

# Introverted and Extroverted Personality Traits of Leaders and OCB of Followers: A Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Relationship of IT Industry in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

Research on relationship between personality and leadership supports the notion that individual differences may be the predictors of leadership effectiveness in contemporary organizations. Extended studies stress that each of the Big-Five broad personality dimensions is related to leader criteria and identified introversion-extroversion as a key element of an individual personality. In general, the main differences between effective leaders and less effective ones are that, effective leaders differ themselves from their personality traits and the relationship building with followers. However, relatively few studies have tested how and why introvert and extrovert leader's personality traits relate to follower behaviors, in addition, if so, the mechanisms through which a leader's personality traits relate to follower behaviours. Accordingly, the main aims of the present study are to examine whether the introverted personality traits of leaders and extroverted personality traits of leaders affect the organizational citizenship behaviour of followers and to examine the role of leader-member relationship as a moderator, in social exchange process. To advance the understanding of these, simple regression analysis and moderator regression analysis were performed to test hypotheses with a sample size of 46 introvert managers and 50 extrovert managers as leaders and 92 and 100 subordinates as their followers respectively from IT industry in Sri Lanka. The study found that there is a positive direct effect of introverted personality traits of leaders and no negative direct effect of extroverted personality traits of leaders on organizational citizenship behaviour of followers. Yet, leader-member relationship moderates the positive and negative relationships between introverted, extroverted personality traits of leaders and organizational citizenship behaviour of followers. Present study makes several theoretical contributions to path-goal theory of leadership with the support from theory of trait leadership and big five model. Further, managerial contributions of the present study make IT firms successful through better selection of leaders based on personality traits which facilitates organizational citizenship behaviour.

**Keywords:** Introverted personality traits, extroverted personality traits, OCB, Leader-member relationship, IT industry in Sri Lanka

## INTRODUCTION

Research on relationship between personality traits and leadership supports the notion that different outcomes of individuals may be the predictors of leader behaviors (Hao and Yazdanifard, 2015). Therefore, it is vital for an organization to identify factors of its success, which can be measured from organizational performances and employee behaviors. Effective leader personality and extra role behavior of followers are the two main factors that have been regarded as fundamental key success factors for organizational performances. Contemporary organizations underline that employees should perform the work tasks and extra role behaviour for the long-term survival of the organization (Neuman and Kickul, 1998). This can be defined as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), a behavior at an individual's discretion that was not directly or explicitly rewarded but that will be taken as a fulfillment of the organization's objectives (Rauf, 2016 as cited in Organ, 1988).

Previous studies have indicated that each of the Big-Five personality traits namely conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and emotional stability are related to leader criteria (Kahya and Sahin, 2018). Emphasizing introversion-extroversion as the main trait of big-five model, extroverts found to be socially engaging, expressive, articulate and comfortable in group settings. On the other hand, introverts seem quiet, low-key, deliberate, and less involved in the social world. Moreover, introverts prefer close relationships as they prefer more close interactions with small groups (Prakash, et al., 2016) whereas extroverts would like to address large groups which result a shallow relationship among members (Hills and Argyle, 2001). Further, extroverts are more competitive and mainly focusing for reward achievements whereas introverts are more cooperative and directing to facilitate more relationships.

Yet, it is evident from contemporary organization behaviors that they are struggling to create required OCB among employees due to the work tasks and primary objectives of the organization. In addition, it may not perform well in an environment which is stable, unchanging, and where centralized decision-making, written rules and procedures, and standardization of tasks are highly considered (DeGroot and Brownlee, 2006). To facilitate OCB, employees prefer more cooperativeness, close relationships and friendly working environment. As extroversion-introversion is the main personality trait according to the five-factor model, behaviors of extrovert leaders will not result OCB as they are more authoritative and dominant in nature. In contrast, cooperativeness and close interactions of introverts will

result OCB among employees in work places where no studies have been conducted to measure the direct relationship. Hence, this study focuses on ‘whether introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders influence the OCB of followers?’ This relationship will be more strengthened or weakened due to the relationships among leaders and followers, which is evident from contemporary organizational behavior. With this background, potential relationship between introverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers and extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers moderates leader-member relationship, which is not explored in the previous literature and is opened for more research. The present study contributes to research in this area. In support, it measures the impact of introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders on OCB of followers and examines whether the leader-member relationship (LMX) moderates the relationship between introverted personality traits and OCB of followers.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section two briefly reviews the literature pertaining to introverted personality traits of leaders, organizational citizenship behavior and leader-member relationship. In section three, research method is outlined. Section four presents the study’s empirical results. The last section discusses the research findings, followed by a presentation of the research limitations and direction for future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leader personality, which is a part of the leader traits, explains a minimum of thirty-one percent (31%) of the variance in leadership effectiveness at large in an organization context (Derue, et al., 2011). The concept of personality has begun to attract a great deal of interest in behavioral ecology and human psychology. Personality differs from person to person (Nettle and Penke, 2010) based on the nature, environment, situation they face and the designation they hold in an organization. Moreover, leadership becomes the core area of most of the organizations, to achieve its objectives in resourceful and operative manner. Besides, leadership leads more positive outcomes of an organization such as job satisfaction, management of diversified workforce, organizational citizenship behavior and high employee commitment (Voegtlin, et al., 2012).

Apart from the studies that have focused on leadership effectiveness (Judge, et al., 2002; Derue, et al., 2011) several attempts were made to provide evidence on traits and behaviors of leaders (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Hogan, et al., 1994)). According to Emanuelsson and Lindqvist (2014) extroversion, self-confidence, and courage are the traits that could potentially be linked

with great leaders. Moreover, the study illustrated that, an introverted leader commonly uses a leader-member exchange leadership style leading to both engagement and empowerment, which will cause organizational citizenship behavior of followers. Leader traits have a long and controversial history, where some literature supports for the extroversion and some for introversion.

Introverts think carefully and analyze details before speaking which is a key trait of a leader (Farrell, 2017). As Hautala (2006) expresses, introverts support for encouraging behavior and extroverts set targets and visions for the subordinates. This illustrates positive aspects of both introverts and extroverts. Moreover, managers who have more introvert traits, become exceedingly effective and efficient, especially when their jobs do not require much social interactions (Hudson and Ferguson, 2016). Besides, there are some instances where it is reported that introverts also have succeeded in leadership (Gio and Yazdanifard, 2015). According to Farrell (2017) extrovert leaders are better in carrying out the organizational projects where introvert leaders are ideal in planning process to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Even a very shy person should be able to lead a group to safety if a rival group was attacking them and he was the first to notice the danger (Vugt, 2006). Culturally, extroverts are seen as individuals whose seek action, like working with others and are achievement-oriented (Clack, 2017). According to Farrell (2017) extroverts build up energy and ideas externally by developing social interactions. Judge, et al. (2002) explained that extraversion is strongly related to social leadership where leaders would like to address a large crowd. Further, they have illustrated that extraversion is the most important trait as both sociable and dominant people are more likely to assert themselves in group situations. Out of all leadership outcomes, one of the imperative leadership outcomes for an organization is 'organizational citizenship behaviour' which is significant to gain sustainable competitive advantage through human psychological engagement. With little research it is evident that OCB is facilitated from team performances, relationships between individuals, leader behaviors and personality traits (Neuman and Kickul, 1998; Elanain, 2007; Harper, 2015). This is a series of voluntary and optional actions that are not part of the person's official duties, but nonetheless done by him/her, and causes improvement in the functions and roles performed by the organization (Shoaeshargh and Dadashi, 2013 as cited in Alotaibi, 2009). However, a little research has carried on to measure the impact of leader personality on OCB of followers (Bernerth, et al., 2008).

It is evident that introverted personality type employees will be more likely to show a dutiful character, more likely to be altruism and obvious citizenship virtue compared to extrovert personality type employees (Harper, 2015). With the wide spectrum of identification of introvert leaders, it is evident that they are passionate to give the freedom to employees while they are working for the organization which will lead to OCB as it is something discretionary and commitment towards what they do. Hills and Argyle (2001) expresses introverts experience high level of empathy with few special people with them which leads to trust and commitment as a part of OCB. Moreover, as Emmerik and Euwema (2007) introvert personalities are more sensitive for a good relation with their team leader and extroverts are less influenced by the relation with their leader when it comes to engagement in OCBs. Extroverted leaders are willing to dominate the context, as employees will take it as forceful reaction from leader and not contribute to OCB. Dominancy may discourage others to build up strong relationships with group members including the leader. Further, it may discourage others to commit more on mutual trust among group members that will cause to reduce the performances in the long run as there is no autonomy for others to work leisurely. As Power (2017) points out, even though extroverts prefer more interactions, they can quickly get aggressive when trying to impress others or earn their respect through over commitment. Further, Grant, et al. (2011) illustrated that although extraverted leadership enhances group performance when employees are passive, this effect reverses when employees are proactive; because extraverted leaders are less receptive to proactivity. Moreover, extroverted leaders may not be successful in organizational performances where the leader is too busy socializing with all levels of the working environment and acting upon them. Farrell (2017) brought up the failures of extroverted leaders as they are arrogant, bossy and self-centered. Perception of leader supportiveness ranked as the highest antecedent on OCB out of other leadership behaviours (Podsakoff, et al., 2000). Therefore, the below hypotheses can be developed to investigate the direct effect between the introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers.

*Hypothesis 1a: Introverted personality traits of leaders positively affect the OCB of followers.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Extroverted personality traits of leaders negatively affect the OCB of followers.*

As Prakash, et al. (2016) highlight, introverts prefer to spend time in smaller groups, or one-on-one, and usually like to get to know each other slowly. Further, as Owen, et al.(2000) Organizational Citizenship Behaviour may relate at the smaller work-group, rather than the organization-wide level, which facilitates more interactions and relationships. Introverts be more selective and focus on establishing individual affiliative relationship with a few special people around them (Hills and Argyle, 2001). This study further illustrated that introverts experience high level of empathy with few special people with them. Therefore, understanding among introverts will increase which will cause for more commitment towards the organization. High-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships were positively related to a desire to help others and be accepted by them, as well as a positive regard for the organization as a whole (Connell, 2005). Conversely, extroverts do not develop a long-term employee organizational association that emphasizes trust, mutuality and shared aspirations (Neuman andKickul, 1998) even though they get to know each other quickly (Prakash, et al., 2016). This study further illustrated that extroverts do not concentrate on mutual trust and an open-ended commitment, which represents from the conventional relationship between an employee and an organization. Moreover, extroverts are more competitive and mainly focus for reward achievements whereas introverts are more corporative and directive to facilitate more relationships. Similarly, supervisor-subordinate relationships characterized by high levels of trust, support, liking, and attention were also associated with increased OCB. Therefore, it is worthwhile to understand how leader-member relationship effects on different personalities of leaders and OCB of followers. Moreover, below hypotheses can be developed to measure the moderating effect of leader-member relationship on personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers.

*Hypothesis 2a: Relationship between introverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers is moderated by Leader-Member relationship.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Relationship between extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers is moderated by Leader-Member relationship.*

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Sample and data collection

The sample of this study consisted of 46 introvert leaders, 50 extrovert leaders and 92 and 100 followers of these leaders respectively from Information Technology industry in Sri Lanka. This sample is chosen, due to hierarchical structure and the responsibilities of leader-follower dyadic relations in the selected IT industry, and easy identification and reliable testing of the leader-follower relationship. The self-administered questionnaires were delivered based on survey strategy to managers to measure introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders and subordinates to measure OCB and leader-member relationship.

### Variables and model

Organizational Citizenship Behavior is the dependent variable of the present study. This was measured using five dimensions: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy and civic virtue using 24-items of OCB measurement scale developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1990). The independent variable introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders was measured using NEO PI-R scale of personality developed by Costa and McCrae (1989). This study used one moderator variable; leader-member relationship which was measured using 7-items LMX reported by Scandura and Graen (1984). The working definitions of the constructs are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Working Definitions of the Constructs**

Construct	Working Definition
Introverted Personality Traits	Quiet, low-key, deliberate, and less involved in the social world, prefer more close interactions with small groups, more corporative and directing to facilitate more relationships.
Extroverted Personality Traits	Socially engaging, expressive, articulate, comfortable in group settings, shallow relationship among members, more competitive and mainly focusing on reward achievements.
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	a behavior at an individual's discretion that was not directly or explicitly rewarded but that will be taken as a fulfillment of the organization's objectives.

Leader- Member Relationship (LMX)	The relationship between follower and the leader, atwo-way (dyadic) relationship, and is affected by mutual interaction.
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Source:(Big-five personality dimensions; Shoaeshargh andDadashi, 2013 as cited in Alotaibi, 2009; Uusi-Kakkuriand Brandt, 2015)

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables.

**Table 2: Means, Standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients of variables**

	Mean	SD	LMX-I	LMX-E	OCB-I	OCB-E
<b>IPT</b>	3.1660	0.0799	0.583**	-	0.344**	-
<b>EPT</b>	3.4926	0.1233	-	0.047	-	0.231**
<b>LMX-I</b>	3.2986	0.4538	-	-	0.433**	-
<b>LMX-E</b>	3.0267	0.5483	-	-	0.551**	-
<b>OCB-I</b>	3.8333	0.3948	-	-	-	-
<b>OCB-E</b>	3.6149	0.2951	-	-	-	-

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note. (1) Between .1-.3: Small Effect. (2) Between .3-.5: Medium Effect. (3) Above .5: Large Effect

IPT- Introverted personality traits, EPT- Extroverted personality traits, OCB-I/E Organizational Citizenship Behavior-Introverts/Extroverts, LMX-I/E Leader-Member Exchange/Relationship-Introverts/Extroverts

An examination of correlations revealed a significant association among the variables. Overall, the patterns of the correlations were much similar to the expected results as the direct effect and moderating effect were significant at 99% in correlation matrix.

The results of the regression used to test the hypotheses of introvert and extrovert leaders are shown in table 3 and 4.



**Table 3: Regression results for Introverted personality traits, OCB and Leader-Member Relationship**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Intercept	-1.555 (-1.267)	3.833 (130.645)	3.789 (155.028)
Beta Value	0.344* (4.392)	0.130** (1.421)	0.120** (1.331)
LMX		0.367* (3.999)	0.388* (4.305)
Intro traits X LMX			0.199* (2.719)
R	0.344	0.455	0.497
R <sup>2</sup>	0.118	0.207	0.247
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.112*	0.196*	0.231*
R <sup>2</sup> change	0.118	0.207	0.247
F change	19.290*	18.648*	15.453*

Source: Survey data

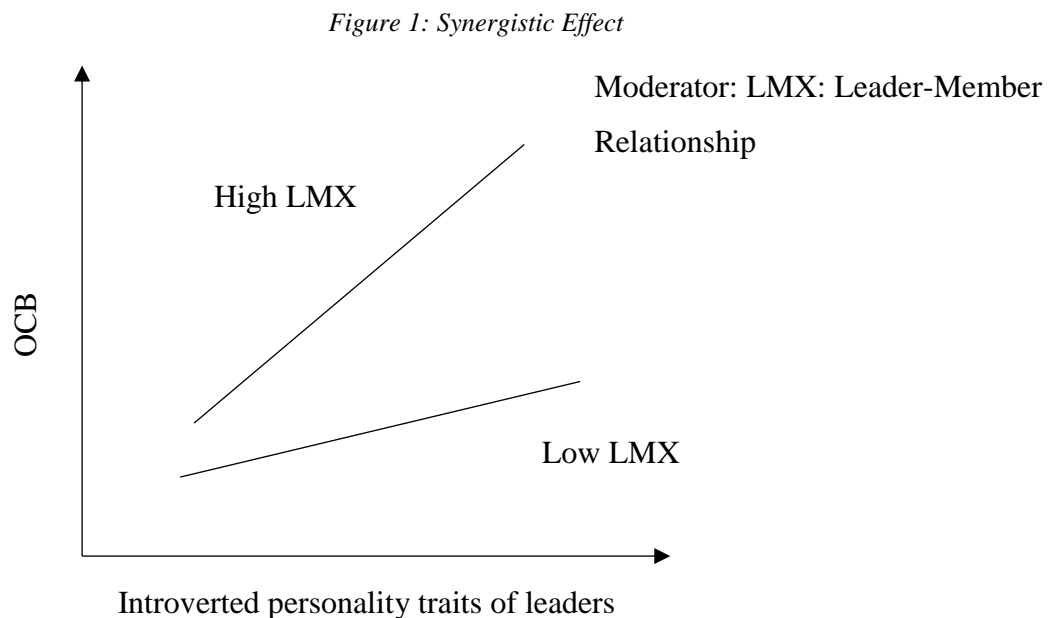
Dependent variable: OCB

*Note:* Data are standardized regression weights. Intro traits= Introverted Traits of leaders; LMX= Leader-Member Exchange/Relationship

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

These results show that introverted personality traits of leaders had a positive relationship with OCB of followers ( $\beta = 0.344$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), significant at the ninety-five percent (95%) level. This finding is consistent with evidence from previous studies (Emmerik and Euwema, 2007; Harper, 2015; Farrell, 2017). Further, relationship between introverted personality traits of

leaders and OCB of followers is moderated by Leader-Member relationship ( $\beta = 0.130$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) as suggested and it became more prominent with the interaction effect ( $\beta = 0.120$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.231 represents the overall impact of introverted personality traits of leaders with interaction effect of leader-member relationship quality on OCB of followers ( $F=15.453$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Based on the results, there is a synergistic effect from leader-member relationship moderation variable to introverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers. It represents both introverted personality traits of leaders and leader-member relationship affect the OCB of followers in the same direction and together they produce a strong relationship than additive effect on OCB of followers.



**Table 4:Regression results for Extroverted personality traits, OCB and Leader-Member Relationship**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Intercept	1.682 (2.714)	2.734 (26.706)	3.618 (204.670)
Beta Value	0.231* (3.122)	0.206* (3.325)	0.185* (3.067)
LMX		0.541* (8.744)	0.474* (7.480)
Extro traits X LMX			-0.215* (-3.374)
R	0.231	0.588	0.622
R <sup>2</sup>	0.054	0.345	0.386
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.048*	0.338*	0.376*
R <sup>2</sup> change	0.054	0.345	0.386
F change	9.750*	45.237*	35.780*

Source: Survey data

Dependent variable: OCB

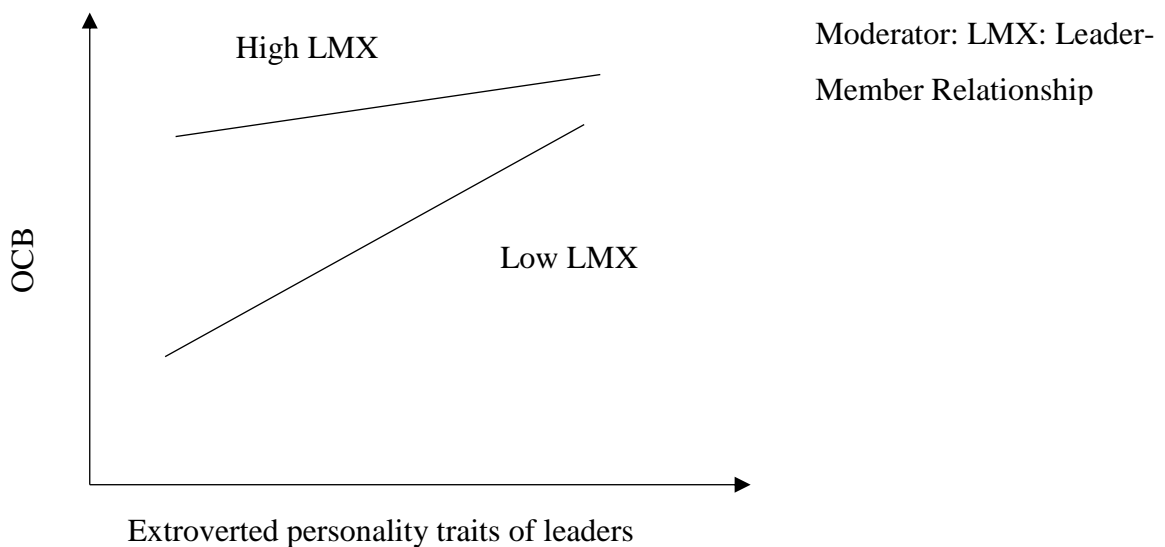
*Note:* Data are standardized regression weights. Extro traits= Extroverted Traits of leaders; LMX= Leader-Member Exchange/ Relationship

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

These results show that extroverted personality traits of leaders had a positive relationship with OCB of followers ( $\beta = 0.231$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) which is not supported for hypothesis as suggested. This finding is consistent with evidence from previous studies (Neuman and Kickul, 1998 as cited in Krebs, 1970; Chiaburu, et al., 2011). Yet, with regards to information technology industry firms in Sri Lanka, the results of the moderation effect is at ninety five percent

(95%) which is a significant level concerning Sri Lankan Information Technology industry. Adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.376 represents the overall impact of extroverted personality traits of leaders with interaction effect of leader-member relationship quality on OCB of followers ( $F=35.780$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Based on the results, there is an Antagonistic effect from leader-member relationship moderation variable to introverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers. It represents both extroverted personality traits of leaders and leader-member relationship predict OCB in the same direction. But, they each weaken each other. The importance of extroverted personality traits of leaders is weakened the presence of the leader-member relationship for OCB of followers.

Figure 2: Antagonistic Effect



## DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND AVENUE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study not only replicates but also extends previous research on the direct effect and moderating effect on leader-member relationship of the relationship between the personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers. In answering research questions, the present study focuses on introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders of IT industry in Sri Lanka. First, the results of this study replicate earlier findings (Emmerik and Euwema, 2007; Grant, et al., 2011; Harper, 2015; Ahmed and Khan, 2016) establishing positive direct effect of introverted personality traits of leaders on OCB of followers. Similarly, the results of this are in line with the findings of the previous studies (Buchanan, 1998; Neuman and Kickul, 1998; Owen, et al., 2000; Hills and Argyle, 2001; Asgari, et al., 2008; Prakash, et al., 2016) and

indicate that the leader-member relationship is a significant determinant of positive direct effect of introverted personality traits of leaders and negative direct effect of extroverted personality traits of leaders on OCB of followers. Yet, the negative direct impact on extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB was not statistically significant in the present study. That may be the operating environment, situation, culture or habits which enhance positive and negative impact on leadership personalities (Baldwin, 2014). As Mooney (2018) states, the nature of a company's culture influences; if there is a strong culture employee will have motivated and well-trained. IT professionals include dependability and the ability to adapt to a changing work environment, such as the need to come in on weekends to address critical systems issues (Long, n.d.). Further, individuals should also feel comfortable working as part of a larger team to complete tasks rather than isolation. Further, as Leonard (2018) expresses, type of the work task affects the leadership behaviors of individuals. As per the IT professionals in Sri Lanka, it is evident that they have to change their leadership traits based on the task accomplishment.

Importantly, the present study extends previous research by examining the moderating role of leader-member relationship between the direct relationship. As hypothesised, the results of the present study supported that leader-member relationship mediated the relationship between introverted and extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers. First, it provides empirical support for leader-member relationship regarding the tendency of high quality relationship between manager/leader and subordinate/follower to enhance organizational citizenship behavior of followers. This enhancement of follower performance is important as previous researches have indicated that introverted personality traits of leaders and leader-member relationship can contribute to effective outcomes of an organization (Hautala, 2006; Bernerth, et al., 2008). Second, findings of this study also provide empirical support for the extrovert's relationship behavior suggested by Hills and Argyle (2001) and Neuman and Kickul (1998). The findings, suggest that extroverted leader personality trait is not a foundational leader characteristic for the OCB of followers. Social exchange relationships, on the other hand, have an impact on the maintenance of the power and solidarity depending on its long term relationship and mutual trust.

In conclusion, despite the importance of leadership characteristics in organizations, this research examines the promising mechanisms through which leader personality influences followers' effective performance, which has been lacking. The present study makes an important contribution by examining how leader personality traits (introverted and extroverted) influence follower attitudes and behaviors by displaying the importance of leader-member

relationship. Hence, this study provides a better understanding of how leader personality influences follower organizational citizenship behavior.

Theoretically, the findings of this study provide understandings for two bodies of work. First, the direct effect of introverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers was supported which rationalized from path-goal theory with the support of theory of trait leadership and five factor model of personality. It further, reveals that leader behavior is important for the follower motivation and goal achievement identified by previous research (House and Mitchell, 1975; Ng, et al., 2008; Malik, et al., 2014) and OCB was generated. However, direct effect of extroverted personality traits of leaders and OCB of followers is not supported with the theoretical argument. Motivated employees will not automatically engage in OCB, unless the organization ensures the presence of job satisfaction, job involvement, psychological empowerment, perceived organizational support, employee engagement and organizational justice (Ahmed and Khan, 2016). Second, the moderating effect of leader-member relationship revealed by this study and previous research (Harris, et al., 2007; Uusi-Kakkuri and Brandt, 2015) supports the theoretical argument and make contributions to the social exchange theory.

Selection of participants in one industry at a given period of time was a potential limitation of this present study. Nevertheless, future research might consider a longitudinal research design examining perceptions of introverted and extroverted personality traits, OCB and leader-member relationship multiple times over a long period of time. The present study encourages future researchers to carry out the same study again with the change of research design to a qualitative research as respondents have not given the assured answers based on questionnaire method. The researchers would be able to observe and understand reactions of respondents if they can conduct the study through interview method as the data collection tool. There will be more interesting answers with the close monitoring methods between the researcher and the respondent.

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