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**The Influence of Project Leadership Traits of Middle
Management on Project Success**

تأثير صفات قيادة المشروع للإدارة الوسطى على نجاح المشروع

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
MSc PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

at

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Abstract

The aim of the dissertation is to investigate the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success. Staff job performance is a crucial element as far as organizational project success is concerned and as such factors that contribute to its enhancement are as important to a company. Considering that middle-level managers usually have a direct supervisory engagement with the staff of a corporation and thus influence their productivity and performance directly, it would be important to understand some of the intrinsic as well as extrinsic factors that may impact on their engagement with their junior staff which in turn may influence the productivity of the latter as a fundamental contributor to project success. One such factor as delineated in this study is the project leadership traits of the manager. In this paper, staff performance was adopted as a measure of project success in which case high performance was delineated to project success.

Through the employment of a mixed method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative approaches as well as review of archival literature, the study sought to gather direct feedback from a mix of mid-level managers as well as junior employees from 10 different organizations with each company having slots of 10 representatives for a total count of 100 respondents using the quantitative method. To gather data using the qualitative approach the study employed the individual interviews method with a single representative from each organization for a total count of 10 interviews. From the analysis of the data gathered from the research process as well as the correlation evaluation of information from past findings, the study proved its hypotheses and established that there is indeed a big relationship in between the project leadership traits of middle management on project success with positive traits enhancing productivity and performance while negative traits hindering staff productivity/ performance. In the end while positive traits promote project success, negative traits hinder project success.

نبذة مختصرة

الهدف من الرسالة هو التحقق من تأثير سمات قيادة المشروع للإدارة الوسطى على نجاح المشروع. يعد الأداء الوظيفي للموظفين عنصراً حاسماً بالنسبة لنجاح المشروع التنظيمي ، كما أن مثل هذه العوامل التي تسهم في تعزيزها مهمة بالنسبة للشركة. بالنظر إلى أن مديري المستوى المتوسط عادة ما يكون لديهم إشراف مباشر على الإشراف مع موظفي الشركة وبالتالي يؤثر على إنتاجيتهم وأدائهم بشكل مباشر ، سيكون من المهم فهم بعض العوامل الجوهرية بالإضافة إلى العوامل الخارجية التي قد تؤثر على تفاعلهم مع شركاتهم. صغار الموظفين وهم بدورهم قد يؤثر على إنتاجية هذا الأخير كمساهم أساسي في نجاح المشروع. أحد هذه العوامل كما هو موضح في هذه الدراسة هو سمات قيادة المدير للمشروع. في هذه الورقة ، تم اعتماد أداء الموظفين كمقياس لنجاح المشروع، في هذه الحالة تم تحديد الأداء العالي لنجاح المشروع.

من خلال توظيف نهج طرق مختلط يتضمن مقاربات كمية ونوعية وكذلك مراجعة الأدبيات الأرشيفية ، سعت الدراسة إلى جمع تعليقات مباشرة من مزيج من المديرين من المستوى المتوسط بالإضافة إلى الموظفين المبتدئين من 10 منظمات مختلفة مع كل شركة وجود فواصل مكونة من 10 ممثلين لإجمالي 100 مستجيب باستخدام الطريقة الكمية. لجمع البيانات باستخدام النهج النوعي ، استخدمت الدراسة طريقة المقابلات الفردية مع ممثل واحد من كل منظمة لعدد إجمالي من 10 مقابلات. من تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من عملية البحث وكذلك تقييم الارتباط للمعلومات من النتائج السابقة ، أثبتت الدراسة فرضياتها وأثبتت أن هناك بالفعل علاقة كبيرة بين سمات قيادة المشروع للإدارة الوسطى على نجاح المشروع مع سمات إيجابية تعزز الإنتاجية والأداء بينما تعمل السمات السلبية على إعاقة إنتاجية / أداء الموظفين. في النهاية ، بينما تعزز السمات الإيجابية نجاح المشروع ، و تعوق السمات السلبية نجاح المشروع.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is without dispute that leaders contribute significantly to a successful or unsuccessful organization. It is obvious that good leadership is requisite to the success of an enterprise and as such its incorporation in the daily activities of a business whether in the short term or long term is very necessary (Tsai, 2011). Noting its significance, various researchers have carried out various studies and research touching on the factors that may influence leadership in an organization. Such factors may arise from a personal level, a communal level as well as the national and global level. In other words, such factors may be intrinsic (arising from within an individual) or extrinsic (arising from external factors). While national and global influences may arise from aspects such as best practice and legal implications, communal levels in most instances arise from societal expectations (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991). Personal influence may emanate from elements such as project leadership traits as well as personal beliefs and convictions (Felfe & Schyns, 2006). It is important to note that a proper consideration and incorporation of the influences mentioned above may be the reason why it is possible to witness some leaders succeeding in their leadership and thus steering organizational success. It is possible that those who are not able to strike a balance between the mentioned factors may more readily experience leadership failure.

Various researchers and studies have investigated the close link between leadership success and failure with a project leader's traits (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Project leadership traits' influence one's leadership especially among middle management personnel and may have a direct impact on staff as well as the staffs' performance/ productivity (Zaccaro, 2007, p.6). It is possible that leaders who behave rationally may experience greater success when dealing with their junior staff than leaders who are irrational and sadistic. Middle management staffs interact closely or directly supervise staff more than the top management personnel and as such have a greater influence on the junior staff. It is because of out of such close interaction or direct supervision that the kind of leadership they offer will make or break the productivity of the junior staff and consequently the performance and success or failure of the company as a whole.

It is no doubt that people are different and as such exhibit different project leadership traits. Such behavioural differences and individual characteristics influence their abilities, needs, and skills to lead or manage other people especially those who report to them (Williams, Myerson, & Hale, 2008, Ngun et al., 2011). Depending on the exemplified project leadership trait, it is possible that

the middle-level manager will influence the productivity/ performance of junior staff. Various scholarly works have proven that leadership styles have a direct impact on employees' productivity (Kara et al., 2013; Keskes, 2014; Laschinger et al., 2014; Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014). Employing a psychological point of view, this paper investigates the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on the productivity/ performance of their staff. Leaders who manifest project leadership setbacks may experience strained leader-subordinate relationships and as such, it is important to understand precisely how project leadership traits influence their leadership styles which consequently affect the productivity/ performance of their staff. In essence, the study examines how project leadership traits influence a middle manager's leadership style and how such influences impacts on the performance of their subordinates. It examines the motivational variables associated with middle management project leadership traits that influence how they discharge their duties and supervise their juniors.

1.2 Justification of the Study

For any organization to be successful in achieving its objectives, its workforce must be productive as per the laid expectations or even beyond. However, the productivity and performance of junior staff depend greatly on the relationship they have with their supervisors who in most cases are normally the mid-level management personnel (Laschinger et al., 2014). Human beings possess diverse project leadership dimensions which may influence their roles either positively or negatively. Being humans, middle-level managers may exhibit varying interpersonal as well as leadership characteristics based on their innate project leadership traits. Project leadership traits have the potential of affecting the managerial effectiveness that can help supervisors to steer the best out of themselves and their subordinates (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Such interpersonal and leadership features can give a positive or a negative influence to the performance of junior employees. It is thus vital to establish how these heterogeneous workplace personalities among middle-level management influence the motivation and hence the productivity of junior employees whether directly or indirectly and thus the performance of an enterprise as a whole. Therefore, this study presents an excellent rationale for establishing the significance of the various dimensions of project leadership traits among middle-level managers influence their leadership and interpersonal approaches and consequently the productivity of their subordinates. The study examined what project leadership traits among mid-level managers make their juniors more productive and which traits influence subordinates' performance negatively.

Successful companies always leverage on the performance of their employees and as such, it is important for them to understand how supervisors contribute to the productivity of the junior staff. Productive employees always grant an organization the competitive edge to prevail in the marketplace and either survive or prevail against the competition as well as other market forces. It is thus imperative for such businesses to address any issues that can derail the employees from giving their best towards the organization within the roles in which they have been assigned. Such concerns include the project leadership traits of middle-level managers who function in the role of supervision of junior staff.

Although crucial research has been done on the issue of project leadership traits in the context of the workplace and its impact on an organization's performance as a whole, there is inadequate work that has been done in explicating the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on productivity/ performance of the subordinate staff. In the case of middle-level managers, the issue has received the minimal attention which in fact has not been comprehensive and hence the justification for this study. Furthermore, in the existing studies, the focus of project leadership traits on employee productivity and organizational performance has been quite general and indiscriminative of top-level and mid-level management. Because of the limited research and scholarly publications that have sought to address the issue of project leadership traits in the workplace, there is evidence that indeed the factor of project leadership traits among leaders influences individual job performance (Camps, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016).

Negative manifestation of project leadership trait may lead to negative job satisfaction among employees which in turn could result in a display of dismal levels of staff commitment to their duties as well as increased employee turnover. The low commitment of employees in their work that can be characterized by acts such as absenteeism as well as high turnover can impact the performance of the organization negatively (Hausknecht, Hiller, & Vance, 2008).

Therefore it is vital to comprehend how a project leader's traits impacts on his or her subordinates' job satisfaction and the drive to show commitment to their work and hence productivity. It is this rationale that this study is therefore justified since it establishes the possible contribution of a middle-level manager on the productivity of his or her subordinates who shape the performance and hence the successfulness of an enterprise holistically.

1.3 Objectives/ Aims of the Study

This study aimed to establish the relationship that exists between the big five leadership traits and interpersonal skills as well as the relationships between the project leadership traits of middle-level managers and the performance of their junior employees. The big five project leadership traits alluded to in this study include conscientiousness also identified as dependability, neuroticism also revealed as emotional instability, extraversion or surgency, openness (intellect) and agreeableness (Judge, & Zapata, 2015). The study intended to establish with clarity the correlation between the project leadership traits of middle-level managers and the productivity of the subordinate staff. Through a quantitative approach employing the use of a questionnaire the study aimed at gathering direct feedback from a mix of mid-level managers as well as junior employees from 10 different organizations with each company having slots of 10 representatives for a total count of 100 respondents. The research process also involved a qualitative methodology in the form of individual interviews with a single representative from each organization for a total count of 10 interviews. The factors considered in the primary data collection process included elements such as project leadership traits, leadership style, conscientiousness, neuroticism, employee motivation, job satisfaction, and interpersonal interactions in the workplace. It is possible that an individual's ability to display enviable characteristics such as conscientiousness and openness could actually be an impact of certain aspects of their project leadership traits. Therefore the researcher found it very vital to have knowledge of these specific elements.

The aims were:

1. To identify the major project leadership traits evident in the workforce.
2. To investigate the human project leadership traits that has the possibility of influencing employee productivity within the context of middle-level management.
3. To evaluate how project leadership traits influence a middle manager's ability to discharge his or her mandate and how his or her actions and relations impacts on the performance of their subordinates.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) Which project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?
- 2) How do the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

In relation to the big five project leadership traits, the study held that a strong and positive manifestation of openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability would impact positively on employee performance. On the other hand, manifestation of negative characteristics such as being reserved or secretive, unscrupulous, discordant, introverted and finally neuroticism would influence the performance of junior employees negatively.

In other words, while open, conscientious, agreeable, extraverted, and emotional stable middle-level managers would have a positive influence on the productivity and performance of their subordinates, neuroticism, reserved, unscrupulous, discordant, and introverted middle-level management personnel would experience diminished productivity and performance amongst their junior staff. In summary, the five hypotheses probed in this study are as shown below.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle level management and project success.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the agreeableness trait in middle level management and project success.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle level management and project success.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle level management and project success.

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between the neuroticism trait in middle level management and project success.

1.6 Importance of the Study

A leader's psychological qualities and project leadership traits are important aspects of his or her effective management and supervisory abilities. As mentioned earlier managers in the middle tier management level in an organization are humans and may thus exhibit distinct attitudes, intentions, anxieties as well as desires. While some of these attitudes, intentions and desires may be unconsciously and conspicuously contradictory, they can readily influence how the leader behaves especially in dealing with his or her juniors. Interestingly, all the factors mentioned above emanate from an inherent regime within a leader in the form of project leadership traits exhibited through

conscious, subconscious and unconscious characteristics (Lewicki & Hill, 1987; Bargh & Morsella, 2008). It could be the reason why some leaders succeed and others fail in empowering their subordinate staff towards personal and organization performance and success. A leader's project leadership trait plays a very significant role in their leadership (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). It determines whether their decisions will be rational or irrational, idiosyncratic or inclusive, and logical or illogical. It is obvious that middle-level managers experience a lot of vertical as well as horizontally integrated pressures at the workplace. Vertical pressures emanate from their top management expectations to meet and possibly exceed in their deliverables as well as from their subordinates to offer sound leadership in their supervisory roles (Muurinen et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2015). Horizontally integrated pressures may arise from their peers who may seem to do better than they are and thus the compulsion to want to outperform them. At the end of the day what such vertical and horizontal pressures breed is the occurrence of stress associated with these middle-level management personnel. With the right project leadership trait, it is possible that a leader will strike a balance between their mandated, and stress and thus not cascade the stress to their junior staff which could actually create an unfavourable working condition for the subordinates with the consequence of leading to job dissatisfaction and consequently diminished productivity.

However, what is more, important as described in this study is the need to have a detailed comprehension of the project leadership traits and how they influence productivity among staff so that where possible it would be necessary to suppress negative manifestations and promote characteristics. Such knowledge may be helpful to middle-level managers to cultivate the sensitivity that may help them lead successfully. Project leadership can be understood from perspectives such as thoughts, feelings, tendencies and desires that make up a person's individuality. Therefore from this outlook, project leadership traits determined an individual's peculiar adaptability to the setting in which he or she is subjected to (Eryilmaz & Kara, 2017). A person's project leadership may be moulded from internal characteristics, situational influences as well as personal experiences. These three elements have an impact on an individual's perceptions, impressions, and actions conferred in the project leadership traits. In leadership, these perceptions, impressions, and actions associated with one's persona are exemplified as the Big Five project leadership traits. Considering personal experiences, it is arguable that one's project leadership may exhibit a continuum over time especially with reads to age (Roberts & Mroczek, 2008). An individual's project leadership and behaviour have also been associated with that person's mental stability in which case an individual who is mentally stable can exhibit enviable project leadership

traits than one who experiences bouts of psychological instability (Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, & McAdams, 2017).

Concisely, to understand the impact of project leadership traits of middle-level managers on their juniors' productivity, it is important to approach such a notion from different angles. A clear comprehension of the various existing points of view is helpful in ascertaining the influence of project leadership on the interpersonal and leadership competencies of middle-level management personnel. The interpersonal and leadership competencies that may be influenced by a leader's project leadership traits include their planning and problem-solving abilities, their independent performance, their leadership role-play, as well as their skills in instituting teamwork and cooperation (Niitamo, 2010). These competencies may be driven by the manager's motives as well as their goals whether at a personal level or institutional level. The competencies are also depicted from the manager's intentions, how such intentions are executed and how he or she processes feedback from those he or she has tasked to implement those intentions (Niitamo, 2010). While independent performance may be viewed as either focused or efficient oriented, leadership may be viewed as directional, motivational, or resourcing. On the other hand, teamwork and cooperation promotion may be seen from the perspective of a manager's ability to listen, plan, communicate, and advice. Finally, in problem-solving, the solutions given must be visionary, creative, practical and operative.

Therefore the project leadership traits of a middle-level manager and his or her role as a leader can influence his disposition towards issues, his motivations towards competitive achievement, inspiration, rationalism, logic, inclusiveness, emotional and stress management, empathy, approachability, self-image, decision making, and self-reflection. These, in turn, have the potential to inspire and motivate junior workers towards increased productivity which leads to the organisation's benefit.

It is true that when faced with stressful situations, some leaders may certainly exhibit the tendency to become disoriented and hence disorganized and as a resulting cascade the stress by acting compulsively towards their subordinates. Firstly, the ability of a middle-level manager to manage emotional and stressful situations is thus an important competence in promoting productivity among junior employees. Secondly, the manager should exhibit tolerance to persistent interpersonal difficulties and be mindful of the individual desires of his or her juniors. Thirdly, they should portray an open-minded perspective especially on their expectations of their subordinate staff and

thus avoid becoming overbearing in nature. It is obvious that leaders who exemplify poor interpersonal relations always face sociability difficulties with their juniors (Biggio & Cortese, 2013). It is thus difficult for them to experience successful cooperation with their staff.

A manager's project leadership traits may also underscore his or her ability to process information and feedback from his or her juniors intelligently (Alghamdi, Aslam, & Khan, 2017). Sometimes, leaders may process feedback from a predetermined point of view and as such their end perception may have already been compromised and biased and as such may cause them to act illogically and irrationally. Therefore they may experience diminished effectiveness and increased difficulties in the process of making decisions and as such their behaviour may hinder employee productivity and performance.

It is undisputed that middle-level managers are often faced with difficult situations that need their mediation. Their understanding of their project leadership traits will thus be useful in ensuring they undertake an appropriate response to a prevailing situation with the aim of achieving a positive outcome (Meyer et al., 1998). Lack of such knowledge may be exhibited through the difficulty such a manager may experience in instituting a rational mediation approach at a specific problem with or between his subordinates. Mediation dysfunctions may also be an impact of psychological or neurotic problems such as depression and emotional instability which may be addressed through clinical interventions. A narcissist (self-concern) attribute also known as narcissism is more likely to influence staff productivity in that where a leader is overly self-involved (Carveth, 2017). Because of prioritizing their personal agenda, their decisions mostly appear to be self-centred and egocentric, and as such their juniors may become uncomfortable and experience a diminished commitment to their work thus diminishing their performance.

Narcissism is a common trait of leadership among many leaders and its drawing of scholarly attention is not new (Glad, 2002). Its occurrence among individuals in management roles has been closely linked with employee job satisfaction and performance. Narcissist leaders in most cases always pursue idiosyncratic ambitions which in most cases are not always in consideration of others. Therefore, subordinates under such leaders who feel discriminated against will most often than not become discouraged and agitated with the impact being their motivation and productivity is lowered.

Characterized as an exaggerated self-love and self-importance, a person with the narcissism project leadership will more often than not exploit those under his or her supervision for his or her personal gain. Such an individual is more likely to exhibit a lack of self-pity or empathy, feels more superior to others, and harbours a sense of a sense of self-grandiosity. Such perceptions greatly undermine interpersonal abilities and may elicit negativity and frustration among junior employees and reduce their productivity (Blair et al., 2008). Moreover, a narcissist leader will struggle with the need to preserve their exaggerated self-worth and perverse self-centeredness at the expense of inspiring employee performance. In most cases, narcissism among middle-level managers will in most cases lead to unethical treatment of junior employees (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

An employee's performance assessment heavily relies on elements such as his or her cognitive, perceptual, and decision-making abilities. Assessment of cognitive, perceptual, and decision-making abilities of an employee may be predictive of such an individual's actions or reactions in the face of an unexpected or stressful situation and hence their job performance (Salgado, 1997). A sensitive project leadership type in leaders is not only transformational but is also predictive of a positive job performance in employees. Furthermore, it is also possible that intuitive, perceiving, and extraverted traits are increasingly transformational and thus leading to productive staff compared to sensing, judging and introverted traits. It has been discussed that more extroverted leaders will readily experience acceptance and sociability with their followers compared to leaders who are introverted and unapproachable (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001).

1.7 Research Methodology

Considering the objectivity of this dissertation to study an existing phenomenon, its basis is a realism approach. Therefore the formulation of hypothesis and analysis of the gathered information is based on realistic rather than assumed data. The research methodology employed in the research process is that of mixed method approach encompassing quantitative and qualitative techniques (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The quantitative approach is empirical in nature and employs the use of a pre-structured questionnaire to investigate the specific objectives of this study based on the provided research questions. It also facilitates the analysis of numeric data.

On the other hand, the qualitative method is perceptive in nature and employs the use of individual interviews to ascertain the perceptions, feelings, thoughts and convictions of the interviews on the subject matter of this study (Krueger & Casey, 2014, p. 11). It is also guided by the three research

questions established in this study. The third approach to the research process is through the review of existing literature related to the subject of this dissertation. The basis of considering all these methods in a single study which is a process known as triangulation, is for comparison of the findings from each of the three approaches for the purpose of gaining a multifaceted view of the subject under review and thus overcoming parochial assumptions and bias (Bentahar & Cameron, 2015, p. 6). A multi-perspective methodological approach in research is useful in fortifying the validity of the research.

As stated earlier, the objective of this study was to precisely establish the relationship between the project leadership traits of middle-level managers and the productivity of the subordinate staff. The use of questionnaires targeted the gathering of feedback a mix of junior employees from 10 different organizations. Each company was assigned 10 slots for 10 internally nominated representatives comprising which led to a total count of 100 respondents. The qualitative methodology in the form of individual interviews targeted 1 junior employ who was the representative from each of the 10 organizations totalling the number of individual interviews carried out to a count of 10.

1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

This study is made of six (6) systematic and methodical chapters. The introduction chapter which is designated as chapter sets the pace for the study by explicating the background of the study and its relation to the topic centred on the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success. It outlines the justification of the study and in the process describes the statement of the problem that inspired the study. It goes ahead to explain the objectives/ aims of the study as well as the hypothesis and assumptions adopted to drive the research process. The chapter also presents an in-depth discussion why this study was important and outlines as well as discusses some of the approaches that can benefit from the knowledge and findings presented in this study. Specifically, it enumerates how middle-level managers can discover their dominant project leadership traits and use such knowledge to create a favourable working environment for their juniors to prevail and hence amplify their performance. Finally, the chapter outlines the research questions as well as the research methodology adopted in the study and ends up by outlining the organization of the dissertation.

In the second chapter, the researcher presents a review of existing literature from past studies that are closely linked to the subject of this study. Firstly it presents a prelude to the chapter with the regards to the variables that are primary to this study which are project leadership traits of middle management and the project success. It carries out the study of archival data of the concepts discussed within this study such as the concept of project leadership and its related theories. It puts an emphasis on the five-factor model among leaders in an organization and investigates the influence of the associated five factors which include neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness to employee job performance. The concept of employee Performance is also discussed in this chapter as does the possible relationship between middle management project leadership traits and employee performance.

The third chapter focuses on the methodological design that was adopted in the course of carrying out the research process in the study. It delineates the design of the research process and provides a justification for the choice of the methodological processes and approaches employed in the research. It also describes the population of the study as well as the sample incorporated in the study. Furthermore, it describes the procedure employed in arriving at the sample (sampling). In this chapter approach to instrumentation is discussed in the context of this study and how the instruments are used in collecting data. It also explains how ethical considerations were incorporated in the research process to preserve the validity and reliability of the research process. With regards to validity, the chapter presents a comprehension of the importance of observing internal and external validity in research. The chapter wraps up by describing how all the data gathered in the research process were analysed as well as providing a summary of the chapter.

Chapter four is the findings chapter and presents the results obtained from the data analysis process described in chapter three. First, the chapter describes the respondents' response rate in regards to the data collected in the research process. Second, it establishes the project leadership traits exhibited by middle management. Thirdly, it outlines the project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success and lastly, it makes a presentation of how the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success.

Chapter five which is the discussion chapter focuses on presenting a detailed discussion of the findings obtained in chapter four in a more in-depth and elaborate approach by underpinning them and comparing to existing research. The reason of relating the findings of the study to existing

literature is to compare how the findings relate to other studied is and whether they are in agreement or conflict with other findings.

The last chapter is chapter five which presents a summary and discussion of the study's findings, conclusion and recommendations, and study's limitations. The chapter discusses the findings of the study in the context of and against proven concepts and draws possible similarities and differences. It is thus able to link the objectives of the study with the analytical findings obtained in the research process of this study. Therefore in relation to findings in other studies as well as findings in this study, the researcher is able to present informed conclusions as well as recommendations for application as well as for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Prelude

The function of leadership whether at the top or middle-level management in relation to the productivity of staff and hence the performance of the organization is a widely researched concept. More so, considering the direct supervisory and engagement roles the middle-level managers have with the employees a corporation. The approach with which middle-level managers deal with their juniors are influenced by multiple factors which include family and stress-related issues, external situational aspects, personal experiences and motivations, leadership styles, and more importantly in the context of this study, their project leadership and project leadership traits (Buchanan et al., 2013). All the mentioned elements have the potential of directly or indirectly influencing the performance of the employees and thus the success or failure of an organization. Various perspectives including hypotheses and theories have been proposed to underpin the relationship between the project leadership traits of managers and the performance of their workers. Therefore, this chapter explores the available key literature to outline the discussions, findings, and theories and thus facilitate the augmentation of the knowledge gathered in the context of the influence of project success traits among middle management personnel to the project success as well as explore and explicate the gaps established in existing literature addressed in this study.

2.2 project leadership and project leadership Traits

A better understanding of the Concept of project leadership may begin with the knowledge of its definition. Project leadership may be defined as the solid set of traits manifested by an individual that grant a reference and in essence, can be attributed to his or her personal identity (Kernberg, 2016, p.145). Such traits are identifiable with a person's persistent model of thinking, as well as his or her perceptions and actions.

It is notable that people react or carry themselves out distinctly under similar circumstances based on their unique personalities compounded by elements such as their values, temperament, attitudes, and past experiences (Letzring, 2008). In a workplace environment, it is vital to have the fundamental knowledge of how such project leadership distinctness may affect productivity.

Considering the role that managers play over their staff, it is imperative to understand how their expression of these project leadership factors influences employee productivity.

An individual's project leadership can be influenced by intrinsic dimensions, external situations as well the past experiences of that person. Project leadership influences an individual's persona in a very significant way and has its impacts on that person's attitudes, motives, and expectations (Homayouni, 2011). Project leadership is identifiable with an individual's behaviour and assumptions as well as the way he or she interacts or deals with other people. A person's project leadership forms a great basis of their 'self' and in most cases, the uniqueness observed in that individual (Bailey, 2003).

Project leadership traits, on the other hand, can be introduced as the innate inclinations or predispositions that inspire a person's enduring persistent model of thinking, as well as his or her perceptions and actions (Capaldi, Dopko, & Zelenski, 2014). These traits are the fundamental components that compel an individual to his or her characteristic thinking, emotion, and behaviour

Importantly, in order for one to understand the concept of project leadership, it is imperative to have an understanding the very core factors that underline a person's consistent line of think, perceptions, and actions. As earlier mentioned, these factors include external situational aspects, personal experiences and motivations as well as innate nature and hereditary variables (Rabideau, 2005; Hopwood et al., 2011). While these factors affect different individuals differently, it may be acceptable to argue that their variability may be the genesis of the various observable project leadership diversities among the humankind. The possible reason why project leadership may appear persistent at one point or another emanates from the possible maintenance within the same environment over a protracted period of time. Therefore, constant change of environment may lead to a commensurate change in a person's project leadership and hence individuality (Hopwood et al., 2011).

The concept of project leadership contributes significantly to the leadership behaviour of managers within a company and as such calls for primary attention to help managers discharge sound and productive leadership. Considering that managers behave the way they do because of their project leadership and project leadership traits, it is vital; to understand how these personalities may inspire

staff to greater job performance or de-motivate them from becoming productive as expected. Middle-level managers must understand the negative attributes of their project leadership that may diminish the performance morale of their workers and learn how to suppress or overcome such traits for the wholesome betterment of the organization.

2.3 Theories Associated With the Concepts of project leadership and project leadership Traits

Various distinct theories have been devised or correlated with the aim of trying to explain the concept of project leadership traits. Such theories include the Cattell's 16PF test theory, the Four Temperaments theory, the Hippocrates theory (460-370 BC), the Eysenck theory (1916-1997), the Allport theory (1897- 1967), and the Big Five Model theory. While the study presents a brief discussion on each of the other five theories, its emphasis is on the Big Five Model as a leadership theory upon which it commits to a more detailed discussion in relation to middle management as well as its influence on staff productivity and performance.

2.3.1 The Allport Theory

The Allport theory (1897-1967) revolves around a tripartite approach to project leadership traits. This three-level approach envisages the occurrence of project leadership traits within a central, secondary and cardinal level (Harris & Mowen, 2001). In describing the central trait level, the Allport theory looks at the common or normal observable features noticeable in almost every individual human being (Harris & Mowen, 2001). Such traits are always general in nature shapes the fundamental or foundational behaviour that is almost conventional to every human being. Considering their universality, central traits can be subjected to rationality on the basis of the universal expectations. On the other hand, the secondary level revolves around a person's individuality and in most cases, they are always only attributed to that individual (Harris & Mowen, 2001). In other words, such traits are not necessarily shared by others and thus they are not universal in nature. They only define the individual harbouring them. These traits are only identifiable by persons who share a very close relationship with such an individual and who have known and interacted with that individual for a long time. They involve elements such as an individual's preferences, taste, fashion and dislikes. For example, one individual's likes may be another individual's dislikes and such are only known by the people such people have interacted

with for such a long time. Finally, cardinal traits arise from the choices an individual makes or incorporate in their lives influenced from both, intrinsic dimensions, external situations and past experiences to guide their behaviour, attitudes, emotions and actions. In other words, these traits develop over time and are defined in the entirety of an individual's persona (Harris & Mowen, 2001). Considering that most individuals normally have distinct life journeys it is impossible to encounter the occurrence of common cardinal traits among individuals. For example, while some people show a strong sense of humility, others display an intense sense of control while others manifest an enviable characteristic for diplomacy.

2.3.2 The Eysenck Theory

According to the Eysenck theory, human project leadership traits are identifiable in three dimensions. According to this theory, project leadership traits can be manifested as neuroticism, extraversion, or psychoticism (Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981, p.11). Eysenck theory describes extraversion in terms of the ability of an individual to display sociability, sensitivity to reward, and ease of interaction with other people (Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981, p.11). Therefore an individual who manifests these behavioural features would be regarded as an extrovert. On the other hand, an individual who displays the very opposites of these features would be identified as an introvert. The second dimension of psychoticism is appropriated with the aspect of managing 'self' and acquiring or achieving a balance in one's character or behaviour (Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981, p.17). However, achieving a point of equilibrium in one's behavioural attributes is not usually possible and as such different individuals will exhibit different levels of psychoticism. Highly psychotic individuals often appear to exhibit high levels of self-ambition sometimes at the expense of other people and as such may deal with other people insensitively. On the other hand, their opposites may be considerate and caring when they are dealing with other people. Finally, neuroticism is described in terms of emotional stability. High neuroticism is identified with low levels of emotional stability and such an individual is said to be emotionally unstable (Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981, p.11). On the other hand, an individual with low or negligible neuroticism is termed as emotionally stable. Because of the high intensity of emotional instability, a neurotic person may appear compulsive, insensitive, and in some instances obsessed over something or an issue. Such individuals easily suffer from withdrawal symptoms and may be unfriendly considering that they may be suffering from low self-worth, depression, anxiety or even abnormal levels of fear

(Amirazodi & Amirazodi, 2011). On the other hand, individuals who are emotionally stable are normally temperate and have the ability to be in control and manage a stressful situation.

2.3.3 The Hippocrates's Temperaments Theory

The Hippocrates temperaments theory introduces the occurrence of choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic traits as four (4) project leadership types in human beings (Okal, Ambuyo, & Amukowa, 2012, p.55). Individuals with the melancholic project leadership type more often than not appear to be extremely pessimistic in a display of their temperament. They do not trust easily and are thus often sceptical and highly cautious in their dealings. Melancholic individuals are often withdrawn and introverted preferring to carry out their activities or assignment singly and possibly on their own without necessarily involving others and as such are highly vulnerable to becoming depressed (Okal, Ambuyo, & Amukowa, 2012, p.58). They are normally very orderly and with highly set expectations on those they work with more so those they supervise. When implementing their role activities they are normally keen on budgetary control and in most cases can become extremely frugal. In addition, they are able to express a tendency of being sympathetic but because of their introversion may become unapproachable and difficult to associate with.

The second project leadership type described by the Hippocrates temperaments theory is the choleric project leadership type. As much as a choleric individual are extroverted, they normally tend to be very self-centred placing self-importance at the forefront of everything they do and in their association with other people (Okal, Ambuyo, & Amukowa, 2012, p.58). To feed their egocentric nature, they normally demand loyalty from others and may not easily embrace or withstand correction. In most cases, they exhibit flared tempers and irritability. Fortunately, because of their energetic drive, they can be very inspirational and drive ambitiousness in other people including their followers. They also like carrying out things with the utmost efficiency and as such may be quite demanding and intolerant especially when their expectations are not met. Unfortunately, unlike melancholics, choleric persons are not detail-oriented individuals and are normally rush in their decision-making process which in most cases has a greater tendency to lead to detrimental results.

The phlegmatic project leadership type as explained by the Hippocrates temperaments theory describes individuals who are tolerant, composed, and with high levels of patience. They normally exhibit high levels of composure even if they are subjected to highly intense situations (Okal, Ambuyo, & Amukowa, 2012, p.58). They are also very diplomatic and administrative. However, because of their non-ambitious nature, they can fail to set up or follow up goals and in the process risking possible failure.

The last of the four temperaments described by the Hippocrates temperaments theory is the sanguine project leadership type. Sanguine individuals are normally extroverted and cheerful exhibiting a high ability to interact with others easily (Okal, Ambuyo, & Amukowa, 2012, p.58). They do not struggle with making new friends or 'breaking the ice' in a tensed situation even in the presence of strangers. They also normally manifest a greater level of imagination, creativity, passion, inspiration, and ambition. Unfortunately, they are easily carried away by events considering their lack of focus and can easily fail to meet deadlines.

2.3.4 The Cattell 16 project leadership Theory

The Cattell 16 project leadership theory uses a questionnaire approach to delineate an individual's behavioural characteristic. It places a greater emphasis on a person's interpersonal abilities especially regarding their skills to maintain productive and healthy relationships with other people (Riggio, 1986, p. 649). These traits can be identified as primary between a low and high low range spectrum. In other words, it depends on how an individual and in the context of this study a middle-level manager can express such traits.

For example, In terms of warmth, a manager can be distant, or unfriendly on the low range or sympathetic and extroverted in the high range. In terms of dominance, an individual can be diplomatic and humble in the low range or exhibit antagonism or charisma in the high range. Similarly, in terms of reasoning, an individual can be intelligent in the high range or unintelligent in the low range. The description for the low and high range manifestations are indicated in the figure below.

Factor	Low Score	High Score
Warmth	cold, selfish	supportive, comforting
Intellect	Instinctive, unstable	cerebral, analytical
Emotional Stability	Irritable, moody	level headed, calm
Aggressiveness	Modest, docile	controlling, tough
Liveliness	somber, restrained	wild, fun loving
Dutifulness	untraditional, rebellious	conformity, traditional
Social Assertiveness	shy, withdrawn	uninhibited, bold
Sensitivity	coarse, tough	touchy, soft
Paranoia	trusting, easy going	wary, suspicious
Abstractness	practical, regular	strange, imaginative
Introversion	open, friendly	private, quiet
Anxiety	confident, self-assured	fearful, self-doubting
Open-mindedness	close-minded, set-in-ways	curious, self-exploratory
Independence	outgoing, social	loner, crave solitude
Perfectionism	Disorganized, messy	orderly, thorough
Tension	relaxed, cool	stressed, unsatisfied

Figure 2.1: Cattell 16 project leadership low and high low range factor descriptions
Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/cattell.jpg>

2.3.5 The Five-Factor Theory

The big Five-Factor has been a notable tool in the realm of discussions involving human project leadership traits. The theory is enshrined in five trait dimensions also identified as extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Judge, & Zapata, 2015). In respect to the five-factor model, it's possible to view project leadership in terms of an individual's psychological development and subscription. It describes project leadership in terms of desirable traits that can lead to the flourishing of personal and interpersonal relationships or disastrous traits that can lead to relationship breakdown. Where relationships blossoms albeit in a more professional manner it is very likely that staff productivity and performance will be exemplary. Conversely, where there is a relationship breakdown between the manager and his workers, it is more likely that the employees may be uninspired in their roles and thus lead to low productivity. From this argument, it is possible to predict how a manager's project leadership traits can influence the performance of his or her staff whether positively or negatively.

While an agreeable manager is sympathetic, cooperative, considerate, and courteous, a Conscientious one is dependable, industrious, and organized (Judge, & Zapata, 2015). Similarly, an open manager is not only imaginative and creative; he or she is also probing. On the other hand, while an extraverted manager is outgoing, cordial, dominant, approachable and sociable a neurotic leader is emotionally insecure and unstable, withdrawn, and nervous (Judge, & Zapata, 2015).

In summary, the big Five-Factor model purviews project leadership traits in the sense of a guiding personal principle that makes an individual behave the way he or she does. It is a helpful model in delineating the uniqueness of an individual. As such they are able to moderate workplace perceptions and hence relationships which can either hinder or spur individuals' staff personal growth as well as their productivity and performance. Conscientiousness is easily associated with employee job performance considering that the manager who may be reliable, dutiful, dependable, industrious, and organized can have a greater chance of inspiring such qualities on their staff towards performance compared to a manager who lacks these traits (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000).

The five dimensions described in the five-factor model broadly delineate social, cognitive and affective mannerism and makes the model an important school of thought to comprehend human project leadership expressions. The big Five-Factor dimensions are observed as continuous in such a way that an individual has the potential of manifesting a blend of (Kotrla Topić, Perković Kovačević, & Mlačić, 2012). They are also hereditary in nature and to a greater extent are associated with a higher level of stability and lastly it is the fact that they are conventional meaning that they have or elicit a global normative view. The advantage of the view granted by the big Five-Factor model is the fact that upon identification of the undesirable components of such a trait exhibited by an individual there may be approaches that can be employed to either eliminate or suppress them as a way of achieving personal improvement and sustenance of desirable behaviour (Mussel, 2013). A detailed discussion of each of the distinct dimensions of the five-factor model is presented below.

Conscientiousness

The primary principles that define conscientiousness include an elevated expression of ambitions, motivation, passion, being organized, persistence, industriousness, focus and dependability (Furnham, 2012). Because of their long-suffering nature, conscientious individuals always try to devise an approach that can help them overcome or remain resilient in the middle of a tense situation. In addition, conscientious individuals always have a focus of carrying out their duties at the highest standards possible and the highest degree of competence as well as self-discipline and commitment and thus able to achieve a greater value for their efforts. Therefore a more conscientious manager has the potential of leading by example in carrying out their duties and thus he or she acts as role models for their staff to follow suit and become productive as well. For a manager to inspire a higher degree of organization, competence, self-discipline, dutifulness, motivation, persistence, perseverance, and ambition, he or she should be able to exhibit such qualities before he or she demands them from other people. Managers who lead by example are more probable to become successful in inspiring their juniors (Whitener et al., 1998). It is thus possible that a conscientiousness manager is able to inspire productivity and performance amongst their subordinate staff. In addition, it is also possible that a leader who exhibits conscientiousness will be able to create a thriving and favourable working environment for his juniors thus help them become the best they can be and in the process facilitate their job satisfaction which consequently spurs their productivity and performance.

Conscientious middle-level managers not only have the ability to inspire their staff to be productive, but the staff can also exhibit greater levels of job satisfaction, minimal absenteeism levels, as well as diminished rates of employee turnover. These managers have the potential of inspiring commitment amongst their workers and as such the staff may also become dependable and highly motivated when carrying out the functions of their roles with utmost diligence (McCrae & Costa, 2003). The workers are more likely to manifest an intense involvement on their duties leading to increased productivity and performance.

As a goal-oriented dimension, a conscientiousness manager will in most cases inculcate the need to set up, follow and achieve the set goals by ensuring persistent concerted efforts and the undertaking of any necessary means possible (Yeo & Neal, 2004, p.231). Such leaders do not easily stop until

the goal is achieved and are only satisfied only upon such set achievements. A conscientiousness manager always tries to look at things in the long-term and as such is normally on the forefront of avoiding satiating immediate demands. Therefore, it is more likely that the employees will be inspired to also acquire such a perspective. Furthermore, since conscientiousness manager display effectiveness, the same is likely to be adopted by the junior staff.

The inspiration of employee performance begins from the point that the manager is also a performer. A lazy thus a low-conscientious manager will inspire laziness while the high-conscientious manager will inspire industriousness. It is because, while a high-conscientious manager defines a goal and guided the junior staff towards the achievement of that goal, a low-conscientious manager lacks such ambitious focus (Hochwarter, Witt, & Kacmar, 2000, p. 472). With such inspiration, the staff will be able to draw meaning and satisfaction from their work since they will attain a psychological identity and find it quite significant as guided by the charismatic leadership of their high-conscientious managers. In other words, even the staff will become desirous of being productive since the manager will have actually set the pace for them and a higher bar for them to scale. Importantly, staff inspired by a high-conscientious manager will direct more of their energy at the task they are carrying out in a more productive manner meaning that they also expend a shorter time to achieve or even exceed the set goals. The employees will not only indicate greater productivity but the world done will also achieve high standards meaning that the quality of service or product will also be of a high standard.

Agreeableness

An agreeable individual is closely associated with elements such as cooperative, sympathy, considerate, courtesy, tolerance, and flexibility (Joseph, 2010). In other words, these individuals exhibit the possession and expression of strong interpersonal skills irrespective of their prevailing circumstances. They are thus easily sociable and approachable and usually tend to be warm around people. These individuals are normally and enviably forgiving and do not easily hold a grudge even when they have been out-rightly wronged (Neto, 2007). They are therefore able to advance a warm surrounding to other people and if such individuals are managers, they are more likely to establish an equitable work setup for their staff.

Cooperative managers would easily work with others and advance teamwork as they do so because of their agreeableness (Morgeson, Reider, & Campion, 2005, p.588). In such a case they are able to preserve harmony across their ranks and are able to engage those they work with through constructive feedback and ability to help them thrive. Therefore staffs who work under an agreeable middle-level manager would thrive because of the prevailing harmony that exists in the workplace. Noticeable is the fact that as agreeable leaders focus on developing a positive and efficient work environment for their juniors, they end up facilitating the productivity and performance of these workers and in the presence also enhance their own performance and achievements.

Agreeable leaders are able to exhibit a high sense of concern and care for others and are able to do anything considered humanly possible to see others prosper including their juniors (Fineman, 2006). In their management roles, leaders exhibiting agreeable characteristics are normally inclusive in their relational undertakings and are able to stand communally with and support their staff. In other words, agreeable managers would typically want to add value to those they supervise and in the process help these workers become better at what they do. As such it is possible that staffs that are empowered by their agreeable managers who also facilitate a favourable work environment will in most cases possess a greater level of productivity.

Agreeable managers will most certainly place high demands for their juniors and because of their considerate nature may deal with their juniors needs on a case-to-case basis and thus able to address the distinct needs of each individual who is under their supervision (Wood, 2008, p.153). They are therefore very helpful to their staff and thus able to get promote the nurturing of the best traits in their individual workers. Managers who are less agreeable are more likely to experience strained relationships with their juniors considering that they are rarely sociable and less accommodative to negative feedback. Unfortunately, agreeable individuals may experience elevated levels of difficulties especially when it comes to making tough decisions considering their perceived high levels of wanting to maintain diplomacy and avoidance of conflict.

Extraversion

The dimension of extraversion describes the occurrence of a continuum between individuals who express introverted and extroverted characteristics. An extroverted usually exhibit tendencies of easily making new friends considering their sociable nature (Guthrie, Coate, & Schwoerer, 1998). They are also more likely to start a conversation with other people considering the ease with which they are able to do it. They are ever ambitious and assertive at the same time and thus are able to set and follow up on goals aggressively until where possible ensure that such goals are achieved.

In terms of the context of middle managers, these individuals normally tend to be very creative and talented and also have the ability to come up with strategies that can help them achieve their aspirations. Furthermore, extroverted managers exhibit a great sense of optimism and as such are able to inspire positive energy and drive in their juniors towards increased productivity and consequently the performance of the organization as a whole. In addition, they like to ensure that those they deal with manifest a greater level of satisfaction and as such their juniors would more easily than not express satisfaction in their jobs which automatically enhance employee job performance. Therefore because of the positive environment created by extroverted managers, employees are able to experience success in their workplace undertakings.

One of the notable features of an extroverted individual is their heightened ability to listen to other people. It is perhaps what also makes it possible for them to easily interact sociably with other people. Extroverted managers will, therefore, take time to listen to the needs of their employees and as such match those needs with the right intervention. On the other hand, managers who do not show the sensitivity of listening to their employees may never come to the realization of such needs and may only generalise their interventions and as such fail to dress individualized needs that can enhance individualized productivity. Staff would most likely express satisfaction on a job in which their superiors take time to listen to them and are concerned and considerate of their personal welfare. And as a result of the satisfaction, they draw from such a relationship they are able to invest more in their performance.

On the retrospect, introverted individuals including managers do not easily cultivate warm relationships because of their withdrawn nature. They are most likely to keep to themselves and as

such do not experience the opportunity to practice listening skills with their juniors. More often than not, such managers are normally unapproachable and their extent of sociability is normally at minimal levels. Therefore, introverted managers lack the very essence of creating and cultivating a close relationship with their staff and as such their engagement with their employees would more often than not appear to be mechanical and only driven by the job description and terms of employment. Introverted leaders have poor people as well as communication skills and may not articulate themselves well to their staff.

On the other hand, extroverted managers are able to indicate high levels of servant-leadership in that they are able to volunteer willingly in doing anything that will make their staff prosper since out of that they are able to draw satisfaction and psychological rewards and where possible gain physical rewards (Hunter et al., 2013). The workers are also thus able to encounter increased opportunities for personal growth and support that can lead to their becoming diligent in their duties and hence more productive. It is indisputable that human beings are a social being and as such when they are under the leadership of an individual who is sociable they are able to thrive more comfortably. In summary, extroverted managers are able to gain the approval of their juniors more readily than the introverted managers and thus elevate the importance the staff will feel concerning their contribution to the organization and get inspired to perform even the more. At the end of the day, such a relationship usually seem to be mutual in the sense that as the manager appears to be highly concerned with the welfare of his or her subordinates and creates time to enhance close relationships with them and gaining a personalised understanding of their needs, the workers, on the other hand, become motivated to carry out their duties.

Lastly, extroverts are associated with a positive outlook at situations even if it means concentrating on a small positive than the large negative. They are optimistic in nature and thus if there may be a possible chance of success at something as small as it may be, they may be willing to take the resultant risk to pursue that ambition. Considering their tendency to concentrate on the positive aspects of a circumstance they normally tend to be judicious in solving issues to achieve positive outcomes (Lee & Tsang, 2001). On the other hand introverts usually appear as pessimistic and may thus exude negative energy which may be draining for their junior employees. In a pessimistic environment, it is almost seldom that a goal orientation may be fully adopted or implemented and as such inspiration towards a cause be greatly hindered diminish staff productivity and hence

performance. Therefore, employees working under an introverted manager with high levels of pessimism are less likely to experience success in their roles considering that their creative ideas would most likely encounter a stumbling block in their manager's pessimism.

Openness to Experience

The fundamental basis of the openness dimension is the evaluation of one's experiences so that such a person is able to undertake an open-minded approach to issues. An open-minded manager will manifest creativity (Homan, 2008), curiosity tolerance and appreciation of distinctness and diversity. Such a manager has a wide perspective on things and is able to be highly flexible and accommodative to diverse points of view. Therefore in terms of how it influences employee performance when expressed by a supervisor lies within the precincts of accommodativeness especially in embracing other people's ideas without reprimanding or embarrassing them. Such managers will inspire and facilitate creativity among the junior employees to ensure they're able to make novel thoughts that can transform the organization. The manager not only exudes positive imagination but also inspires it by creating a workplace environment where such is possible (Matzler, Bidmon, & Grabner-Kräuter, 2006). They are never complacent and do not settle for the status quo or the average. Therefore they inspire their workers to get out of their comfort zone and engage in effective and creative ideas that can spur the company to greater heights.

Open managers are always flexible and accommodative in many areas and can facilitate opportunities for creativity among their staff including empowering them through professional training and knowledge acquisition activities (Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010). Considering their flexibility, they are also able to sustain beneficial relationships with people because they're rarely judgemental thus able to cultivate healthy relationships. These managers are also always keen about feedback which in essence helps them in adjusting the workplace situations according to the preferences of the given feedback (Atwater & Brett, 2005). Because they appreciate feedback including criticism for the purpose of doing the right thing, they are never conservative and as such when they are faced with a situation that may need to change they may be very apt to conform especially if such an action would be for the greater benefit of the organization. Therefore when faced with unpredicted situations, they are able to manifest a high level of adaptability without

snapping. Their creativity also helps them and their teams to manoeuvre tricky organizational situations even if such a strategy would mean accepting or adapting to change.

Workers working under open-minded managers always carry out their duties efficiently considering that they are inspired to come up with creative solutions to their prevailing needs as well as setbacks. Workers are also as curious in their duties as their managers are which in turn inspires their attraction to what they do. In the face of disruptive models of doing business, open managers are normally able to inspire their teams to adapt to change quickly to avoid a situation where the company is not able to keep up with the competition and thus lose out on business. In such a case, the company may strive to maintain its relevance in the marketplace.

Unfortunately, by the fact that such managers are always looking or longing for something new, they become disinterested in the mundane and may actually exhibit disinterest if they have to do the same things the same way for a protracted period of time. They can pass such negativity to their staff in the sense that he or she may not inspire productivity in what he or she has lost interest in. Therefore, a job environment that inspires creativity and new ideas will inspire middle-level managers to explore newer ways of doing things so that where there are elements of inefficiency they are able to devise efficient methodologies of work for themselves and their staff. Because of their satisfaction in such an environment, they are able to inspire a sense of significance to their workers who in turn become content and committed to their duties and in the process enhance their performance.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is associated with a person's emotional instability (Hills & Argyle, 2001, p.1375). A neurotic individual can be moody, temperamental, irritable, and nervous. However, an individual exhibiting a lower score of neuroticism is usually regarded as emotionally stable and are able to exude resilience when faced with tough situations. Persons with high neurotic tendencies always exhibit undesirable behaviour and are mostly associated with habitual stress and depression. Their levels of anxiety are always elevated and as such are never comfortable in the company of other people (Zinbarg et al., 2016). Because of such discomfort, they are also never at ease in forming or

sustaining relationships because they never adjust easily to the challenges associated with relationships.

A highly neurotic individual is usually unapproachable. In the context of middle-level managers, what this means that a highly neurotic manager would be perceived as unapproachable by his or her juniors and may thus be afraid to seek guidance from him or her on matters that may enhance individual job performance (Cheng, 2016). Because of their relational shortcomings, highly neurotic middle managers rarely inspire employee creativity and motivation, since the junior staff may be fearful of the possible outcomes of making mistakes in the process of trying out presumed imaginative solutions to problems that may be present in the organization. Furthermore, these managers tend to create a tensed workplace environment which also hinders the liberty with which employees can carry out their duties.

Highly neurotic managers always lack the ability to inspire junior staff towards a set course or goal considering that they are always anxious, moody, and sceptical. This means that the staff may also never experience personal growth because the opportunity to 'think outside the box' may be limited. These individuals do not also have confidence in themselves and as such are not able to instil confidence in their juniors (Vardaman, Gondo, & Allen, 2014). They are also not able to manifest an element of toughness and can easily snap in the face of a pressurising situation. In other words, they manifest a tendency to easily give up when faced with tough circumstances and may never try extra harder in trying to find a way out as compared to more emotionally stable persons.

Neuroticism usually exhibits a negative correlation with the effectiveness with which a neurotic manager is able to dispense efficient leadership and guidance as well as inspiration to employee productivity in the workplace (Dima et al., 2015). While they tend to concentrate on aspects that are negative of an issue, highly neurotic individuals are usually pessimistic in nature. They rarely find satisfaction in solutions and as such may never take risks at all even when it is necessary to change the cause of an issue. In other words, they always appear fearful and in most cases withdraw effort. Their level of confidence is also usually low and can never be effective in inspiring the same to their juniors. Because of lack or low levels of confidence and devotion to their duties, a neurotic manager may also not facilitate their juniors to work efficiently.

Because of a lack of confidence in themselves, a neurotic manager may be insecure and as such may never take criticism on a light note. This may further worsen their levels of anxiety which further elevates the level of tension in their administrative space. Neurotic individuals exude low levels of extroversion and as such are less sociable which in the process denies them the potential of gaining knowledge from other people (Schweckendiek, Stark, & Klucken, 2016). Therefore, such managers may be limited to what is routine and may lack the opportunity to be creative or inspire creativity among their subordinates. They are also never decisive on issues which can derail the speed at which productive deliberations can be made for the sake of staff and organization performance (Klingler, Hollibaugh, & Ramey). In fact, they can easily abort demanding opportunities which in retrospect may lead to increased employee job performance by the fact that they are never comfortable and can never withstand pressure.

Highly neurotic managers are more often than not vulnerable to almost any situation due to their elevated levels of anxiety and depression (Lubke et al., 2015). As such they are more likely to be impulsive and hostile since they are more charged with negative energy. Therefore, because of the hostile environment created by compulsive neurotic managers, the employees will in most cases exhibit low levels of satisfaction in their jobs which in turn will diminish their levels of productivity and performance. Conversely, managers on low levels of neuroticism will easily appear credible and trustworthy when they carry out their duties and even their staff will find them dependable and reliable. When junior staffs note that their leaders are reliable and dependable their levels of trust in them will grow as well and in the process increase their levels of job satisfaction under such managers which in essence will inspire positive performance. The employees will also develop an increased commitment to the organization due to the positive drive they draw from such managers.

2.4 Leadership

Even at their management rank, middle-level managers are leaders. The success or failure of an organization relies heavily on its leaders (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2016). This is because the inspiration, the motivation, and guidance as well as discouragement, dissatisfaction, and non-committal to employee performance emanates from their leaders. Being human, leaders still experience the very elements that influence the human nature including project leadership traits.

There are certain project leadership traits that are considered desirable for effective leadership as do the existence of those that are undesirable by their subordinates.

Different managers in their roles as leaders usually exhibit distinct personalities from each other and as such with the possibility of dealing with the same employees over different times can manifest notable differences in the job performance of those same employees (Qureshi, 2017, p.13). In other words, while one manager may experience overall success in productivity and performance with a particular group of staff, another leader may experience failure working with the same staff at a given point in time.

Relational leaders are also most likely to experience a cordial relationship with their juniors and as such be a source of great inspiration for them. One of the unfortunate things for relational leaders is the fact that, a greater extent of relations can breed familiarity and contempt and it may make such a leader become less decisive on matters that such authority may be needed.

A person's leadership abilities are normally under the innumerable influence of their psychological being (Bryman et al., 2011). A person's project leadership as inspired by their psychological nature has a significant contribution to the way he or she deals with issues as well as with people. Therefore project leadership traits can actually influence the leadership abilities of a manager including a middle-level manager. This, in turn, presents notable impacts on the employees' performance in place of work.

2.5 The Concept of Employee Job Performance in Relation to the Leader's Personalities Traits

Employee job performance can be attributed to the extent in which a worker is resourceful and of greater benefit to an organization by undertaking activities and initiatives that leads to organization success (Sonntag, Volmer, & Sychala, 2008). The performance of junior employees in an organization is usually influenced by their perception of their leaders. Therefore the behavioural traits of these leaders will determine whether such employee perception is favourable or regrettable.

According to the Fiedler's contingency model (1967), it is presumed that a task-oriented leader will still discharge his or her duties efficiently irrespective of whether the situation is conducive or not (Sargeant & Shang, 2017). Therefore in relation to the big five project leadership model, describes a conscientious manager who in most cases manifests a task-oriented aspect. Extroverted and

agreeable leaders who in most cases are always relational may experience the challenge of familiarity when dealing with their junior staff to some undesirable extents in which they may not be able to act decisively on perilous issues for the fear of being perceived as overly judgmental.

A leader's project leadership traits influence their motivation which subsequently leads to the motivation of junior staff towards increased productivity and performance. In the same manner, a more social leader, as well as a more decisive leader, will inspire greater levels of employee performance. Therefore a leader who is able to exhibit an elevated extent of interpersonal abilities will more likely inspire his or her juniors to greater performance. In summary, project leadership traits influence a manager's leadership and interpersonal abilities which in turn inspires or degrades employee motivation towards increased job performance.

2.6 The Relationship between the Five Factor project leadership traits of Middle Management and Employee Job Performance

Depending on the leadership manifestation of the middle level managers as well as their interpersonal skills, it is quite certain that their project leadership traits will influence the outcomes of their staffs' job performance. Whether a leader is extraverted, conscientious, open to experience, agreeable, or neurotic, these traits have the potential of influencing their leadership and interpersonal abilities as discussed below.

2.6.1 Conscientiousness

The influence of a middle-level manager's conscientiousness on project success is deeply rooted in the general tendency of involvement and commitment in the work being done with both emotional and psychological satisfaction and reward in achieving the intended goal envisaged both at the supervisor's and subordinate's levels (Furnham et al., 2002). The need to achieve the intended goal not only inspires passion among workers but it also drives diligence (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Workers who carry out their duties under a goal-oriented manager are more likely to experience job satisfaction since they are inspired towards a course. Because these workers never want to be labelled as underperformers who do not meet their targets, they may be willing to work extra hard to achieve those set targets. In the process of their motivation to meet their targets, the employee productivity and performance is normally evident. The extrinsic and extrinsic rewards that

conscientious mid-level managers inspire in their subordinates are more likely to inspire job satisfaction and performance as well (Furnham et al., 2002).

There is actually a positive correlation between conscientious leadership and employee job satisfaction which in turn presents a positive correlation with employee job performance. Workers under a conscientious leader will most likely exude spontaneous show of positivity, persistence, self-discipline, patience, ambition, and diligence (Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Judge et al., 1999). In other words, these workers will always strive for the highest possible performance to achieve personal and organizational satisfaction and rewards.

A conscientious manager can be defined as a perfectionist, immovable, and rule conscious meaning that they prefer a situation where people adhere to the set rules, a situation of the organization, attention to details and neatness, a reflection of caution and sensitivity, and pragmatic yet realistic. Therefore, when their subordinates operate in tandem with such principle, there are high chances that such workers will be able to meet their targets and achieve the goals set by the manager. Because of their strategic thinking, conscientious managers can help their juniors plan ahead and carry out their duties in a more organized manner (Barrick, Gupta, & Mount, 2003).

It is important to note that a conscientious manager is able to inspire his or her workers by example in that they can be depended upon, they are persistent, and they are achievement-oriented (Mount & Barrick, 1998, p.851). Because they are able to display the qualities, their juniors will in most cases tend to ape them and as such also exhibit conscientious traits. The compounded impact of manager-subordinate conscientious is that there will be noticeable exponential job performance within such a department in an organization. In other words, greater performance ratings will be evident in workers who are under a conscientious manager compared to those who are not working under such a manager.

As mentioned earlier, one of their other elements of conscientiousness that facilitates high achievement and hence performance is self-discipline. A manager who is self-disciplined will expect less from his or her workers since he or she would already be an example to the subordinates and as such, they would already have someone to learn the essence of self-discipline from. Since it is easy to demand what one is capable and is possibly already achieve it is highly likely that the juniors can readily embrace the virtue of self-discipline. Interestingly, once such staffs have adopted a culture of achievement-oriented striving, they would most often than not require minimal

supervision and will find themselves doing the right thing at the right time. With self-discipline learnt from the manager, the workers will manifest individual stability to make rational decisions in starting and completing their duties diligently even if the prevailing conditions are unfavourable without giving up.

2.6.2 Agreeableness

The fundamental delineation of an agreeable manager is the fact that they strive to create or facilitate a favourable working environment for their workers. This is in consideration to the fact that such managers can be ready to offer a helping hand to their juniors, trust them, act compassionately towards them and when they are wrong or make mistakes they can be ready to forgive (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In addition, because agreeable managers are able to nurture healthy relationships with their juniors as well as with other people, they will be instrumental in ensuring that their workers are satisfied and that these workers' needs are met as would be possible. In essence, the interpersonal excellence associated with agreeable managers promotes employee job performance by the fact that employees are able to be productive out of a transformational persuasion rather than a transactional drive.

An agreeable manager will get along well and easily with his or her workers in a manner that exudes tolerance as well as suppression of conflict. They are never self-centred or self-seeking, are always optimistic, are forgiving, practice altruism, and very cooperative (Barrick et al., 2002). In other words, an agreeable manager nurtures healthy relationships with his or her juniors through acts of compassion and empathy. It makes the junior staffs develop a sense of belonging and overall satisfaction which in turn encourages them to work hard and achieve greater performance (Organ & Lingl, 1995).

A general position is that agreeable managers are able to facilitate a positive relationship with their subordinate employees and consequently promote their job satisfaction. Workers who are under an agreeable manager are able to exhibit satisfaction not only in their jobs but as well as their workplace colleagues (Silva, 2006). This is because agreeable managers are able to create an environment of selflessness, compassion and cooperation not only between themselves and their junior workers but also among the junior employees themselves.

2.6.3 Openness to Experience

Managers who display openness to experience are often abstract, sensitive, accommodative, and warm. They are keen on other people's emotions, feelings, and perceptions but are nevertheless not judgemental. They are quite imaginative and open-minded and as such are never discriminative. Their ability to embrace all people makes them a very significant group of managers who can inspire workers to be comfortable with their diversity and not feel unimportant. When workers feel important, they will always have the drive to work hard to meet their deliverables. They are also explorative and always want and willing to understand new ideas or concepts while at the same time being temperate in their engagement with other people including their junior workers. This creates a calm and empowering thus satisfying environment for the junior employees to prosper (Axtell et al., 2002).

Because of their imaginative nature, managers who display openness to experience normally tend to be creative and curious and as such readily accommodate new ideas (Costa & McCrae, 1992). What such perception can do is the fact that such a leader grants room for creativity amongst the junior employees who in turn can come up with innovations that can really enhance their performance. The accommodative nature of such managers allows them to be quite flexible to other people's ways of thinking and as such the employees can have a greater potential to think outside the box for ideas that can facilitate prosperity of the firm. They also usually encourage independent judgement among their workers.

What a manager who displays openness to experience normally achieves in their workers is the ability for the workers develop a positive attitude and rive on their own imaginations, concepts and creations. Such an approach is able to enhance a sense of self-importance on the part of the workers and as such facilitate even a greater sense of energy for achievement and hence performance.

In summary, a manager who manifests openness to experience at the workplace is able to facilitate an environment where employees have the liberty to be themselves and thus avoid pretending to be what they are not. It is because the supervisors are never perturbed by distinctness or diversity both in people or ideas. In fact, they promote it to encourage people to be as imaginative and as creative as possible towards personal and organizational performance. Workers who work under an ideologically liberal environment facilitated by a manager who shows openness to experience will experience increased levels of job satisfaction which in turn will enhance performance (Judge et al.,

2002). These kinds of managers usually encourage self-determination considering that the employees are often inspired to explore their imagination and creativity.

2.6.4 Extraversion

While extraversion in the context of individuality may be viewed as the degree to which a person may exhibit interpersonal prowess and liveliness, the context of a middle manager may be more specific by observing how such a manager interacts with his or her juniors or other persons they work with closely. While extroverted individuals expend greater intensities of energy and drive towards the outside social world, an introverted individual directs minimal energy to such a realm (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Therefore, an extroverted manager is able to drive greater inspiration, positive emotions, affection, cheerfulness, interactivity, and approachability towards and among their junior workers.

Extroverted managers have the ability to enhance closeness and connection between themselves and their workers as well as amongst their workers. As such they inspire sympathy, care and genuine concern within the work environment. They help nurture a sense of belonging and warmth and therefore inspire motivation and employee job satisfaction which in turn results in enhanced job performance amongst employees. In addition, considering the fact that extroverted managers are able to create an interactive working environment, their approach is more likely to encourage teamwork whereby the workers feel much comfortable with each other and are thus able to cooperate for the greater good and performance of the organization. Therefore in occupations in which cooperation and sociable traits are vital, an extroverted manager will most likely experience a team whose members are more inspired to deliver on their performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997).

The extroverted manager will readily help their workers and would more likely be glad to see them succeed. Where necessary these individuals are normally enterprising and risk takers and will in most cases inculcate such risk-taking perspectives in their subordinates. In fact, extroverted leadership is a significant predictor of employee performance (Vinchur et al., 1998). In summary, the extroversion trait among middle-level managers will most assuredly display a positive correlation with employee job performance in the sense that it helps create a positive environment filled with positive energy and hence job satisfaction among the employees (Furnham & Zacherl, 1986; Tokar & Subich, 1997). While extroverts receive feedback more positively, introverts

would possibly under the same circumstances receive the same feedback negatively (Pickering et al., 1999). Because of the possible different ways in which these two groups of managers may receive feedback, it is also likely possible that their reactions would be different. While those who receive a feedback negatively may become perturbed with it and instil punishment those who receive it positively may not be bothered by it. Punishment, on the other hand, will instil fear and dispositional susceptibility which will in turn result to low productivity among the junior employees. Through their interactions with a broad range of people, extroverted managers may also have the advantage of acquiring new knowledge from their interactions with other people which in essence they can share with their teams to enhance their productivity (Watson & Clark, 1997, p.767; Magnus et al., 1993).

2.6.5 Neuroticism

Neurotic managers would more often than not be emotionally unstable. They are more likely to manifest coyness, vulnerability, depression, nervousness, impulsiveness, hostility, and insecurity vulnerability (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Their perception is usually negative and as such experience a compounded occurrence of negative events in their lives. Interestingly, their situations may not be totally negative *per se* but it is only that they chose to focus and dwell on the negative facets of those situations resulting to a generalised negative outlook. Unfortunately, these individuals also foster such negativity at the workplace which really puts a strain on their juniors. Considering that such managers normally display tendencies of being moody, unapproachable, and rigid, rarely would their subordinates question or correct their plans and neither would they be free to seek further directions from them so as to avoid conflict.

In most cases, neuroticism managers do not normally have confidence in themselves and may lack the ability to complete an assignment efficiently and successfully. They also suffer from inferiority complex and do not often celebrate the self-worth in them. Therefore because they do not believe that a task can be completed successfully, they are not able to be assertive on their juniors and thus not able to inspire productivity and increased performance. Furthermore, when faced with stressful situations such individuals may practice escapism and withdrawal and may thus give up from pushing hard on a workplace approach or concept that may actually increase the performance of staff. As long as an idea appears tough, they would easily shy off from it instead of acting in pursuit.

Because of the tense working environment that neuroticism managers may create it is more likely that in a bid to avoid appearing confrontational, junior employees may not have the courage to present feedback and would thus behave withdrawn which in essence would have a negative impact on their performance (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). Therefore in terms of leading, such a manager would fail to offer sound leadership to the staff and may actually increase the levels of frustration among the staff. The emotional instability exuded by neuroticism managers is able to manifest a ripple effect even on the junior staff which would actually ignite job dissatisfaction and lowering performance in the process (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Workers who work under emotionally unstable managers usually end up becoming less satisfied with their jobs and may not put in the extra energy that can help them become more productive.

On the contrary, emotionally stable managers normally have the ability to create or facilitate a calm work environment where workers may be at peace to carry out their duties without fear or vulnerability of victimization. Such employees may exhibit commitment and appreciation of their job and possibly even increase their efforts in reaching or even exceeding the set goals. In general, emotional stability among middle-level managers will have a positive correlation with job satisfaction and consequently job performance (Dunn et al., 1995). It is because emotionally stable managers are able to remain composed even in charged situations and thus avoid being confrontational with staff in a manner that can discourage them from carrying out their roles and duties successfully.

In summary, by the fact that neuroticism managers unknowingly promote negative affectivity in the work environment, it is more likely that the staff feeling the impact of that negative affectivity may experience job dissatisfaction and consequently exhibit derailed performance (Judge et al., 2002). In other words, in such an environment, the works will have lowered perceptions of job satisfaction. When employees are unhappy with a job that they are doing, rarely will they give it the effort it deserves to produce favourable results. It is also because neuroticism managers may fail to be rational or logical when making their decisions and may end up making decisions that may be harmful to their juniors who may consequently become discouraged and further non-committed to their duties. In such a scenario, such an organization or department may experience an elevated rate of employee turnover.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Concisely, this chapter presents the correlation between project leadership traits of middle management to project success from the approach of reviewing past studies closely related to the subject of this study. While the chapter endeared to introduce and discuss the concept of project leadership and project leadership traits in the context of available literature and theories, it introduced various theoretical models. However, its emphasis was on the big five model that outlines five project leadership dimensions which include extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. The chapter established that while a higher degree of extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness among middle management facilitated employee job satisfaction hence enhancing employee performance, higher degrees of neuroticism facilitated employee job dissatisfaction hence hindering employee performance.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Preamble

Employee performance is an important component of overall organizational performance. Its occurrence is so significant such that it forms part the processes that most organization undertake in their routine organizational development (OD) efforts. Therefore this study intended to investigate how the project leadership traits of middle management influence the project success. The aspects the study intended to investigate included the determination of which project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success and how do the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success.

As introduced in this study, the success of a company in being able to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace largely depends on the productivity and performance of its employees. Therefore it is imperative to be cognizant of the factors that can possibly spur or derail employee performance within an organization. The rise and fall of the effectiveness of employees within an enterprise rest squarely with its leaders and especially the middle-level management who are in direct supervisory contact with the employees. Therefore, how these middle-level managers deal with their junior staff will greatly influence how effective these employees perform guided by elements such as job satisfaction, as well as personal commitment and inspiration.

However, it is possible that project leadership traits of these mid-level management personnel may have an impact on their ability to offer sound leadership and exemplify reputable interpersonal skills. In other words, project leadership traits of middle-level management may actually have an impact on the productivity/ performance of their staff.

Therefore, based on these assumptions, this study relied on the research questions outlined below in its research process.

- 1) Which project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?
- 2) How do the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in the research process of this study. The details discussed in this chapter includes design the of research, a description of the study population and

sample, the methods employed in the research, the information gathering and analysis procedures and techniques, consideration of research ethics, research instruments, as well as reliability and validity aspects of the research.

3.2 The Design the of the Research

Mixed method design was the approach chosen to undertake this research because of its numerous strengths. The mixed method approach can be described on the basis of its undertaking which involves the application of more than one technique in the collection and analysis of research data (Tariq & Woodman, 2013, p.1). To qualify the reference to the design adopted in this research as a mixed method approach, three data collection and analysis methods were adopted. The three methods included quantitative, qualitative, and secondary research. Importantly, quantitative and qualitative methods are forms of primary research. While the quantitative technique focus on numerical data hence it is empirical in nature, the qualitative method dwells on an individual's feelings, perceptions, personal opinions, as well as thoughts. For the quantitative approach, a questionnaire was physically administered to the study sample. On the other hand, physical personal interviews were conducted as a part of qualitative research (Newman et al., 2006, p.3). Secondary research entailed the literature review and analysis of past studies closely related to the subject of this research. The approach of employing more than one method in carrying out research as is the case with the mixed method approach is referred to as triangulation (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012, p.75).

The basis of employing the mixed methods technique in a research process is to widen as well as solidify the findings of a research process by viewing the subject being studied from different angles (Johnson & Anthony, 2007, p.113). As a result, the researcher benefits from the strengths of each technique used. The appropriateness of the mixed method design to a research is that it helps to overcome the possibility of presenting biased or parochial inferences (Azorín & Cameron, 2010, p.95; Creswell, 2013, p.6).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are important and proven process for data collection and analysis in a research process. However, while it is not possible to capture qualitative data using numerical quantification, it is also not possible to gather empirical data through feelings or thoughts of the respondent. Therefore the adoption of both methods in a mixed methods design makes it

possible to generate both numerical and qualitative findings regarding the sample and generally the population that is being studied.

The adoption of questionnaires in the research process presented the study with immense benefits. The use of questionnaires granted the advantage of reaching out to a larger group of respondents over a short time. This is in consideration that once the questionnaires were administered the researcher did not need to engage the participants any further in answering the questions unless only when any clarification was necessary. By the fact that a questionnaire itself is self-guiding, all the respondents were able to fill in a very short duration. The questionnaire also granted the possibility of collecting voluminous data in a short and equally less expensive manner.

The use of the questionnaire was helpful in ensuring that the respondents provided feedback in line with the objectives presented in the forms and specifically related to the research questions in this study. Therefore it prevented the possibility of collecting any information that would have been irrelevant and unrelated to this study. In most cases, the respondents in a survey are normally granted the advantage of anonymity and as such are able to provide honest feedback without the fear of repercussions such as victimization. It, therefore, guarantees confidentiality to the identity of the participants.

On the other hand, an interview makes it possible to collect qualitative data that cannot be quantified and collected numerically. These are often feelings, personal thoughts and opinions as well as perceptions and experiences. Such information is normally entrenched within the conscious and subconscious depth of a person's psychological and emotional persona and therefore cannot be presented in mathematically. Furthermore, apart from the interview questions normally used to guide an interview process, interviewees usually have the liberty to express themselves as much as possible. In the process, they can provide detailed information on the subject matter more than the researcher may have anticipated or predicted thus providing more enlightenment to the interviewer. Communication is usually more than just the words spoken and may involve the unspoken details exhibited through bodily movements and reactions when an individual is trying to make a point. Therefore in the process of an interview, the researcher is also able to observe these unspoken expressions to understand how important the subject being discussed is to the respondent.

3.3 Sources of data and Population of the Study

The objective of this study was to precisely establish the relationship between the project leadership traits of middle-level managers and the productivity of the subordinate staff. This meant that the project leadership traits of middle-level managers were the independent variable while the productivity of the subordinate staff was the dependent variable. This study endeavored to investigate the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable from the point of view of the staff and not their supervisors.

Therefore the study population consisted of a mix of junior employees. For the survey, the sample consisted of a total count of 100 respondents from 10 different organizations nominated internally in a random manner with each organization given a slot for 10 representatives. On the other hand, the individual interviews individually with 10 junior employees who were each a representative of the 10 organizations.

3.4 Sampling Approach

The sampling method was rather random and the study was not concerned with details such as age, gender, how long the respondents had worked for the organization, or their academic qualification. The drive of such an approach was to engage respondents from a wide spectrum of the mentioned features so as to gain the possibility of gaining an understanding of the issue probed in this study from a greater divide.

3.5 Ethical Considerations of the Research

A valid research must conform to the acceptable standards of ethics. The fundamental drivers of ethics include elements such as safety of both the researcher as well as the respondents. The research process must also be compliant with the law and must be void of any illegalities and irregularities. Therefore, the researcher observed all the applicable best practices to ensure compliance with the law as well as the safety of all those involved in the research.

Consideration of ethics also emphasises that research participants must be aware of the objectives of the research and have clarity of their roles in the process so as to not only make informed decisions but also grant an informed consent of their participation. Therefore the researcher conducted a reconnaissance to the 10 organizations identified for the purpose of this research and

informed the probable respondents through their authorities (top and middle management) of the purpose, methods, and importance of the study as well as their roles. The probable participants were then given a week to decide whether to participate in the research or express their displeasure. Furthermore, the possible participants were given the liberty to only participate in the survey whether their anonymity and privacy would be guaranteed but they were also requested to participate in the interviews willingly.

3.6 Research Instrumentation

The importance of the research instrument is its function as a data collection tool. Therefore it must be aligned to the objectives and more importantly to the research questions of a study. The success of collecting relevant data in a research process relies heavily on the preciseness and objectivity of the research instrument. The research instrument employed in the quantitative approach of this study was a questionnaire. The questions presented in the questionnaire were aligned to the two research questions that guided this study. The questionnaire presented closed questions and a Likert-Scale to gather feedback from the survey respondents (Appendix A). On the other hand, the researcher adopted an interview guide furnished with probing questions expanded from the two research questions of the study (Appendix B).

3.7 The Procedures of Data Collection

The Procedures of data collection in a research process are as important as the data collected. In fact, they influence the accuracy and as such must be very reliable, precise and as simple yet objective as possible. The procedures must be void of confusion and must not lead to confusion otherwise they may misrepresent facts which may lead to the misinterpretation of those facts. The physical survey process was slated to take 30 minutes at each of the 10 different organizations on the different day the researcher visited each company. Similarly, the researcher also took advantage of the survey day to carry out the interview with the one interview representative of that organization. Each interview in each corporation took approximately 60 minutes.

3.8 The Reliability and Validity of the Research

3.8.1 Reliability

The degree of consistency that a research instrument is able to achieve in capturing the details the researcher intends to collect is referred to as its reliability (Polit & Hungler, 1993, p.445). Therefore the research instrument employed in the survey process of this research was in such a way that the questions were closed and that the respondents were only to check the provided boxes to the extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements provided. The researcher also ensured that all the questionnaires presented to the respondents were the same.

3.8.2 Validity

A research instrument must be able to collect the intended information accurately. The extent to which a research instrument is able to gather the information to which it is designed to collect is known as its validity (Polit & Hungler, 1993, p.445). An instrument with a strong validity will manifest a greater extent of accuracy in the data that it captures. As a way of increasing the accuracy with which the designed instrument would be able to capture feedback from the respondents, the researcher provided guidance on the details of the questionnaire before the participants were fully engaged to respond to the questions,

Internal Validity

There is normally a tendency of more than one independent research variables to overlap and thus masking the exact independent variable that may be exerting an influence on the dependent variable and may result in bias in assessing the real influence. This phenomenon is known as confounding (Skelly, Dettori, & Brodt, 2012). In this regards, internal validity refers to the extent in which the confounding occurs in research. A greater internal validity would mean that the degree of confounding is minimal. On the other hand, a greater degree of occurrence of confounding means that the internal validity of the research is low. As a way of increasing the internal validity of the research, the researcher found it important to present short and precise questions that the respondents would easily understand.

External Validity

When a research instrument is able to function beyond the scope of the research in which it was originally designed to apply, such a tool is said to have a stronger degree of external validity. To enhance external validity of the research instrument, the researcher designed it in such a way that the concepts captured on it were universal.

3.9 Evaluation of the Data Gathered from the Research

After the data was collected from the field, it was subjected to scientific methods of analysis in order to derive common trends as well as correlations in order to gain meaning and understanding of the prevailing characteristics associated with the subjected studies under this paper. Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected in the research process was to help in prove or disprove the study's hypothesis. The survey data was analysed both descriptively and statistically.

3.10 Chapter Summary

In summary, in a bid to prove or disprove the study's hypothesis, the research adopted a mixed method approach to establishing if actually there was a prevailing influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on the project success. Basing the research on the big five project leadership traits, the study held that a strong and positive manifestation of openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability would impact positively on employee performance. On the other hand, the study held a hypothesis that a negative manifestation of these traits in the form of being reserved or secretive instead of openness, unscrupulous instead of conscientious, discordant in the place of agreeableness, introversion instead of extraversion and finally neuroticism instead of emotional stability would influence the performance of junior employees negatively. The researcher carried out a survey as well as conducted individual interviews with 100 junior staff representatives from 10 companies. The findings of the study and the discussions behind the established findings are presented in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to probe the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success. Through a mixed method research in data collection and analysis, this chapter presents the findings of the analyzed data for the purpose of presenting a research supported inferences. Data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively through the use of a survey and individual interviews respectively. In addition, archival data obtained through secondary research also compounded the evidence presented in this study. The whole process of data collection and analysis was guided by the following two research questions.

- 1) Which project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?
- 2) How do the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?

4.2 Sample Characteristics

The study employed a questionnaire survey to establish the influence of the personality traits of middle management on productivity/ performance of staff. 100 respondents were targeted and fortunately all of the 100 recruited participants fully engaged in the activity giving a 100% response rate. The approach to recruiting the sample was rather random and as such had mixed characteristics in terms of gender and age. However, the sample was somehow stratified to include only respondents who were in the roles of junior employees. In other words, the sample consisted of a mix of junior employees. In addition, the research process also included the carrying out of individualized unstructured interview sessions with randomly nominated junior employee representatives each from the 10 organizations incorporated in this study.

4.3 Findings of the Research

In the survey process, a Likert scale was adopted to capture responses delineated to strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Depending on the provided statement of inference related to a given middle management personality trait, a respondent was to give a single score as either strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, undecided, agreeing, or strongly agreeing. Each

cumulative score on the variables outlined above then formed the basis of the evaluation and analysis of the participants' survey responses.

4.3.1 The Results of the Survey

The questions in the poll instrument were directly structured and delineated to the five middle management personality traits introduced in this study which included the conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, extraversion, and neuroticism traits. One of the key variables was based on the count of junior employees who believed that conscientiousness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. From the respondents' response, it was apparent that 86.5% of the survey participants strongly agreed that Conscientiousness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. The frequency distribution, as well as graphical presentation of the feedback provided by the respondents on the influence of middle-level manager's conscientiousness on project success, are shown in the table and figure below.

Middle-Level Manager's Conscientiousness and Project Success

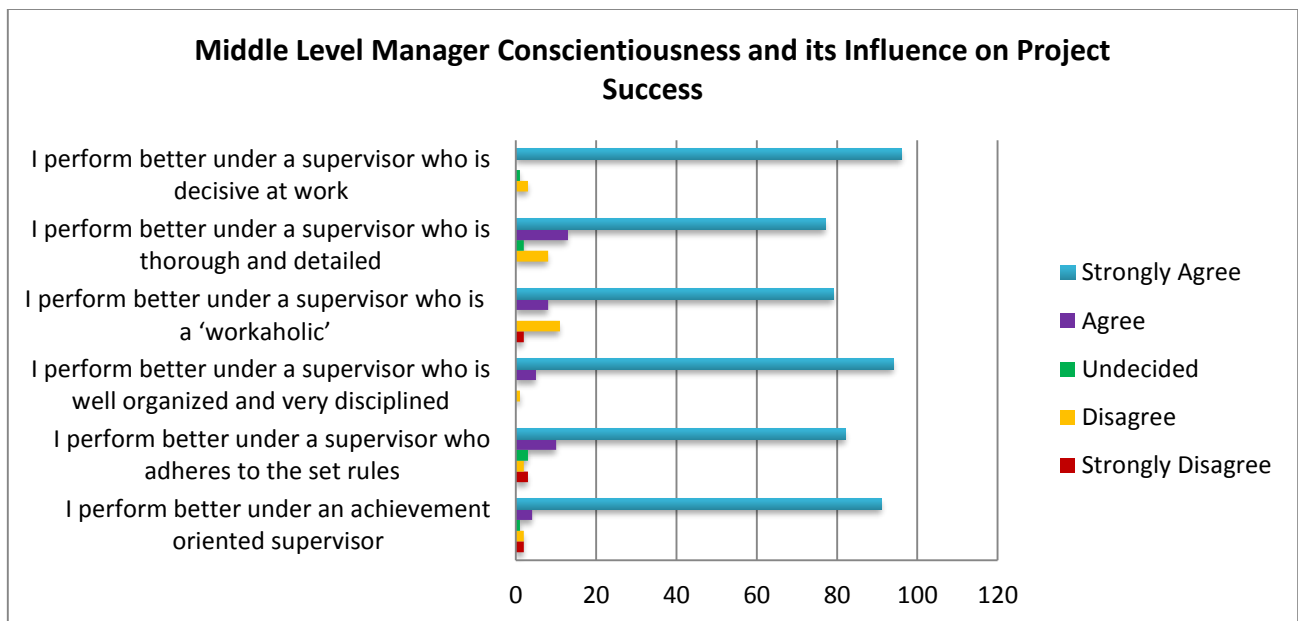


Figure 4.1: Frequency Distribution of Middle-Level Manager Conscientiousness and its Influence on Project Success

Evaluating the frequency distribution as well as graphical presentation details shown in table 4.2 and figure 4.2 above, the research justified that was obvious that most of the respondents strongly agreed that they would experience better performance under a conscientious manager. The higher average mean response rate of 86.5 was an indication of a strong positive correlation between a middle-level manager conscientiousness and project success. These findings are in agreement with the establishments of Hurtz and Donovan (2000) who found out that because of their reliability, dutifulness, dependability, industriousness, and being well organized Conscientious supervisors/line managers have a greater chance of inspiring such qualities on their staff towards performance thus increasing the rates of project success.

Middle-Level Manager's Agreeableness and Project Success

According to Costa and McCrae (1992), agreeable managers strive to create or facilitate a favourable working environment for their workers which in turn promoted job satisfaction employee job performance and productivity leading to project success. With regards to a middle-level manager's agreeableness, the frequency distribution, as well as graphical presentation of the feedback provided by the respondents on the influence of middle-level manager's agreeableness on project success, is shown in the table and figure below.

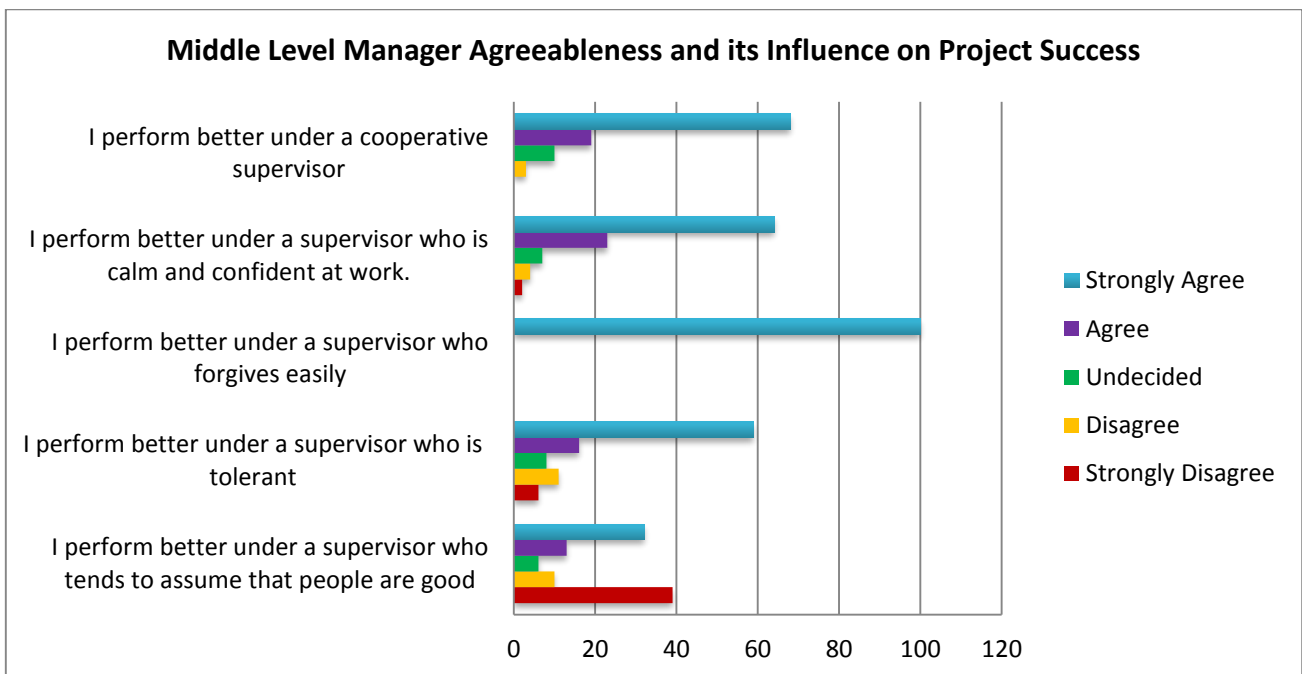


Figure 4.2: Frequency Distribution of Middle-Level Manager Agreeableness and its Influence on Project Success

From the frequency distribution as well as graphical information presented in table 4.3 and figure 4.3 above, it is debatable that there are some aspects of an agreeable trait in a manager that can inspire project success while others can have a significant negative influence. However, with the average of those who believed that an agreeable supervisor may inspire their performance being 64.6, it would be generally accepted that there is a significant positive correlation between the agreeableness project leadership trait in middle managers and project success. The findings are in agreement with Organ and Lingl (1995) who established that due to the ability of agreeable managers to create a favourable working environment for their juniors, it assists in developing a sense of belonging and overall satisfaction which as a result encourages them to work hard and achieve greater performance leading to project success.

Middle-Level Manager's Openness to Experience and Project Success

According to Axtell et al. (2002) line managers who display the openness to experience are often open-minded and accommodative of other people's ideas and as such enhance explorative tendencies among junior employees which in turn empower them to productivity. The respondents produced mixed feedback on the influence of their middle-level manager's openness to experience on their performance the details are shown in the table and the figure below.

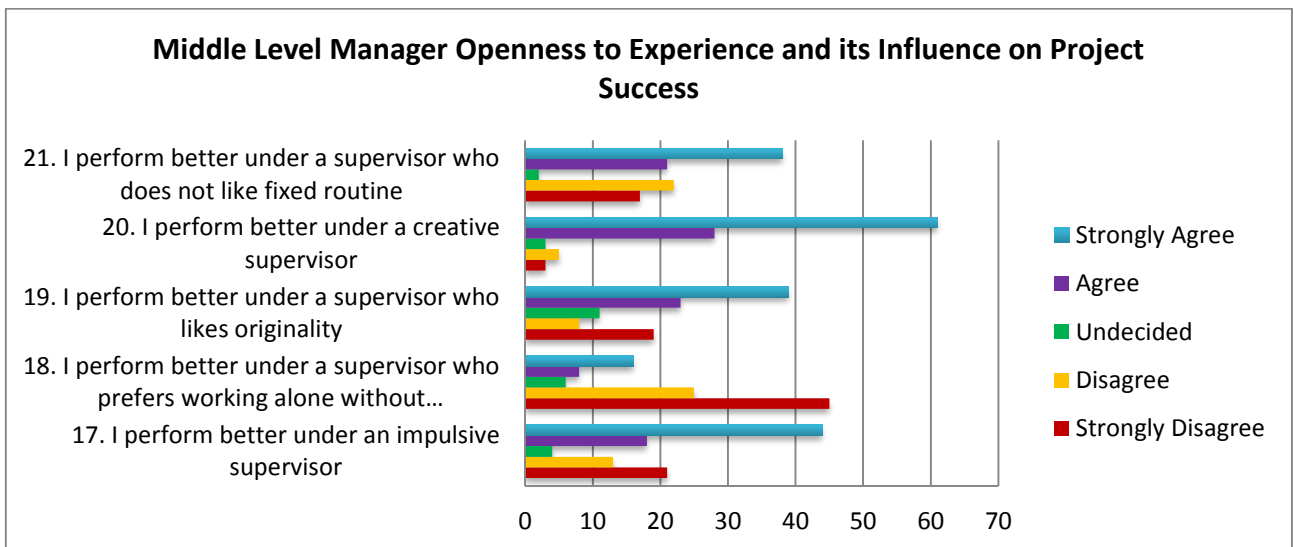


Figure 4.3: Frequency Distribution of Middle-Level Manager Openness to Experience and its Influence on Project Success

The details presented in table 4.4 and figure 4.4 with regards to middle-level manager openness to

experience and its influence on project success indicated a non-significant variation between its positivity and negativity. This means that while there were those who performed better under a manager who exhibited such a trait, there was almost an equal number of participants who indicated that they did not really perform better under such supervisors. While the average of those who believed that an agreeable supervisor may inspire their performance was 39.6, those who indicated that an agreeable manager would not inspire their performance presented a mean of 21.0. Moreover, from the two means, it would be generally admissible that the Openness to Experience project leadership in a manager would inspire a considerable level of project success than the contrary. The higher percentage of those who believed that an agreeable manager would not inspire their performance were reflective of the findings of Costa and McCrae (1992) who delineated that a manager who is open to experience grants room for creativity amongst the junior employees who in turn can come up with innovations that can really enhance their performance.

Middle-Level Manager's Extraversion and Staff Performance

Costa and McCrae (1992) explain that due to the fact that extroverted managers expend greater intensities of energy and drive towards the outside social world, they are able to drive greater inspiration and positive emotions among their junior workers which are more likely to encourage teamwork that enhances performance and project success. Delineating the results of the analysis of the data concerning a middle-level manager's degree of extraversion on project success, the frequency distribution, as well as graphical presentation of the feedback provided by the respondents, is shown in the table and figure below.

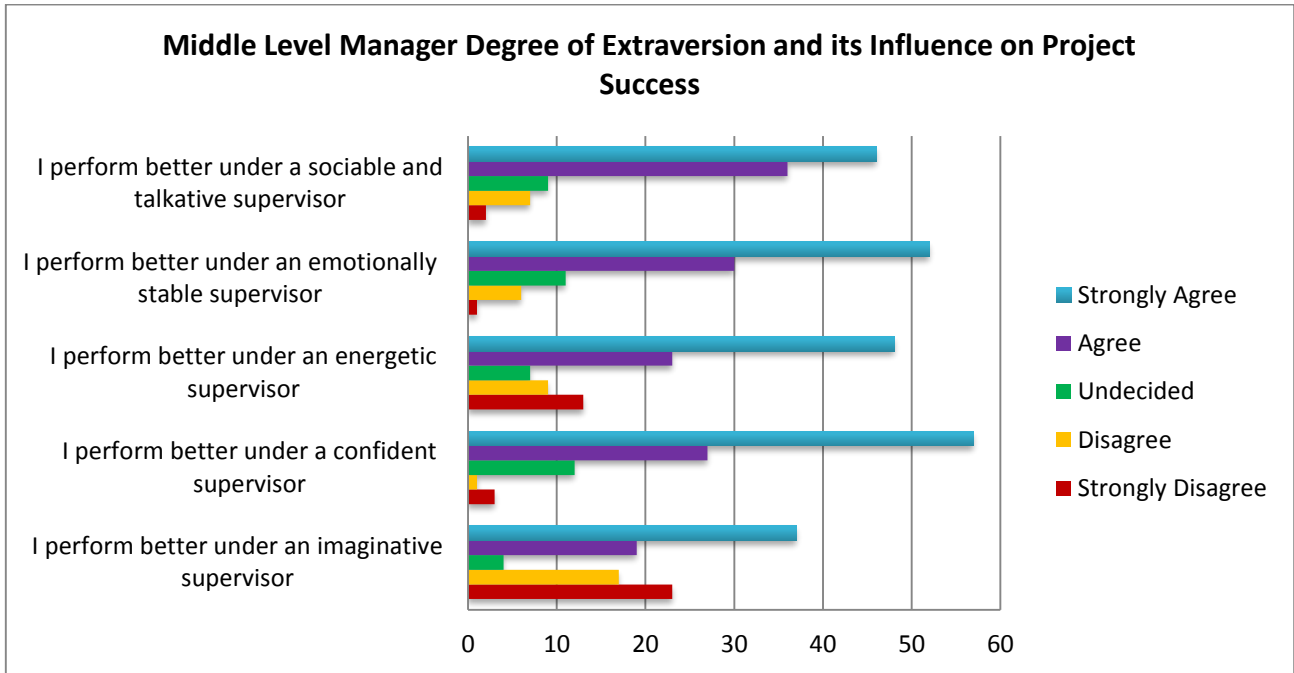


Figure 4.4: Frequency Distribution of Middle-Level Manager Degree of Extraversion and its Influence on Project Success

From the results shown above, a strong manifestation of extraversion would generally inspire employee performance with a mean of 48.0 as presented by the frequency distribution as well as graphical details captured in table 4.5 and figure 4.5 above. Vinchur et al. (1998) denote that extroverted leadership is a significant predictor of employee performance. Barrick and Mount (1991), as well as Salgado (1997), explains that an extroverted manager will most likely experience a team whose members are more inspired to deliver on their performance. However, from the results, it is apparent that the influence of extraversion is not as strong as the once exhibited by neuroticism and conscientiousness shown by the data analysis process of the research. In other words, while extroverted supervisors would facilitate an environment in which more staff would thrive, it such a trait does not exert a considerable level of influence on project success compared to neuroticism and conscientiousness. With a mean of 8.4, it was also clear that most staff do not perform well under introverted managers. Pickering et al. (1999) also found out that introverted managers receive the same feedback negatively which consequently derails the performance of their juniors.

Middle-Level Manager's Neuroticism and Project Success

Costa and McCrae (1992) explain that neuroticism managers foster negativity at the workplace which really puts a strain on their juniors making it strenuous for the juniors to seek further directions from them as a means of avoiding conflict. The withdrawal tendency by the junior employees according to Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) as well as Watson and Hubbard (1996) will certainly have a negative impact on their performance thus lowering the level of project success in the process. The table and figure below describe the frequency distribution of the established feedback associated with neuroticism managers to project success.

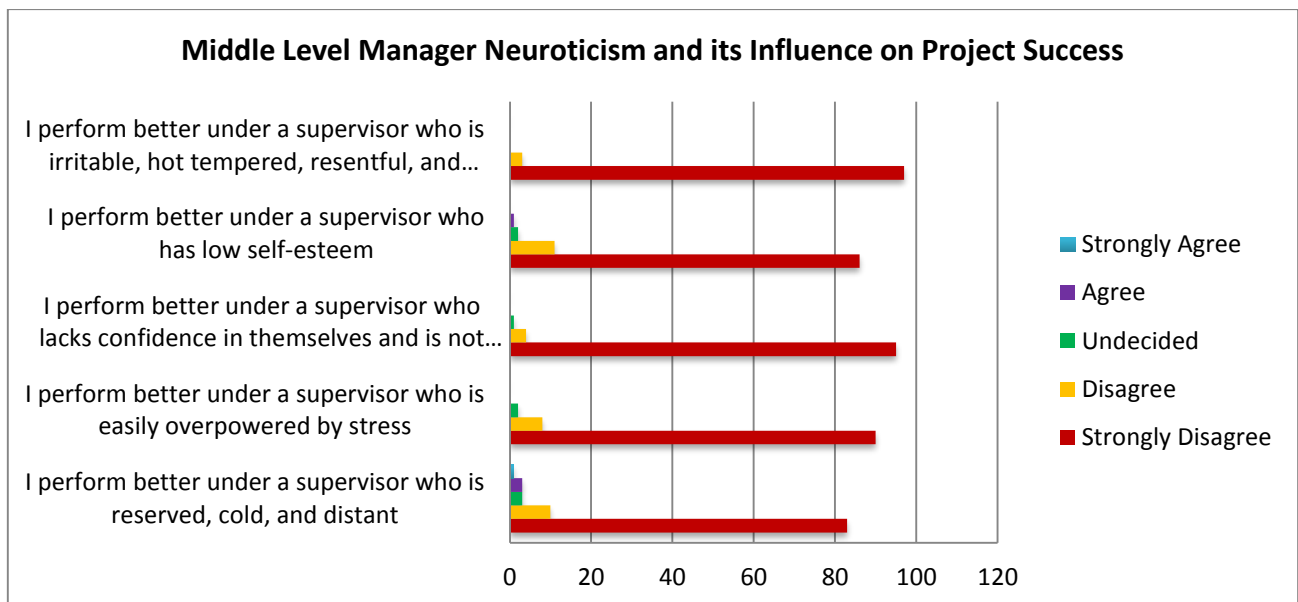


Figure 4.5: Frequency Distribution of Middle-Level Manager Neuroticism and its Influence on Project Success

From the data provided in table 4.1 and the graphical frequency distribution outlook in figure 4 above, it is evident that most of the respondents strongly disagreed that they would experience better performance under a neuroticism manager. In other words, with an average mean response rate of 90.2, it was obvious that the manifestation of neuroticism in a supervisor indicated a strong negative correlation to project success. The findings are in tandem with those of Dunn et al. (1995) and Judge et al. (2002) who explain that emotional stability among middle-level managers will have a positive correlation with job satisfaction and consequently job performance and that since neuroticism managers are never emotionally stable, their negativity affects the work environment negatively which may lead to their juniors experiencing job dissatisfaction and consequently

exhibit derailed performance.

4.3.2 The Results of the Interviews

10 individual interviews were carried out based on the two research questions that guided this study with one interview for each of the 10 representative organizations. In the section below, the qualitative responses collected from the interview participants are discussed. Interestingly, the feedback collected from the interviewees was not any different from the data collected from the survey.

How does conscientiousness trait in middle-level management influence job productivity/performance?

The interview participants agreed that the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management had a strong influence on their job productivity/ performance. Based on the conscientiousness project leadership, an interviewee said that “an achievement-oriented supervisor inspires my performance” while another mentioned that “a supervisor who adheres to the set rules inspires my performance.” According to McCrae and Costa (2003), the need to achieve the intended goal not only inspires passion among workers but it also drives diligence among workers. The findings of McCrae and Costa (2003) are in line with the results of this study.

How does agreeableness trait in middle-level management influence job productivity/performance?

From the interview results, it was apparent that agreeableness has a significant positive influence on employee performance hence project success. For instance, one respondent said, “A supervisor who is tolerant inspires my performance” while another participant mentioned that “a supervisor who forgives easily inspires my performance.” Neto (2007) explains that an agreeable manager is typically tolerant and forgiving and does not easily hold a grudge even when they have been outrightly wronged which in turn facilitates a warm working environment and relationships that can encourage employees to thrive.

How does openness to experience trait in middle-level management influence job productivity/performance?

Regarding the openness to experience trait in middle-level management influence on job productivity/ performance, it was clear the personality influences job performance and hence project success positively. One respondent mentioned, “A supervisor who likes originality inspires my performance”. On the other hand, an interviewee reiterated that “a supervisor who does not like fixed routine inspires my performance.” The above findings are agreeable to those of Homan (2008) as well as Matzler, Bidmon, and Grabner-Kräuter (2006) who explain that an open to experience manager not only exudes positive imagination but also inspires creativity by creating a workplace environment where such is possible.

How does extraversion trait in middle-level management influence job productivity/ performance?

The interviewees admitted to the positive correlation that exists between the extraversion trait in middle-level management influence job performance. One key response from a participant included a statement in which the respondent said, "A confident supervisor inspires my performance" Furthermore; another interviewee stated that "a sociable and talkative supervisor inspires my performance." According to Hunter et al. (2013), extroverted managers are able to indicate high levels of servant-leadership and are able to volunteer willingly in facilitating approaches that will make their staff prosper since out of that they are able to draw satisfaction and hence enhance their productivity and diligence towards project success.

How does neuroticism trait in middle-level management influence job productivity/ performance?

Concerning the trait of neuroticism in project leadership among supervisors, the interviewees agreed that the trait has a negative correlation to employee productivity and hence project success. One respondent said that "a supervisor who is reserved, cold, and distant does not inspire my performance.” In addition, another participant stated that a supervisor who is easily overpowered by stress does not inspire my performance.” Cheng (2016) explains that a highly neurotic manager is usually unapproachable and thus the juniors may be afraid to seek guidance from him or her on matters that may enhance individual job performance. As such, neurotic managers rarely inspire employee creativity and motivation and only create a tensed workplace environment. Furthermore, according to Vardaman, Gondo, and Allen (2014), such managers tend to exhibit low confidence in themselves and in most cases appear overpowered in pressurising situations and may fail to give direction to their juniors.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing and Discussion of Results

Based on the five-factor model of project leadership, this study aimed to the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success. The dimensions investigated were Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Extroversion. The questionnaire employed in the quantitative process of this study was aligned to the two research questions that guided this study with the questions in the instrument linked systematically to the five personalities mentioned above to a feedback capturing Likert-Scale. Based on the five-factor model the study proposed five hypotheses each for one of the five factors. In this study, an independent t-test was employed to test the significance of the personality managers in relation to project success. The statistical p-value was employed to test the hypotheses at 95% confidence level. The p-value is a useful tool for testing the probability of an occurrence. The hypothesis is supported when $p < 0.05$ (Gupta, 2012).

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success

This variable tested whether there was a significant relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success. *Hypothesis 1* inferred that conscientiousness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. The statistical evaluation results of the variables as shown in table 4.6 below indicated that conscientiousness had a significant influence on project success ($p = 0.011 < 0.05$). In other words, there is a positive relationship between conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success.

Table 4.1: The Relationship between conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	
Conscientiousness	5	20.02	37.24	16.65	
Test Value = 95.000000					
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Conscientiousness	-4.5	4	0.011*	18.04	21.96
*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$					

4.4.2 Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success

The relationship tested under this variable was the presence or absence of significant correlation between the agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success. *Hypothesis 2* inferred that agreeableness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. The evaluation of the relationship between agreeableness trait and project success in Table 4.7 showed that agreeableness trait had a significant positive influence on project success since $p = 0.003 < 0.05$. The value of p , therefore, supported the acceptance of *Hypothesis 2*.

Table 4.2: The Relationship between agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	
Agreeableness	5	20	25.16	11.25	
Test Value = 95.000000					
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Agreeableness	-6.66	4	0.003*	18.04	21.96
*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$					

4.4.3 Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success

The variable tested the relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the two. *Hypothesis 3* delineated that openness to experience trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. The result of the correlation between the independent variable (the openness to experience trait in middle-level management) and the dependent variable (project success) indicated that openness to experience trait has a significant influence on project success considering the determined value of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.3: The Relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	
Openness to experience	5	20	12.58	5.63	
Test Value = 95.000000					
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Openness to experience	-13.0	4	0.000*	18.04	21.96

*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$

4.4.4 Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success

The relationship tested under this variable was the presence or absence of significant correlation between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success. *Hypothesis 4* inferred that extraversion trait in middle-level management positively influences project success. The evaluation of the relationship between extraversion trait and project success in table 4.9 showed that extraversion trait had a significant positive influence on project success ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). The value of p , therefore, supported the acceptance of *Hypothesis 4*.

Table 4.4: The Relationship between extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	
Extraversion	5	20	17.62	7.88	
Test Value = 95.000000					
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Extraversion	-9.52	4	0.001*	18.04	21.96

*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$

4.4.5 Hypothesis 5: There is a negative correlation between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success.

The variable tested the relationship between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the two. *Hypothesis 5* delineated that neuroticism trait in middle-level management negatively influences project success. From the probability value $p = 0.013 < 0.05$, it was evident that the neuroticism trait had a significant influence on project success albeit in a negative way as shown in table 4.9. In other words, there is a negative correlation between the neuroticism trait in middle-level

management negatively influences project success. As such, *Hypothesis 5* was supported and accepted.

Table 4.5: The Relationship between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	
Neuroticism	5	20	39.34	17.59	
Test Value = 95.000000					
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Neuroticism	-4.26	4	0.013*	18.04	21.96
*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$					

4.5 Summary of Findings

Comparing and contrasting the respondents' feedback with regard to Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Extroversion in this study, it was evident that the two most significant traits exhibited by middle-level managers that had the greatest influence on employee performance were conscientiousness and neuroticism. While Conscientiousness indicated the strongest positive correlation between a middle-level manager's project leadership and an employee's performance, neuroticism, on the other hand, indicated the strongest negative correlation. Secondly, while a greater manifestation of extroversion and agreeableness in a supervisor indicated a considerable positive influence on staff performance such indications were not as high as those exhibited by conscientiousness and neuroticism. Finally, the influence of the trait of openness to experience did not a huge variation between its influence on performance and non-performance on staff.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Preamble

This study intended to measure the influence of project leadership traits of middle management based on the five-factor model of personality on project success. The dimensions of the five-factor model of personality include Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Extroversion, and Neuroticism. A predetermined questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while individual interviews were used to collect qualitative data from study participants. Quantitative data was subjected to scientific analysis using the Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS software) while the interviews data was evaluated through thematic and narrative analysis. This section presents an in-depth discussion of the findings established in Chapter 4 above while underpinning it on past literature.

5.2 Discussions of Findings

Overall, it was apparent from the findings that the study established that the respondents strongly agreed that conscientiousness and neuroticism personality traits among line managers were the strongest indicators of project success considering. The highest number of respondents feigned performance under a neuroticism supervisor while on the other hand, the highest count of respondents strongly agreed to enhanced performance under a conscientious middle level manager. For the other three traits; Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Extroversion, it was evident that supervisors who possessed these personalities influenced project success positively albeit not as strongly as the positive correlation of conscientiousness or the negative correlation of neuroticism. Summarily, the major findings established by the study can be presented as listed below.

1. The manifestation of neuroticism in a supervisor indicated a strong negative correlation to project success.
2. There is a strong positive correlation on the relationship existing between a middle-level manager conscientiousness and project success.
3. There is a significant positive correlation between the agreeableness project leadership trait in middle managers and project success.

4. The Openness to Experience project leadership in a middle level manager inspires a considerable level of project success positively than the contrary.
5. Most staffs do perform well under extroverted supervisors than under introverted line managers.

In testing *Hypothesis 1* which inferred that conscientiousness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success the study established that there's a good relationship in between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success. Therefore, *Hypothesis 1* is supported and accepted. The findings are supported by Furnham et al. (2002) who explain that conscientious mid-level managers inspire extrinsic and extrinsic rewards in their subordinates that consequently inspire job satisfaction and performance leading to project success. The findings are also supported by Mount, Barrick, and Stewart, (1998) as well as Judge et al. (1999) who established that employees under a conscientious leader will most likely exude spontaneous show of positivity, ambition, and diligence and will always strive for the highest possible performance to achieve personal and organizational satisfaction and rewards. In addition, an interviewee said, "an achievement-oriented supervisor inspires my performance" signifying the importance of the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management to project success.

Similarly in evaluating the position of *Hypothesis 2* which inferred that agreeableness trait in middle-level management positively influences project success, the findings indicated that indeed the agreeableness trait had a significant positive influence on project success since $p = 0.003 < 0.05$. The results are in tandem with the findings of Organ and Lingl (1995) who determined that an agreeable manager nurtures healthy relationships with his or her juniors which in turn promotes job satisfaction among employees encouraging them to work hard and achieve greater performance. Furthermore, the findings are also supported by the study conducted by Silva (2006) who established that agreeable managers are able to create an environment of cooperation thus facilitating a healthy and positive relationship with their subordinate employees and consequently promoting job satisfaction at the workplace. From the interviews, a participant responded by saying, "A supervisor who is tolerant inspires my performance" which means that indeed the agreeableness trait in middle-level management has a positive correlation with and hence promotes project success.

In attempting to prove, *Hypothesis 3* which delineated that the openness to experience trait in middle-level management positively influences project success, the findings were that there is a

positive relationship between openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success and as such, *Hypothesis 3* was supported and accepted. These findings are in line with the study carried out by Axtell et al. (2002) who explains that managers who are open to experience are always explorative and possess a willingness to understand new ideas or concepts from their fellow workers which creates an empowering and satisfying environment for the junior employees to be more creative and thus productive. Costa and McCrae (1992) also in support of the positive correlation between openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success expound that considering their imaginative nature, such supervisors normally tend to be creative and curious and as a result are usually ready to accommodate new ideas including those from their juniors. Therefore employees that are able to express independent judgement are able to think outside the box for ideas that can benefit the company. Finally, Judge et al. (2002) present a significant explanation that employees who function in a liberal environment facilitated by an openness to experience manager do exhibit increased levels of job satisfaction which in turn advances their performance. In addition, an interviewee said, “A supervisor who likes originality inspires my performance” signifying the positive contribution of the openness to experience trait in middle-level management to project success.

The study established that *Hypothesis 4* which stated that extraversion trait in middle-level management positively influences project success was acceptable. The findings are supported by those of Vinchur et al. (1998) who cements that in fact, extroverted leadership is a significant predictor of employee performance. Furthermore, Barrick and Mount (1991), as well as Salgado (1997), established that an extroverted manager will most likely experience a team whose members are more inspired to deliver on their performance. Furnham and Zacherl (1986), as well as Tokar and Subich (1997), also contribute to the discussion of the positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success by stating that the extroverted manager helps create a positive environment filled with positive energy and hence job satisfaction among the employees. Another possible way that extroverted managers can inspire project success according to Watson and Clark (1997) as well as Magnus et al., 1993) is the fact that an extroverted manager will most certainly come into interactive contact with a broad range of people from whom he or she can acquire new knowledge which they can share with their teams to enhance their productivity. Finally, from the interviews, a respondent stated that “a sociable and talkative supervisor inspires my performance” indicating how significant the trait is in contributing to project success.

Finally in testing for *Hypothesis 5* which delineated that neuroticism trait in middle-level management negatively influences project success, the findings showed that it was evident that the neuroticism trait had a significant influence on project success albeit in a negative way. Concisely, a negative correlation exists between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management negatively influences project success. The findings were in agreement with those of the study conducted by Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) who found out that junior employees tend to exhibit a withdrawn behaviour when they are dealing with a supervisor who exhibits the neuroticism since they never want to get confrontational in a tense working environment created by such managers and as such impact on their performance negatively. Furthermore, Watson and Hubbard (1996) argue that the emotional instability manifested by neuroticism managers has a greater potential of eliciting job dissatisfaction among junior employees thus lowering their performance in the process. Such workers end up exhibiting diminished drive to carry out their functions and thus become less productive manifested in their poor job performance. Dissatisfied employees according to Dunn et al. (1995) display diminished commitment and appreciation of their job and may possibly not put much effort efforts to meet and exceed their set goals. Summarily, Dunn et al. (1995) reiterate that emotional stability among middle-level managers will have a positive correlation with job satisfaction and consequently job performance which means that the converse is also true. The findings are also supported by Judge et al. (2002) who explain that the tense workplace created by the negative affectivity emanating from a neuroticism manager consequently derails performance among junior workers. From the interviews, a participant responded by saying, “a supervisor who is reserved, cold, and distant does not inspire my performance” which signifies that indeed the neuroticism trait in middle-level management has a negative correlation with and hence promotes project success.

With reference to the information gathered and analysed from the predetermined research questionnaire in this study, it was apparent that significant relationships occur between project success and the five traits delineated in the big five personality model. It was obvious that while Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Extroversion indicated a positive correlation with project success with Conscientiousness exhibiting the highest indication, Neuroticism on the other hand displayed the highest negative correlation to project success.

The findings of the relationships of the big five traits in middle management relative to project success backed the conceptualization of the middle management big five personality traits as

antecedents to employee motivation, productivity, and hence overall project success. Furthermore, the p value (**Conscientiousness** - $p = 0.011 < 0.05$; **Openness to experience** - $p = 0.000 < 0.05$; **Agreeableness** - $p = 0.003 < 0.05$; **Extraversion** - $p = 0.001 < 0.05$; and **Neuroticism** - $p = 0.013 < 0.05$) derived from the quantitative data confirmed to the existence of significant relationships between the five traits and project success. In other words, the findings supported the concept of the significant contribution of line managers' big five personality traits to project outcomes including its success as well as failure. Therefore, based on the presented findings, it is imperative for senior management to be discrete when appointing supervisors so that such appointments are in consideration on the kind of task that a team is required to undertake. For example, a deliverable that requires significant people interaction skills should be supervised essentially by an extroverted supervisor compared to a neuroticism middle level manager. Essentially, according to Macey and Schneider (2008) a proactive personality such as that which is characterised by an extroverted line manager has a notable influence to influence to lead to the success of a sales department.

On the other hand, a neuroticism line manager would comfortably supervise a responsibility that does not require high levels of interactions such as laboratory studies. In other words, it is important for senior management to consider the personality of line managers when making appointments as a way of enhancing proper employee engagement and promoting employee outcomes. From the data analysed in the study, it is obvious that line managers' behavioural and psychological states have a significant direct impact on the overall outcomes of employees which influences project success greatly. It is therefore important for supervisors to be sensitive of their actions and decisions especially considering that such emanate from their behavioural and psychological states when dealing with their juniors as a way of trying to enhance employee productivity, performance and project success.

Harter et al. (2006) reiterate that line managers' behavioural and psychological states influences junior employees' expectations and outcomes in a manner that it can maximise or minimise their productivity and efficiency. Harter et al. (2006) further compound that line manager's behaviour influence employees' perception of their posterity with a firm and are thus likely to work hard and become less motivated depending on the kind of influence they encounter from the supervisor. Therefore, from an employee perception, it is apparent that supervisors' personality traits do influence the favourability of the workplace directly which in turn affects employee motivation and productivity hence project success. Such direct influence arises from the fact that employees

experience a direct and immediate relationship with their supervisors (Buckingham & Coffman (2000). While the study established that there was a greater employee motivation under a conscientious, openness to experience, agreeable, or an extroverted line manager with Conscientiousness manifesting the highest motivation, Neuroticism on the other hand displayed the lowest levels of employee motivation. From the study it was apparent that employee motivation is a significant antecedent to project success. Therefore concisely, the process of hiring line managers (supervisors) must be characterised by a sensitivity and consideration of their personality traits since their behavioural and psychological states have a direct influence on the favourability of the workplace conditions, employee outcomes, and overall project success.

5.3 Chapter Summary

Summarily, this section of the study intended to present a detailed explanation of the findings observed in the research analysis process of this paper and to underpin the findings based on the existing literature. In agreement with the earlier findings of other past studies, this study established that while Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Extroversion indicated a positive correlation with project success with Conscientiousness exhibiting the highest indication, Neuroticism on the other hand displayed the highest negative correlation to project success.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Employee outcomes are a fundamental concept in project success that is directly influenced by supervisors' behavioural and psychological states emanating from their personality traits (Harter et al., 2006). Therefore, the personality traits of middle level managers are a significant antecedent to project success. This study intended to shed light on the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success. The objectivity of the study was to establish which middle management project leadership traits were the most predictive of employee performance. Through a mixed research methodology and within the context of the big five project leadership model, the study was able to establish that in as much as managers' Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Extroversion exerted a notable influence on project success; the most predictive traits were Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. The study established that while Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Extroversion indicated a positive correlation with project success with Conscientiousness exhibiting the highest indication, Neuroticism on the other hand displayed the highest negative correlation to project success. The study participants' responses towards the contribution of the big five project leadership personality traits to project success were skewed towards a strong agreement for Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Extroversion and a strong disagreement towards the Neuroticism trait. Therefore, firms can find the information presented in this paper of significance use especially when it comes to the recruitment and placement of individuals within supervisory roles in the organisation. Such knowledge may be useful in placing supervisors with the right psychological and behavioural traits within the right departments in the firm that can grant the company a much needed competitive advantage towards employee motivation, productivity and overall project success.

6.2 Conclusion

This research intended to primarily investigate the influence of project leadership traits of middle management on project success. While focusing on the big-five personality model in project leadership, the study established that indeed there is a statistically significant relationship between project leadership traits of middle management and project success. The objectives that guided the study were as listed below.

1. To identify the major project leadership traits evident in the workforce.
2. To investigate the human project leadership traits having the possibility of influencing employee productivity within the context of middle-level management.
3. To evaluate how project leadership traits influence a middle manager's ability to discharge his or her mandate and how his or her actions and relations impacts on the performance of their subordinates.

One of the fundamental research questions that were significant in establishing the above objectives was "How do the identified project leadership traits delineated by the big-five personality model in project leadership exhibited by middle management influence project success?" In addition, the study adopted five hypotheses which it intended to prove. Each of the five hypotheses was associated with each of the five traits identified in the big-five personality model.

Conscientiousness

Relative to the trait of conscientiousness in middle-level management, the first hypothesis with its converse null hypothesis were as listed below.

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no positive relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success

The findings of the survey supported by the findings of the interview revealed a proof of the hypothesis and indeed established that there is a positive relationship between the conscientiousness trait in middle-level management and project success.

Agreeableness

Relevant to the trait of agreeableness in middle-level management, the second hypothesis with its converse null hypothesis were as follows.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no positive relationship between the agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success

Proven by the findings of the survey and supported by the findings of the interviews the research process established that there is a positive relationship between the agreeableness trait in middle-level management and project success.

Openness to experience

Delineating the trait of openness to experience in middle-level management, the third hypothesis, as well as its converse null hypothesis, was as follows.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no positive relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success

From the findings of the survey and supported by the findings of the interviews, the study found out that there is a positive relationship between the openness to experience trait in middle-level management and project success.

Extraversion

With reference to the trait of extraversion in middle-level management, the fourth hypothesis, as well as its converse null hypothesis, was as follows.

Hypothesis 4

H₀: There is no positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success

As established by the findings of the survey as well as the findings of the interviews it was apparent that there is a positive relationship between the extraversion trait in middle-level management and project success.

Neuroticism

With reference to the trait of neuroticism in middle-level management, the fifth hypothesis and its converse null hypothesis statements were as indicated below.

Hypothesis 5

H₀: There is no negative correlation between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success

H₁: There is a negative correlation between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success

As established by the findings of the survey as well as the findings of the interviews it was apparent that there is a negative correlation between the neuroticism trait in middle-level management and project success.

To achieve the objectives mentioned above as well as prove the established hypotheses, the design of the research was that of a mixed method research employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data collection was achieved through a questionnaire survey instrument while qualitative data collection was carried out through semi-structured individualized interviews. 100 respondents participated in the survey and out of these 100, 10 participated in the interviews. The quantitative data was analysed statistically using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The basis of employing the mixed method research was to solidify the findings of the study considering the different perspectives that each method affords which is a phenomenon known as triangulation (Johnson & Anthony, 2007, p.113).

In this study, it was established that conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and extroversion among middle-level management contribute positively to project success while neuroticism among middle-level management correlates negatively to project success. Concisely, the study was successful in proving its hypothesis that a higher degree of manifestation of project leadership traits associated with such Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extroversion would inspire the performance of junior employees towards project success. Conversely, a greater manifestation of neuroticism would influence employee performance negatively.

Based on the findings of this study, definition of employees' needs and expectations as it concerns the behavioural and psychological states of middle level managers arising from their personality traits should be a priority consideration when it comes to the hiring and placement of line managers within various departments in a company. The personality traits of supervisors have a great direct impact on the outcome their juniors influencing their motivation and productivity which according to Harter et al. (2006) are important requisites that help maximise employee performance and efficiency and hence promote project success.

The respondents in this study delineated the fundamental contributions that the personality traits of middle level management have on employee outcomes and project success. It was evident that line managers are able to influence the conduciveness of the psychological conditions of a workplace and thereby enhance employee job satisfaction and motivation which essentially promotes productivity and performance that are directly related to project success. In summary, based on their personality traits, middle level managers can provide an environment that employees feel safe and comfortable to work in and hence undertake initiatives that can benefit the organisation or an environment where the employees feel threatened and uncomfortable and are thus discouraged to carry out initiatives that can enhance organisational outcomes. For instance, conscientious line managers as well as those exhibiting other proactive personalities will exude ambition, confidence, and resourcefulness which can impact employee outcomes positively hence enhance project success (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

6.3 Recommendations

Employee performance contributes significantly to the overall performance of an organization. Therefore it enhances is an important requisite for an organization that seeks to succeed.

Supervisors' project leadership traits can influence the performance of staff and especially with regards to the degree of expression or manifestation of the associated traits. It is therefore imperative to make consideration for personality when placing candidates in various supervisory roles. For example, a role that requires the coordination of teamwork such as in managing a sales team, a neuroticism line manager may not be ideal since such an individual may derail the performance of such a team. However, openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extroversion manager may be quite ideal for such a role.

Considering that the personality of the type of manager given the role of managing junior staff will contribute to the workers' job satisfaction, it is imperative that such an individual possess the necessary trait that can foster a working environment that promotes junior staff job satisfaction. That way, instances of employee dissatisfaction and turnover may be minimised. While it would be commendable to cultivate more on the greater scores of personalities such as Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extroversion therapy may be vital in overcoming the negative traits associated with Neuroticism.

By all means and including for middle level management, leadership should entail the ability to enhance a positive work environment that promotes high employee motivation and performance as a requisite to enhance the levels of project success. It is important for organisation to be cognizant of the significance of the relationship that their line managers have with their employees. From this study, it is evident that the relationship between middle level managers and their junior employees is influenced by the supervisor's personality traits in a major way (Buckingham & Coffman, 2000). Middle level management personalities should also be aligned to the expected deliverables within a role or a department such that strengths emanating from such personalities are harnessed maximally. It is also because such personalities also influence the favourability of the working environment for junior employees and therefore influencing overall employee outcomes.

6.4 Study Implications

The personality traits of middle level managers influence overall employee engagement and outcomes which play a crucial role in employee productivity and hence project success. Therefore, it is important for the senior management within a firm to recognise the essence of considering the perspective of personality traits in the hiring and placement process for line managers within various departments in a company. Where possible, the senior managers should consider placing

supervisors in roles that may not conflict their personalities so as to maximise performance, efficiency and overall project success. In other words, aligning the recruitment of line managers relative to their personality traits and the responsibilities at hand may be helpful in predicting employee engagement including favourable working environment, professional development, performance feedback, and hence project success. Therefore, firms that are able to incorporate personality assessment for their line managers have a greater potential of experiencing increased competitive advantage in achieving their intended project success milestones.

6.4 Study Limitations

The focused approach employed in this study was that of the employees' perspective. In other words, while investigating the possible influence of the project leadership traits of middle-level managers on staff performance, the respondents were junior staff and not the managers themselves. Therefore, the study may have been one-sided and there could be a possibility that a combined respondents' research or a manager as a respondent approach would have produced different findings than the ones achieved in this study.

6.5 Future Studies

Future studies can consider studying the influence of the project leadership traits of middle management on project success with the middle managers as the respondents or a combined study that is inclusive of both supervisors and junior staffs as the respondents. Besides, this study focuses on the big-five personality model which in the real sense is usually broad. Therefore, future research can consider investigating the impacts of narrow traits models in middle management on project success. In other words, future studies can replicate this study with an approach to studying narrow personality traits instead of the broad traits delineated in the big-five personality model. In addition, future researchers may consider employing a larger sample than the one adopted in this study and establish if by using a large sample, the findings may be different or similar to those of this current study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Participants Survey Questionnaire

The researcher intends to use the information collected through this questionnaire strictly for academic purpose. The title of the study is “**The Influence of the project leadership Traits of Middle Management on project success.**” The information provided and persons involved in this questionnaire will be accorded the utmost confidentiality. Kindly respond to as many questions as you find applicable. You can also get in touch with the researcher on email (**insert email address**).

Thank you.

Note: Kindly avoid writing your name on any part of this questionnaire

Kindly tick as many applicable boxes as possible to identify your supervisor’s traits that influence your productivity/ performance

How does project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?					
PROJECT LEADERSHIP TRAIT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
TRAIT A					
1. I perform better under a supervisor who is reserved, cold, and distant					
2. I perform better under a supervisor who is easily overpowered by stress					
3. I perform better under a supervisor who lacks confidence in themselves and is not self-driven					
4. I perform better under a					

supervisor who has low self-esteem					
5. I perform better under a supervisor who is irritable, hot tempered, resentful, and sometimes moody					
TRAIT B					
6. I perform better under an achievement oriented supervisor					
7. I perform better under a supervisor who adheres to the set rules					
8. I perform better under a supervisor who is well organized and very disciplined					
9. I perform better under a supervisor who is a 'workaholic'					
10. I perform better under a supervisor who is thorough and detailed					
11. I perform better under a supervisor who is decisive at work					
TRAIT C					
12. I perform better under a supervisor who tends to assume that people are good					
13. I perform better under a supervisor who is tolerant					
14. I perform better under a supervisor who forgives easily					
15. I perform better under a supervisor who is calm and confident at work.					
16. I perform better under a cooperative supervisor					
TRAIT D					
17. I perform better under an impulsive supervisor					
18. I perform better under a supervisor who prefers working					

alone without interruption from others					
19. I perform better under a supervisor who likes originality					
20. I perform better under a creative supervisor					
21. I perform better under a supervisor who does not like fixed routine					
TRAIT E					
22. I perform better under an imaginative supervisor					
23. I perform better under a confident supervisor					
24. I perform better under an energetic confident supervisor					
25. I perform better under an emotionally stable supervisor					
26. I perform better under a sociable and talkative supervisor					

APPENDIX B

Participants Interview Questions

Research question #1

Which project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?

1. Identify the middle management project leadership traits in the context of the big five model that influence your job productivity/ performance.

Research question #2

How do the identified project leadership traits exhibited by middle management influence project success?

1. How does conscientiousness trait in middle level management influence your job productivity/ performance?
2. How does agreeableness trait in middle level management influence your job productivity/ performance?
3. How does openness to experience trait in middle level management influence your job productivity/ performance?
4. How does extraversion trait in middle level management influence your job productivity/ performance?
5. How does neuroticism trait in middle level management influence your job productivity/ performance?