



Development of a Five-Factor Model charisma compound and its relations to career outcomes



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ABSTRACT

Under the increasing influence of trait-perspectives on leadership, the current study introduces a personality-based measure of charisma. In order to obtain a Five-Factor Model (FFM) prototype for the charismatic leader, experts in the field of leadership and personality research were invited to participate in an expert panel. For each of the 30 NEO PI-R facets, experts ($N = 38$) rated the prototypic case of a successful charismatic leader on a scale ranging between 1 (*extremely low*) and 9 (*extremely high*). Based on the FFM count technique (Miller, Bagby, Pilkonis, Reynolds, & Lynam, 2005), an easy-to-use count was developed in which facets that were rated as being prototypically high (≥ 7) or low (≤ 3) were summed together to calculate the FFM charisma score. To investigate the predictive validity of the FFM charisma count in terms of work-related outcomes, the 1994 Ghent alumni sample was used in which college alumni ($N = 262$) were administered the NEO PI-R before entering the labor market and 15 years later when their professional careers had unfolded. The results demonstrate that FFM charisma was positively related to extrinsic career outcomes 15 years later, including income, number of subordinates, and managerial level. Moreover, FFM charisma was positively associated with adaptive performance, and with career roles that directly relate to charismatic leadership. It is concluded that the FFM charisma compound provides opportunities to map charismatic tendencies in a career-relevant way.

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1. Introduction

In the leadership literature, there is disagreement among scholars about whether charisma is an *attribution* based on relational processes (e.g., Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000; Howell & Shamir, 2005; Waldman & Javidan, 2009), or rather a *personal characteristic* of the leader (e.g., Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009; Riggio, 2009; Zaccaro, 2012). An important part of the leadership literature adopts the attributional perspective on charisma, in which charisma lies in the eye of the beholder, and leaders are not charismatic unless followers perceive them as such (e.g., Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). However, even Weber, who is often cited as arguing in favor of this attributional approach, recognized the role of personality traits by noting that charisma applies to “a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural powers or qualities” (Weber, 1947, p. 358). This conceptualization of charisma illustrates that even the

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'attributionists' acknowledge that there must be something about these leaders that provokes such charismatic attributions. In line with this idea, increased attention is being devoted to trait-perspectives on leadership (e.g., Judge et al., 2009; Zaccaro, 2012), while also contemporary definitions of charisma refer to a constellation of personal characteristics that allow an individual to influence other people by affecting their feelings, opinions, and behaviors (Riggio, 2009).

In this context, there have been several attempts to identify personality traits related to charismatic leadership (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2004; De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Koopman, 2005; De Vries, 2012; House & Howell, 1992; Judge & Bono, 2000). Throughout this search, the hierarchical Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality (Digman, 1990) has played a central role. Briefly, the FFM suggests that the comprehensive construct of personality can be represented by five broad personality domains, generally referred to as Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Goldberg, 1993). This five-factor structure of individual differences in personality has been shown to be universal (McCrae, Costa, del Pilar, Rolland, & Parker, 1998; McCrae et al., 2005), and the hierarchical aspect of the FFM lies in the differentiation of each of the five domains in six specific traits or facets (Costa & McCrae, 1995).

A meta-analysis by Bono and Judge (2004) examined relationships between charisma and Big Five personality traits, in which charisma was conceptualized as part of transformational leadership, including the 'idealized influence' and 'inspirational motivation' dimensions of Bass' (1998) scales. Using the FFM as a guiding framework, only Extraversion ($\rho = 0.22$) and Neuroticism ($\rho = -0.17$) were found to be significantly and consistently related to ratings of charisma, indicating that highly charismatic leaders tend to be more extraverted, and less neurotic. As for Openness and Agreeableness, results were inconsistent, indicating that these traits were sometimes positively associated, and at other times negatively associated with charisma. Finally, Conscientiousness did not relate significantly to charisma (Bono & Judge, 2004). As a set, the Big Five personality traits accounted for 12% of the variance in charisma. Although these findings thus provided some support for the dispositional basis of charisma, the proportion of variance explained was relatively small. Therefore, the authors suggested that the Big Five domains might be too broad to fruitfully capture the dispositional basis of charismatic leadership. As a solution, exploring the relationships between Big Five facets and charismatic leadership might prove worthwhile (Bono & Judge, 2004; Hough, 1992). Moreover, as the individual is a complex system, the study of single isolated personality traits is unlikely to fully capture its complex psychological reality (Furr, 2008). By focusing on the unique associations between traits and outcomes, one fails to consider that it is the *specific configuration of traits* that is most relevant for understanding and predicting work-related and career outcomes (Shoss & Witt, 2013). In the current study, a FFM charisma compound will be introduced that holds the advantage of representing a meaningful configuration of traits, with relevance to understand behavior at work.

Apart from contributing to our understanding of the specific personality features that underlie individual differences in charisma, understanding the underlying personality core associated with charismatic leadership has important implications for practice, such as selection, training, and development of leaders. For instance, given that Big Five traits are relatively stable (e.g., Cobb-Clark & Schurer, 2012), and knowing that leader charisma has beneficial effects on followers, such as higher levels of performance, commitment, trust and satisfaction (e.g., Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), charismatic tendencies could be taken into account when making employment decisions. Once a FFM charisma compound is developed through an expert consensus approach (Study 1), its construct validity will be investigated, as well as its predictive value for career outcomes 15 years later (Study 2).

1.1. An expert consensus approach and the FFM count technique

A personality-based measure of charisma will be obtained by using: a) an expert consensus approach (Lynam & Widiger, 2001); and b) the FFM count technique (Miller et al., 2005). First, an expert consensus approach will be used to obtain a prototypical FFM profile for the charismatic leader's personality. In this approach, experts in the field of charismatic leadership and personality are asked to rate the prototypic case of a charismatic leader in terms of personality, using all 30 facets of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1995). Aggregation across these experts allows generating a FFM prototype for the charismatic leader, based on a selection of facets that are rated as prototypically high or prototypically low by the experts. Previously, this approach has also been used by Lynam and Widiger (2001) to generate FFM personality profiles for each of the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) personality disorders. For instance, the FFM prototype of the narcissistic personality disorder was represented by low scores on all six facets of Agreeableness, one facet of Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness (i.e., self-consciousness, warmth, and feelings respectively), and it was also represented by high scores on one facet of Neuroticism and Openness (i.e., angry hostility and actions respectively), and two facets of Extraversion (i.e., assertiveness and excitement seeking) (see Lynam & Widiger, 2001). Moreover, in the applied field, FFM profiles have been generated for organizationally relevant profiles, for instance for the entrepreneur (Obschonka, Schmitt-Rodermund, Silbereisen, Gosling, & Potter, 2013). The latter profile development, however, was limited to FFM domains instead of a differentiated profile development by means of facet descriptions.

Once an "expert generated FFM prototype" is obtained for the charismatic leader, the FFM count technique (Miller et al., 2005) will be used to create participants' FFM charisma scores. In contrast to the complex scoring methodology of the prototype matching technique (Lynam & Widiger, 2001), in which expert generated prototypes (that use all 30 FFM facets) are matched to individuals' FFM profiles, a simple sum of the most characteristic FFM facets will be used to obtain one's charismatic personality score. The result can be considered as a "compound trait", which is a linear combination of narrower personality facets that do not all co-vary (Shoss & Witt, 2013). The FFM count technique has proven to be a valid method to represent personality disorders in terms of convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity (e.g., De Fruyt et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2005; Miller, Reynolds, &

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