

Personality profile of high-performing leaders: a BFI-2 analysis

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Abstract

The present study employs a Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2) analysis to investigate the personality traits of a group of high-performing leaders operating within a military context. The Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2), T-score analysis, and Variance analysis (ANOVA) were utilized to identify the personality configurations contributing to effective leadership in military environments. The findings indicate that "Emotional Stability" and "Conscientiousness" are the most salient traits, with high scores for "Productivity," "Responsibility," and low "Emotional Volatility." These traits, essential for goal-oriented behaviour and resilience under stressful conditions, are in accordance with previous research, linking these traits to job performance and stress management in leadership roles. A moderate level of Extraversion and Agreeableness is beneficial for maintaining normal team dynamics and fostering trust. Similarly, a balanced level of Openness to Experiences is associated with strategic adaptability without compromising discipline and performance. The study validates the utility of the BFI-2 in identifying personality traits that are predictive of success in exercising leadership in high-stress environments; it also highlights the distinction between leaders and the mean of the general population on these traits. The results indicate that the enhancement of these traits may result in increased leadership effectiveness, thus providing insights for the improvement of human resources selection and training programs.

Keywords:

High-Performing Military Leaders; Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2); Personality Traits; Conscientiousness; Emotional Stability; Leadership; Personality Assessment; Human Resources Selection and Training.

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This paper presents the personality profiles of a group of high-performing leaders in a military context, using the Big Five Inventory - 2 (BFI-2) to identify predominant personality traits and *T-scores* to relate the results to the general population. The study was conducted for the dissertation paper prepared at the end of the Master of Joint Command - Air Forces at the Command and Staff Faculty of "Carol I" National Defence University - Bucharest. The study for the dissertation contains more complex research due to the fact that personality traits were identified to validate a hypothesis of predictability of association with certain leadership styles based on predominant personality traits.

In this study, the term "high-performing leaders" refers to individuals in leadership positions who consistently demonstrate superior performance in achieving organizational goals, managing responsibilities, and maintaining resilience under pressure. These characteristics are essential and define the work of a military officer who is successful in career advancement in responsibility-sensitive leadership positions. The sample is comprised of military officers who have been admitted to a military graduate school after a rigorous selection process, officers who have demonstrated not only intent, dedication, and sacrifice by committing personal time to complete rigorous training, but also the competence to perform leadership roles in specialized military fields. The officers' branches range from fighter pilots, pilots, and air traffic controllers to air defence officers. These criteria to differentiate high-performing leaders are in line with studies such as [S. Singh \(2003\)](#) that higher-performing leaders foster team adaptability and cohesion in high-performance contexts, [DM Hutton \(2018\)](#) on situational adaptability and interpersonal effectiveness in high-risk environments, and [P. Hawkins \(2014\)](#), who emphasizes that higher-performing leaders excel at building effective teams and accomplishing goals.

Understanding personality traits that contribute to effective leadership is a focus of interest in psychological research, with the Big Five personality model emerging as a relevant (Cronbach Alpha = 0,86), scientifically accepted framework. The Big Five Inventory - 2 (BFI-2) is an evolution of the original Big Five Inventory, providing a tool for measuring personality traits associated with leadership potential and performance. Developed by [Soto and John \(2017\)](#), the BFI-2 expands the scope of personality assessment by introducing a hierarchical model that includes 15 facet-level factors or traits within the five major meta-factors *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness*, *Emotional Instability* (Negative Emotionality or Neuroticism), and *Open-Mindedness to Experiences* (Open-Mindedness). By performing both general and detailed analysis, the BFI-2 offers increased predictive power and reliability and is relevant for assessing traits that support leadership.

Personality assessment using the Big Five model has consistently proven its relevance in organizational settings where certain personality traits are correlated with leadership effectiveness. Research indicates that high levels of *conscientiousness* and

emotional stability are particularly associated with leadership effectiveness, as these traits foster goal-oriented behaviour, resilience and stable decision-making. High *Conscientiousness*, characterized by traits such as *Productivity*, *Organization*, and *Responsibility*, enables leaders to adopt a disciplined approach, essential for dealing with complex demands. *Emotional Stability*, represented by low scores on the *Anxiety* and *Emotional Volatility* factors, enables leaders to effectively manage stress, an important factor in situations that require quick thinking and calm decision-making.

BFI-2's ability to assess traits using *T-scores* facilitates a standardized measure of trait intensity across diverse populations. *T-scores* adjust individual scores relative to a normative sample, allowing comparative analysis of how certain traits may vary among leaders relative to the general population. In the field of leadership studies, *T-scores* provide valuable insight into how the intensities of factors such as *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability* can predict a leader's success in diverse contexts, particularly in high-risk environments such as the military, where resilience and discipline are essential.

Previous research emphasizes the importance of certain Big Five model traits in improving leadership performance; Judge et al. (2002) found that, although *Extraversion* may be less prevalent than *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability*, it still contributes to leadership by promoting positive social interactions, assertiveness and effective team communication. *Agreeableness*, although not very often associated with leadership because of the potential to reduce authoritative firmness of command, can nonetheless improve trust and group harmony, especially in leaders who score high on facets such as *Trust* and *Respect*. Therefore, moderate levels of *Agreeableness* can create a balanced approach that encourages teamwork without compromising authority.

Through the *T-score* analysis, the research provides a comparative perspective on the intensity of the traits, revealing significant increases in *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability* across the sample. These findings contribute to the understanding of how certain factors in the Big Five domains align with effective leadership, providing detailed insight into the role of personality in predicting leadership success. This research is also relevant because organizations are increasingly relying on personality assessments, such as the BFI-2, for selection and training in a variety of areas.

Research methodology and objectives

This study employs a quantitative and comparative methodology to examine the personality traits of high-performing military leaders using the Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2). The raw scores were transformed into T-scores, allowing standardized comparison with a normative population and facilitating an understanding of

personality traits predictive of leadership success.

The study's focus on military leadership in high-stress environments guided the formulation of the following research questions:

1. What are the most pronounced personality traits among high-performing military leaders as identified by the BFI-2?
2. How do these traits compare to those of the general population using normative T-scores?

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to identify the key personality configurations associated with effective leadership.

The BFI-2 was chosen as the research instrument because of its demonstrated validity in measuring both personality traits across multiple cultures and general populations as well as specific personality traits, such as the military. This research instrument contains 60 items grouped into five Meta-Factors: *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness*, *Emotional Instability*, and *Openness to Experiences*, along with 15 factors that allow for more detailed analysis within each Meta-factor. The selection of BFI-2 is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of face-level perspectives for the predictability of certain leadership outcomes ([Soto and John 2017](#)). For example:

- *Conscientiousness*: Factors such as productivity, accountability, and organization are particularly relevant because of their association with goal (mission) oriented behaviours, reliability, and attention to detail. Leaders who score high on these factors are more likely to excel in roles that require discipline and consistency.
- *Emotional instability*: Low scores on factors such as *anxiety*, *emotional volatility* and *depression* indicate emotional stability, an important trait for leaders operating in stressful environments. This stability allows leaders to remain calm and focused for rational decision-making in dynamic or crisis situations.
- *Extraversion* and *Agreeableness*: Moderate scores on factors such as *sociability*, *assertiveness* and *trust* were assessed to understand their role in enhancing team dynamics and developing interpersonal relationships. In leadership, these traits create a balance between authority and approachability, contributing to team cohesion and team morale.
- *Openness to experiences*: *Creative imagination* and *intellectual curiosity* were rated as indicators of adaptability and openness to new ideas, traits that are beneficial for leaders who have to work in complex and constantly changing environments.

Presentation of the focus group

The study sample consisted of 29 individuals, out of a total of 30 officers from the Romanian Air Force who were attending the Master's Degree program in Joint

Command, Air Force specialization. In order to maintain objectivity, I excluded myself from the sample.

These officers were admitted after a rigorous selection process, demonstrating the dedication and competence required for leadership positions; all officers had senior officer ranks with a minimum of 15 years of experience in the act of military leadership. Their specializations include fighter pilots, air traffic controllers, and air defence officers, reflecting a diverse range of military fields where adaptability, discipline, and decision-making ability are essential. This context ensures that the sample accurately represents a high-performance and leadership-oriented group suitable for examining personality traits associated with effective leadership. From a psychological point of view, this group is a homogeneous one because the career selection was done including the admission to psychological examinations that are periodically administered. To investigate the potential interactions between the key personality traits associated with effective leadership, the variables *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability*, a dispersion analysis (ANOVA) was conducted, given that there were two groups in the sample, first and second-year officers. This approach allowed us to test for significant interaction effects between these traits across different levels of training, providing a more detailed understanding of how these combined traits may influence leadership performance. By examining the interplay between *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability*, the analysis aimed to uncover differences in the combined effects of these traits between the two groups, thus contributing to the assessment of leadership potential at different stages of officer training. However, the presentation of these results may be the subject of another article.

Creating a study group of only military officers limits the possibility of generalizing the findings to other occupational contexts; future research could extend these findings to other professions that involve functioning in stressful situations, such as healthcare, law enforcement, or even corporate, to determine whether similar personality profiles produce leadership effectiveness. In addition, examining longitudinal changes in personality traits among leaders could provide insights into how traits such as *conscientiousness* and *emotional stability* develop or fluctuate over a leader's career, or whether they are stable, or fixed.

Personality is considered to be relatively fixed with age, with insignificant changes occurring after age 30. In a study (Srivastava et al. 2003, 1041 - 1053) conducted on a sample $n = 132,515$ individuals it was found that *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* increased during early and middle adulthood and emotional stability decreased among women but not men.

Evaluation procedure

The BFI-2 was administered in a controlled, face-to-face environment to ensure consistency of responses and to answer on the spot in case of any queries. Each

participant independently completed the 60-item inventory, translated into English by specialized staff, with items designed to assess personality traits along the dimensions of the Big Five model. Participants rated the statements on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which was then transformed into raw scores for each meta-factor and factor. To standardize the results, raw scores were converted to *T-scores*, a psychometric method that allows normative interpretation of individual scores in relation to a larger population. The database (Soto and John 2017a, 117-143) to which the results were compared is shown in Table 1.

TABLE NO. 1

Descriptive statistics for BFI – 2

Domain or facet	Internet sample				Student sample				Sample <i>d</i>
	Men <i>M (SD)</i>	Women <i>M (SD)</i>	Combined <i>M (SD)</i>	Gender <i>d</i>	Men <i>M (SD)</i>	Women <i>M (SD)</i>	Combined <i>M (SD)</i>	Gender <i>d</i>	
Extraversion	3.15 (.78)	3.31 (.80)	3.23 (.80)	.21	3.20 (.70)	3.31 (.73)	3.25 (.71)	.15	-.03
Sociability	2.80 (1.02)	3.10 (1.07)	2.95 (1.05)	.29	2.94 (.86)	3.06 (1.01)	3.00 (.94)	.12	-.05
Assertiveness	3.28 (.92)	3.28 (.93)	3.28 (.93)	.01	3.27 (.82)	3.28 (.85)	3.28 (.84)	.02	.01
Energy Level	3.37 (.88)	3.56 (.89)	3.47 (.89)	.22	3.40 (.80)	3.58 (.72)	3.49 (.77)	.24	-.03
Agreeableness	3.57 (.65)	3.79 (.60)	3.68 (.64)	.35	3.51 (.63)	3.82 (.56)	3.66 (.62)	.53	.03
Compassion	3.72 (.79)	3.97 (.76)	3.84 (.78)	.33	3.60 (.81)	3.98 (.69)	3.79 (.78)	.49	.07
Respectfulness	3.87 (.73)	4.08 (.68)	3.98 (.71)	.30	3.76 (.68)	4.05 (.64)	3.91 (.68)	.44	.10
Trust	3.13 (.83)	3.32 (.80)	3.23 (.82)	.24	3.15 (.77)	3.43 (.77)	3.29 (.78)	.36	-.08
Conscientiousness	3.35 (.74)	3.50 (.79)	3.43 (.77)	.20	3.34 (.60)	3.54 (.66)	3.44 (.64)	.31	-.03
Organization	3.33 (.99)	3.51 (1.03)	3.42 (1.01)	.19	3.46 (.88)	3.68 (.87)	3.57 (.88)	.26	-.16
Productiveness	3.31 (.87)	3.43 (.93)	3.37 (.90)	.13	3.24 (.75)	3.39 (.80)	3.32 (.78)	.19	.07
Responsibility	3.40 (.78)	3.57 (.83)	3.48 (.81)	.20	3.33 (.60)	3.55 (.71)	3.44 (.66)	.33	.05
Negative Emotionality	2.95 (.88)	3.18 (.84)	3.07 (.87)	.27	2.84 (.74)	2.95 (.79)	2.89 (.76)	.14	.21
Anxiety	3.28 (.95)	3.58 (.88)	3.43 (.93)	.33	3.20 (.78)	3.53 (.85)	3.37 (.83)	.40	.07
Depression	2.82 (1.03)	2.88 (1.02)	2.85 (1.02)	.06	2.65 (.92)	2.53 (.93)	2.59 (.93)	-.14	.26
Emotional Volatility	2.77 (1.04)	3.09 (1.04)	2.93 (1.05)	.31	2.66 (.91)	2.79 (.97)	2.73 (.95)	.13	.20
Open-Mindedness	3.93 (.64)	3.91 (.67)	3.92 (.65)	-.02	3.71 (.65)	3.62 (.63)	3.66 (.64)	-.15	.39
Intellectual Curiosity	4.18 (.69)	4.03 (.71)	4.10 (.70)	-.21	3.89 (.76)	3.80 (.70)	3.85 (.73)	-.12	.24
Aesthetic Sensitivity	3.71 (.90)	3.88 (.94)	3.80 (.92)	.19	3.57 (.95)	3.58 (.90)	3.58 (.92)	.02	.36
Creative Imagination	3.89 (.81)	3.82 (.80)	3.85 (.81)	-.09	3.68 (.75)	3.46 (.77)	3.57 (.77)	-.28	.36
Sample size	500	500	1,000		313	146	459		

All results were manually entered into a common database, which was analyzed to obtain data on the total mean of each trait, the standard deviation of the responses, the mean of the first-year subgroup, the mean of the second-year subgroup, and the total.

A personality trait profile was compiled for each subject, as exemplified in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE NO. 2

Full profile of subject 10 (S10) by *T - score*

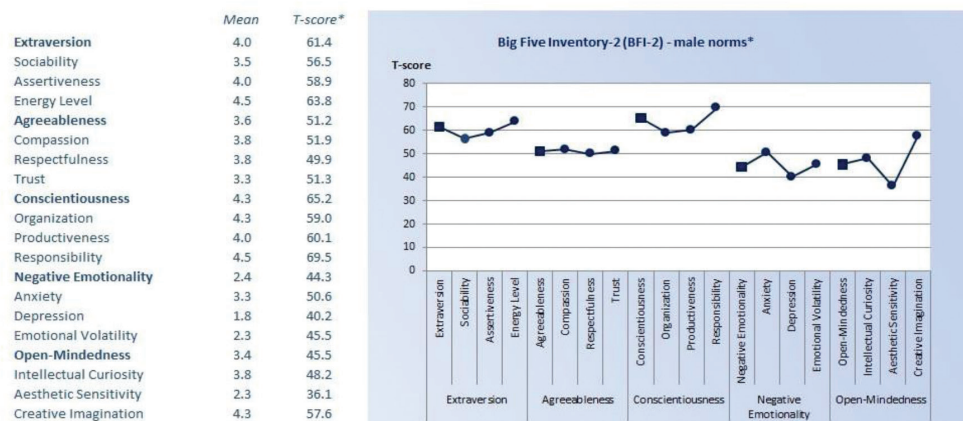
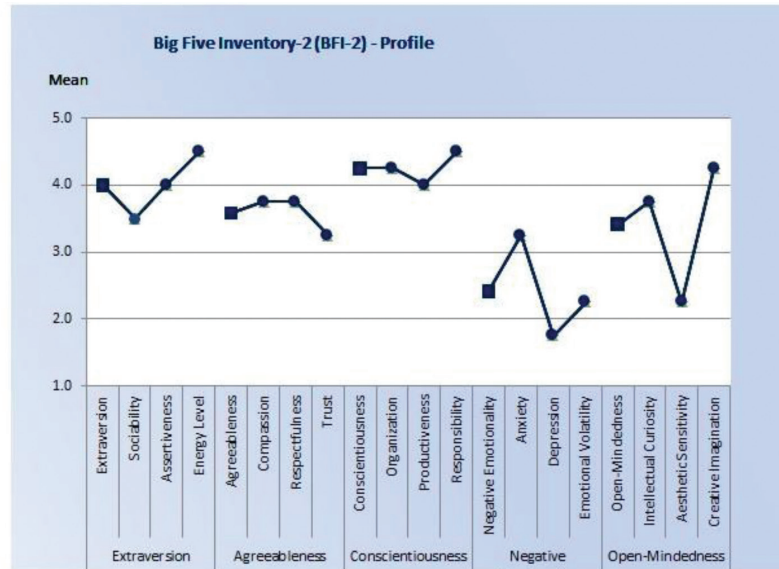


TABLE NO. 3

BFI – 2 profile of subject 10 (S10)



Data analysis

The data were analyzed by calculating the mean *T-scores* for each factor for each subject, then compared with normative data to determine the degree of deviation. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the personality profiles of the sample, with particular attention paid to high or low scores relative to the normative mean. This methodological approach ensures that the study results are both statistically valid and applicable in a controlled leadership context. The use of *T-score* and factor-level analysis provided by the BFI-2 contribute to a detailed understanding of personality profiles.

TABLE NO. 4

BFI - 2 results for the first subgroup

Extraversion	57.9	54.3	69.8	59.0	46.0	63.8	54.3	56.7	50.7	52.6	53.7	56.7	44.6	54.3	56.7
Sociability	68.1	56.5	74.0	56.5	50.7	65.2	56.5	56.5	56.5	51.9	51.9	59.4	49.4	53.6	56.5
Assertiveness	43.7	46.7	62.0	58.9	43.7	62.0	52.8	52.8	46.7	58.5	52.6	55.9	46.7	52.8	55.9
Energy Level	57.5	57.5	63.8	57.5	45.0	57.5	51.3	57.5	48.1	45.4	55.8	51.3	38.5	54.4	54.4
Agreeableness	60.4	56.5	71.0	52.5	45.9	67.0	56.5	56.5	51.2	53.2	50.2	53.8	48.8	55.1	51.2
Compassion	58.0	51.9	67.3	48.8	45.7	64.2	54.9	51.9	48.8	53.9	50.3	48.8	43.0	51.9	45.7
Respectfulness	53.5	53.5	60.9	46.2	46.2	64.6	53.5	53.5	53.5	49.2	49.2	53.5	37.5	53.5	57.2
Trust	64.3	61.0	74.0	61.0	48.1	64.3	57.8	61.0	51.3	54.2	50.9	57.8	63.9	57.8	51.3
Conscientiousness	61.0	54.1	77.7	66.6	45.7	67.9	66.6	58.2	61.0	57.0	62.0	49.9	40.6	62.4	63.8
Organization	53.3	47.6	67.5	61.8	47.6	67.5	59.0	53.3	56.1	53.7	56.6	50.5	39.3	59.0	59.0
Productiveness	66.8	60.1	73.5	66.8	46.8	66.8	66.8	56.8	60.1	57.6	60.8	50.1	42.0	60.1	60.1
Responsibility	57.0	52.8	77.8	61.2	44.5	57.0	65.3	61.2	61.2	56.3	63.4	48.7	45.8	61.2	65.3
Negative Emotionality	46.5	47.7	26.3	45.4	46.5	37.5	34.1	47.7	44.3	40.1	40.1	46.5	50.6	45.4	44.3
Anxiety	41.0	47.4	25.0	50.6	44.2	28.2	34.6	44.2	41.0	37.9	37.9	47.4	52.6	44.2	37.8
Depression	51.1	48.4	32.1	37.5	51.1	45.7	37.5	48.4	48.4	44.3	47.0	45.7	52.4	48.4	45.7
Emotional Volatility	48.2	48.2	31.8	51.0	45.5	42.7	37.3	51.0	45.5	41.9	39.3	48.2	47.0	45.5	51.0
Open-Mindedness	51.9	44.2	59.6	46.8	44.2	46.8	42.9	37.8	41.6	54.7	57.4	50.6	46.8	48.1	48.1
Intellectual Curiosity	48.2	44.9	48.2	44.9	44.9	51.4	35.0	38.3	44.9	49.3	56.4	44.9	49.3	48.2	44.9
Aesthetic Sensitivity	51.9	44.0	57.2	49.3	44.0	36.1	44.0	38.7	41.4	51.9	54.7	51.9	43.6	46.6	46.6
Creative Imagination	54.3	47.6	67.6	47.6	47.6	57.6	54.3	44.3	44.3	60.3	57.0	54.3	50.5	50.9	54.3
	S15	S16	S17	S18	S19	S20	S21	S22	S23	S24	S25	S26	S27	S28	S29

The use of the T-score was essential to this study because it allowed comparison between the study sample and a normative population as the T-score standardizes scores around a mean of 50 with a standard deviation of 10, allowing researchers to determine how well the level of an individual trait relates to the norm. In the context of this study, the T-score provided insights into traits that were more pronounced or diminished among higher-performing leaders compared to benchmarks of the general population. The database resulting from the centralization of the responses was made for the statistical analysis of the subgroups as presented in Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE NO. 5

BFI - 2 results for the second subgroup

Extraversion	65.0	57.9	61.4	54.3	54.3	54.3	59.0	59.5	50.7	61.4	49.5	63.8	57.9	55.5
Sociability	65.2	56.5	59.4	47.8	47.8	53.6	62.3	59.3	53.6	56.5	47.8	62.3	62.3	50.7
Assertiveness	58.9	55.9	52.8	52.8	55.9	52.8	58.9	55.5	49.8	58.9	49.8	62.0	52.8	52.8
Energy Level	63.8	57.5	66.9	60.6	57.5	54.4	51.3	59.3	48.1	63.8	51.3	60.6	54.4	60.6
Agreeableness	52.5	40.6	67.0	55.1	44.6	56.5	53.8	50.2	52.5	51.2	57.8	63.1	55.1	57.8
Compassion	42.6	33.3	54.9	48.8	45.7	54.9	61.1	50.3	54.9	51.9	48.8	64.2	61.1	58.0
Respectfulness	53.5	38.8	64.6	53.5	38.8	53.5	46.2	49.2	42.5	49.9	53.5	53.5	49.9	53.5
Trust	61.0	54.5	74.0	61.0	51.3	57.8	51.3	50.9	57.8	51.3	67.5	64.3	51.3	57.8
Conscientiousness	70.7	63.8	76.3	61.0	63.8	45.7	55.4	63.3	61.0	65.2	69.3	69.3	48.5	62.4
Organization	64.7	64.7	67.5	56.1	59.0	36.3	53.3	56.6	59.0	59.0	59.0	56.1	41.9	56.1
Productiveness	66.8	56.8	73.5	60.1	60.1	53.5	56.8	63.9	60.1	60.1	66.8	66.8	56.8	63.5
Responsibility	69.5	61.2	73.7	61.2	65.3	52.8	52.8	63.4	57.0	69.5	73.7	77.8	48.7	61.2
Negative Emotionality	38.6	40.9	38.6	40.9	46.5	36.4	42.0	36.9	39.8	44.3	39.8	27.4	47.7	37.5
Anxiety	50.6	47.4	41.0	37.8	41.0	37.8	37.8	34.9	34.6	50.6	31.4	28.2	50.6	34.6
Depression	37.5	34.8	40.2	45.7	42.9	37.5	48.4	38.9	48.4	40.2	42.9	32.1	48.4	42.9
Emotional Volatility	34.5	45.5	40.0	42.7	56.5	40.0	42.7	41.9	40.0	45.5	48.2	31.8	45.5	40.0
Open-Mindedness	45.5	46.8	45.5	45.5	48.1	36.5	54.5	53.4	57.0	45.5	44.2	55.7	41.6	49.3
Intellectual Curiosity	48.2	35.0	48.2	51.4	44.9	28.4	48.2	49.3	58.0	48.2	44.9	54.7	31.7	44.9
Aesthetic Sensitivity	38.7	44.0	33.5	38.7	54.5	41.4	51.9	51.9	51.9	36.1	41.4	57.2	41.4	49.3
Creative Imagination	54.3	64.3	60.9	50.9	44.3	47.6	60.9	57.0	57.6	57.6	50.9	50.9	57.6	54.3
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14

Given that the study group consists of a small number of subjects (< 30) the results obtained were compared to the sample presented in Table 1, and Table 6 presents the final average obtained.

TABLE NO. 6

Average BFI-2 results

Extraversion	56.4	57.5	55.4
Sociability	56.8	56.1	57.6
Assertiveness	53.8	55.0	52.8
Energy Level	55.4	57.9	53.0
Agreeableness	54.7	54.1	55.3
Compassion	52.3	52.2	52.3
Respectfulness	51.3	50.1	52.4
Trust	58.3	58.0	58.6
Conscientiousness	61.0	62.6	59.6
Organization	55.9	56.4	55.4
Productiveness	60.7	61.8	59.7
Responsibility	60.9	63.4	58.6
Negative Emotionality	41.4	39.8	42.9
Anxiety	40.4	39.9	41.0
Depression	43.6	41.5	45.6
Emotional Volatility	43.8	42.5	44.9
Open-Mindedness	47.9	47.8	48.1
Intellectual Curiosity	45.8	45.4	46.2
Aesthetic Sensitivity	46.0	45.1	46.8
Creative Imagination	53.8	54.9	52.8
	Media	An 2	An 1

Data interpretation

Each of the Big Five Meta – Factors: *Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Instability* and *Openness to Experiences* was examined in detail, Table 1 shows the mean T-scores for the five Meta-Factors, highlighting high scores (maximum green, minimum red) for *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability* and moderate scores for

Extraversion and *Agreeableness*. These findings suggest a personality profile aligned with characteristics essential for effective leadership.

To classify the results obtained, I used the following scale defined by a standard deviation of 10: T-scores in the range of 20–34.99 are considered very low; T-scores in the range of 35–44.99 are considered low; T-scores in the range of 45–55 are considered average; T-scores in the range of 56.1–65.99 are considered high; and T-scores in the range of 66–80 are considered very high.

The mean *T-score* for *extraversion* (56.4) indicates a moderate level of sociability and energy among the sample. Subjects within the study group scored high on the *Sociability* (56.8) and *Energy level* (55.4) factors, suggesting a natural inclination toward positive interactions with others and a consistent enthusiasm within groups. These factors are beneficial in leadership as they contribute to a leader's ability to raise the morale of a team and maintain an optimistic attitude, which can be instrumental in motivating team members. The *T-score* for *Assertiveness* (53.8), although moderate, reflects a reserved tendency to impose one's decision-making power on others, suggesting leadership that balances authority with approachability. This balance in *assertiveness* supports a leadership style that commands respect without overwhelming subordinates, a characteristic often associated with effective leadership (Judge et al. 2002, 765-780).

With a mean *T-score* of 54.7, *Agreeableness*, among the study group, is moderately high. *Trust* stands out with a high *T-score* (58.3), indicating that these leaders are generally inclined to view the world around them positively, a trait that facilitates cooperative relationships and trust-building within the team. This attitude is valuable in military contexts that are based on mutual respect and cohesion, where trust in the commander is essential, making the difference between a commander and a commander who is also a leader. *Compassion* (52.3) and *Respect* (51.3) scored moderately high, indicating that while these leaders display empathy, they do so in a balanced way that does not compromise assertive decision-making. This profile aligns with research suggesting that moderate levels of agreeableness enhance team dynamics and cooperation without impairing a leader's ability to act decisively (Graziano and Eisenberg 1997).

Conscientiousness emerged as the most pronounced trait among the study group with a mean *T-score* of 61.0, marking it as a defining characteristic of the sample. Within this Meta-factor, *Productivity* (60.7) and *Accountability* (60.9) scored the highest, emphasizing a strong commitment to perform tasks effectively. This high level of *conscientiousness* is consistent with previous findings suggesting that *conscientiousness* is a significant predictor of job performance, particularly in roles that require organization, attention to detail, and responsibility (Barrick and Mount 1991). The *Organizing* factor, with a *T-score* of 55.9, reinforces the profile of a leader who values structure and meticulous planning, traits essential for managing

complex tasks and maintaining consistent performance under pressure. Overall, the high scores on the *Conscientiousness* domain factors underscore the goal-oriented tendencies of the leaders in this sample, mission-oriented and disciplined individuals who have sworn a sacred oath to defend their country... even at the cost of their lives.

The low mean *T-score* in *Negative Emotionality* (41.4) indicates that the leaders in this sample exhibit high levels of emotional stability. *Anxiety* (40.4) and *Emotional Volatility* (43.8) were particularly low, suggesting that these leaders possess a strong emotional balance, a trait essential for maintaining composure in critical situations. Low scores on *Depression* (43.6) also indicate a stable state of mind, essential for good decision-making and performance. This stability aligns with findings from leadership psychology that link low *Neuroticism* or *Emotional Instability* with effective stress management and a stable attitude in the face of adversity ([Watson and Clark 1994](#)). The low overall scores on the *Negative Emotionality* factors suggest that leaders in this sample are less prone to emotional disturbances, thus favouring an effective and calm leadership style suitable for crisis-resolution environments such as the military.

Openness to Experiences had a moderate mean *T-score* of 47.9, indicating an openness to new experiences, balanced by a preference for conservative and practical approaches. Of the factors, *Creative Imagination* had the highest score, 53.8 suggesting that although these leaders are capable of innovative thinking, their creativity is applied in a stable and strategic manner. In contrast, *Intellectual Curiosity* (45.8) and *Aesthetic Sensitivity* (46.0) were slightly below the population average, suggesting an emphasis on concrete, results-oriented goals, operating from standard procedures rather than abstract or artistic interests. This pattern of moderate openness broadly aligns with the military system's approach to innovation, where adaptability is valued within the confines of practical, mission-centred goals. The leaders in this sample demonstrate a balanced approach between embracing novelty and strictly applying procedures, an advantage in areas that require the strategic application of creativity.

T-score analysis reveals a personality profile compatible with leadership characterized by high *conscientiousness* and *emotional stability*, moderate *extraversion* and *agreeableness*, and a balanced *openness to experiences*. High scores on *Conscientiousness* factors such as *Productivity* and *Responsibility* emphasize the disciplined and goal-oriented approach of these leaders. Low scores on emotional instability emphasize their ability to remain disciplined and resilient, which are essential for maintaining performance in stressful environments. Moderate levels of *Extraversion* and *Agreeableness* facilitate positive team interactions and confidence building, without compromising decisiveness. Together, these traits suggest a leadership profile that balances an emphasis on task accomplishment with interpersonal skills.

Due to the limitations of this study, the results obtained cannot represent a generalization generating conclusions at the level of the entire category (delimitation) of officers in the Romanian Air Force due to the impossibility of forming a representative sample, some data on the number and command experience of officers having a classified character. Another limitation that I could not control is related to the degree of honesty of the subjects, as well as the correct understanding of the questions that constituted the administered forms even though I was available for clarifications during the completion of the tests. Another limitation of the study may be represented by the sample to which the data obtained in calculating the *T - T-score*, the conclusions and the description of the factors and meta-factors imply the description of a group of individuals compared to the general population, the situations in which the act of leadership is exercised may imply variables that have not been taken into account.

Conclusions

High *T-scores* on *Conscientiousness*, particularly on factors such as *Productivity* and *Accountability*, indicate a goal-oriented, disciplined, and detail-oriented approach among military leaders. High *conscientiousness* is consistently associated with job performance in leadership research, implying a sustained effort in accomplishing tasks, leaders who exhibit high *conscientiousness* are often able to maintain a structured environment essential for clear decision-making and goal achievement in complex assignments. This study reinforces the idea that conscientiousness, with its associated factors, is not only a predictor of goal-oriented success but also a foundation for cultivating the organizational skills that leaders need.

Low *T-scores* on *Emotional Stability*, particularly on *Anxiety* and *Emotional Volatility*, suggest a high degree of emotional stability, an essential leadership trait. *Emotional stability* enables leaders to manage stress effectively, maintain composure, and make informed decisions unaffected by external factors or internal disturbances. Findings demonstrate that the emotional stability of high-performing leaders is important for both individual resilience and team trustworthiness, as leaders who exhibit a calm and steady demeanour are more likely to inspire trust and reliability within their teams. Thus, emotional stability emerges as an essential trait for leadership success.

Future research could also investigate cultural differences in the manifestation of these traits, as the impact of personality on leadership may vary by cultural context. Cross-cultural studies examining BFI-2 profiles of leaders in diverse cultural contexts could reveal how certain traits are valued, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the role of personality in global leadership.

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