

British Management Thought: A Critical Analysis

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Similarities and Differences between Leadership and Management: High-Performance Competencies in the British Royal Navy

Mike Young and Victor Dulewicz
Henley Management College, Greenlands, Henley-on-Thames RG9 3AU, UK
Corresponding author email: vic.dulewicz@henleymc.ac.uk

This paper describes the research, analysis and development of a model clarifying the similarities and differences in competencies and personality factors associated with effective Leadership and Management in the Royal Navy. A questionnaire study was conducted on a sample of 261 Officers and Ratings (Sailors). Their performance was rated through the organization's rigorous appraisal process, whilst competency and personality data were gathered through the Occupational Personality Questionnaire and the Leadership Dimensions Questionnaire. The results identify the common and unique relevance of specific competencies and personality factors and so provide an illuminating insight into the differences between the constructs of leadership and management. The critical factors related to effective leadership and management performance are also identified.

Introduction

The proliferation of literature on leadership (Kets de Vries, 2001) has led to the suggestion that the construct has been studied more extensively than almost any other aspect of human behaviour (Higgs, 2003) and some authors contend that business and academia are obsessed with the topic (Goffee and Jones, 2000). However, 'as long as a potential gain can be derived from identifying the relationships between success and individual attributes, there is a clear need for studies exploring links between performance, specific competencies and underlying personality' (Robertson *et al.*, 1999, p. 6). This paper presents findings from such a study (Young, 2005a), which

set out to increase our understanding of the complex interplay between personal factors and behavioural characteristics (competencies) relevant to effective leadership and management performance in the Royal Navy (RN).

At the outset of this paper, it is important to clarify the focus and scope of the term 'competency' as it applies in this study. The opening paragraph highlights the confusion that surrounds the concept of competency (see Young, 2005b, for a full discussion of the issues in this debate). Robertson *et al.* (1999) appear to view competencies as distinct from 'underlying personality' whereas the authors of this paper adopt the position that a personality factor becomes a competency if it predicts effective and/or superior performance as set out below.

¹Throughout this paper the use of capitals (e.g. Leadership, Management, Performance, Motivation) indicates the appraised function in the Royal Navy or the specific psychometric scale/questionnaire. Use of lower case indicates the generic concept (with the exception of titles).

Competency: A competency is 'an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance' (Klump,

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