

Review of recruitment and selection for leadership positions: Evidence from a systematic review



Maria Inês Fangueiro¹, Ricardo Gonzalez², Adérito Seixas³ & A. Rui Gomes¹
¹Univ. Minho, Portugal ²Univ. Federal do Ceará, Brazil ³Univ. Fernando Pessoa, Portugal

INTRODUCTION

Recruiting and selecting leaders involves finding qualified candidates to fill a particular job vacancy, with the main aim of identifying “the right man for the right job” (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Anwar & Shukur, 2015). Although leadership and selection are extensively studied, it is interesting to note that there is still **a limited knowledge** of which psychosocial skills and characteristics are actually operationalized in recruitment and selection for leadership positions.

METHOD

- Protocol and registration.** Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) updated guidelines (Page et al., 2021); protocol was registered in the Open Science Framework (OSF) database.
- Research question.** What skills and characteristics are considered when individuals are recruited and selected for leadership positions?
- Methodological quality.** JBI Checklist for Prevalence Studies (Munn et al., 2020); JBI Checklist for Qualitative Research (Lockwood, Munn, & Porritt, 2015).
- Search strategy.** Databases (general and specific) were accessed by three independent researchers on March 19, 2024, using (“leaders*” or “manage*”) and (“recruitment and selection” or “headhunting”).

RESULTS

Of 2,186 identified articles, four met all inclusion criteria and were included in the systematic review.

Table 1. Integrative results of the psychosocial characteristics identified in the four included studies

Psychosocial characteristics	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Frequency
Psychological stable factors					
Personality	No	Yes	No	No	1
Motivation and resilience	No	No	Yes	Yes	2
Commitment and integrity	No	No	Yes	Yes	2
Emotion stability	Yes	No	No	Yes	2
Psychological dynamic factors					
Ability to lead change	Yes	No	No	No	1
Decision-making skills	Yes	No	Yes	No	2
Social dynamic factors					
Communication skills	Yes	No	Yes	No	2
Interpersonal skills	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3
Ability to mentor or lead others	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3

Note. The characteristics present in the different studies were identified and, when similar, aggregated to allow for more effective identification of the characteristics of interest for this review

CONCLUSION

The study found that psychosocial skills are more often studied in existing leaders than in leadership recruitment and selection, with only four studies addressing this process. Despite methodological limitations, a relevant set of psychosocial skills was identified for leadership selection.

References

Anwar, G., & Abdullah, N. N. (2021). Inspiring future entrepreneurs: The effect of experiential learning on the entrepreneurial intention at higher education. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 183–194. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.62.26>

Anwar, G., & Shukur, I. (2015). The impact of training and development on job satisfaction: A case study of private banks in erbil. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 2(1), 65–72, Retrieved from <https://ijsses.tiu.edu.iq/index.php/ijsses/article/view/637>

Lockwood, C., Munn, Z., & Porritt, K. (2015). Qualitative research synthesis: Methodological guidance for systematic reviewers utilizing meta-aggregation. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare*, 13(3), 179–187, <https://doi.org/10.1097/xeb.0000000000000062>

Munn, Z., Barker, T. H., Moola, S., Tufanaru, C., Stern, C., McArthur, A., & Aromataris, E. (2020). Methodological quality of case series studies: an introduction to the JBI critical appraisal tool. *JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports*, (10), 2127–2133 Retrieved from <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:203623002>

Page, M. J., Moher, D., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., & Mckenzie, J. E. (2021). Prisma 2020 explanation and elaboration: Updated guidance and exemplars for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372(160), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n160>.