



The Influence of Inclusion in Influential Networks: Perceptions of Ability and Personality Traits on Promotions Within Management

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ABSTRACT

Promotions rank among some of the most powerful forms of incentive and reward systems that organizations can offer their employees. This study examined the influence of inclusion in influential networks, perceptions of managerial ability and the personality traits of extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience on the number of promotions awarded to managers. However, results from a field survey showed that inclusion in influential organizational networks, perceptions of managerial ability and the personality trait of introversion were significantly related to the number of promotions gained within management. Implications of the findings are discussed in terms of individual differences, trust and distrust, and team dynamics in organizations that are viewed as social systems.

Promotions are an important organizational career and hierarchical progression mechanism. They have been formally defined as upward movements in organizational hierarchies (Sanborn & Berger, 1990). Only a select few of those who begin their careers in organizations and a select few of those recruited at non-entry career stages are eventually promoted into the upper echelons of management. They rank among some of the most powerful incentives that any organization can offer its employees (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987; Sanborn & Berger, 1990) and are usually accompanied by one or more increments in pay, benefits, organizational centrality, status, perquisites and future opportunity (Sanborn & Berger, 1990). In this study, three research questions surrounding managerial promotions were specifically addressed. They are:

- (i) do individuals included in influential networks receive more promotions?
- (ii) do perceptions of managerial ability influence the number of promotions awarded?
- (iii) do personality traits have any impact on promotion decisions in organizations?

These research questions were studied only on a sample of managers across several organizations. Managers were studied because they are generally accorded more responsibility and decision making power, and because they constitute an important resource for maintaining organizations' competitive advantage by providing them with strategic and tactical direction.

Prior research

The topic of managerial progression in organizations has been researched before. "How do you make it to the top?" Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy (1994) posed in their paper on managerial advancement. Tharenou et al's findings suggest that training, career encouragement, work experience, and the presence of help at home seemed to determine which managers advanced in the public and private sectors in Australian organizations. A U.S. study conducted by Ohlott, Ruderman and McCauley (1994) at the Center for Creative Leadership hints that task-



related developmental components of current jobs actively shape the careers of those promoted into senior management positions. This relationship holds true if and only if task-related developmental challenges, and obstacles of the type described below, are minimized, and if trust is maximized in organizations.

The presence of a significant amount of trust between managers and their supervisors, and between managers and others in the organization, is vital for their career development. Coleman (1990) studied trust among diamond traders in London and New York. He detected that traders make or break deals on the basis of verbal agreements as a demonstration of trust. A large part of such deal-making was found to be contingent upon the community's or influential organizational networks' dissemination of information. This information included the trader's reputation known to those with whom he or she does business or must do business with in the future. When studying promotion decisions in organizations, it is important to pay attention to organizational networks, their patterns of inclusion and exclusion, their perceptions, and their patterns of information dissemination against the backdrop of trust between its members. Organizational actions that speak to inclusion and integration, and good transmissions and communications between members, can help further the case for individual promotion, while exclusionary or devious actions and the transmission of bad or false reports can harm the individual case for promotion with varying degrees of severity. Kelley and Thibaut (1978) called such leverage "fate control," because the community and its constituents can unilaterally and singularly determine the fate of each of its members.

The studies recounted in this section accentuate the organizational and individual influences on promotions and the antecedents of promotions in organizations. An organizational perspective proposed by Blum, Fields and Goodman (1994) examined a few contextual aspects surrounding managerial advancement. Blum et al.'s results indicate that macro-characteristics such as existing social structures, personnel and compensation practices and industry type exert a significant influence on managerial job placement practices.

Individual differences also appear to play a role. Powell and Butterfield (1994; 1997) specifically studied the effect of the demographic variable, race, on promotions to top management positions within the federal government. They concluded that race affects promotion decisions indirectly through two other job-relevant variables, namely, employment in the hiring department and years of work experience. In other words, their study suggests that applicants of color or racial minorities might end up at a disadvantage in the promotion process due to the indirect effects arising from variables such as lack of seniority and tenure (1997). Another study from the international arena (Israel) suggests that labor unions afford their members some protection in promotion decisions as a result of which women face lowered rates of promotion and compensation discrimination in unionized firms (Bamberger, Admati-Dvir & Harel, 1995). However, such union-based protection is mostly available only to non-managerial personnel groups (groups that were not the focus of this research).

The research presented here specifically examines the variables that influence managerial promotions and advancement in organizations.



The Hypotheses

Several variables influence organizational promotion decisions. The three variables that are studied here are the extent of inclusion in influential networks, perceptions of ability, and personality traits.

Inclusion in Influential Networks

Networks are critical to both career advancement and individual socialization in organizations (Noe, 1988). Limited access to networks or exclusion from organizational networks is a disadvantage, because it affords individuals "restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organizations and difficulty in forming alliances, which, in turn, are associated with limited mobility and *glass ceiling* effects" (Ibarra, 1993, p. 56).

Access to influential networks in organizations is important. As Ibarra (1993) highlighted, in order to get things accomplished in organizations, individuals should be able to draw on both instrumental and emotional resources from these networks. Examples of instrumental resources include seeking and gaining work-related information while emotional resources include bonding with others through the building of alliances.

Blau (1977) proposed that individuals tend to interact with similar individuals while bonding and networking. This proposition, the basis of the concept of "homophily," leads us to the idea that preference for others who are similar to ourselves on dimensions such as age, race or sex result in social networks that are predominantly comprised of individuals who share common characteristics (Brass, 1985).

In addition to homophily, other dimensions can also influence social network formation and representation. Mehra, Kilduff & Brass (1998) used McGuire's Distinctiveness Theory (1984) to study social network representation further. Distinctiveness Theory parsimoniously enhances the concept of "homophily," when it suggests that people in a social context tend to identify with others with whom they share characteristics that are relatively rare in that environment. Thus, two or more minority immigrant managers in a group that primarily consists of Caucasian managers are more likely to notice and to identify with each other because of their distinctiveness. Mehra et al. discovered that relative proportional representation plays a role in defining distinctiveness. In other words, the lower the relative proportion of members sharing some characteristics in a social context, the greater the likelihood of those members establishing social network ties with each other. Mehra et al.'s study focused on distinctiveness based on race and sex in a sample of MBA students. This paper hones in on distinctiveness that is based on mutual attraction and interests, and the willingness to identify with individuals displaying good potential or good track records within management networks. In so doing, it subscribes to the concept of deep-level diversity that encompasses mutual attraction and interests, job satisfaction and organizational commitment that transcend surface diversity characteristics such as race and sex (see Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998).

Inclusion in organizational dominant networks has been found to be an important correlate of individual perceived power and promotion in organizations (Brass, 1984). Exclusion



from such networks is unfortunate and acts as a career hindering mechanism for some individuals. Brass (1985) investigated:

- i) the interaction patterns of men and women in an organization
- (ii) the relationship of those patterns to their perceptions of influence, and
- (iii) the relationship to their promotions to supervisory positions after three years.

His results suggest that positions in workflow and interaction networks relate strongly to measures of influence in organizations. His follow-up study further stated that promotions were significantly related to centrality within the functional area, as well as in men's and dominant coalition interaction networks. The first hypothesis will attempt to replicate and extend Brass's findings by studying a sample of managers.

H1: The organization is more likely to promote those individuals who associate with the members of the organization's dominant influential network within management for purposes of career and/or friendship.

Perceptions of Ability

Ability is widely recognized as a criterion of evaluation in promotion decisions (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987). Ability represents what an individual can do. Quinn, Tabor and Gordon (1968) surveyed managers in three Ohio firms and found that 47% of the respondents mentioned ability frequently when discussing how they generated promotions. Individual ability has previously been evaluated in a number of ways. Education, generally the attainment of a college degree (London & Stumpf, 1983), supervisor evaluations (London & Stumpf, 1982) and peer evaluations (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987) are some of the means that have been used to assess individual ability in the past.

Blumberg and Pringle (1982) made a strong argument for the importance of ability's impact on work performance. Since different jobs and professions make different demands on people's abilities, a good fit between the abilities of an individual and the job or profession usually results in good performance. Managers need to possess good decision-making abilities (the ability to identify problems, generate alternatives, evaluate those alternatives and make competent choices), good work-related abilities and good interpersonal abilities (good listening, feedback and conflict resolution skills) in order to perform well. Stevens and Campion (1994) referred to these abilities as technical expertise (job or professional expertise), problem solving and decision-making skills and interpersonal skills.

The term "Pygmalion Effect" (Eden, 1990) has been used to characterize situations in which supervisors' expectations and assessments of their employees' abilities actually shape or determine their employees' behavior. In other words, if supervisors in organizations expect more from their employees, their employees are likely to perform better. In a study conducted with 105 soldiers engaged in a combat command course in the Israeli military, Eden & Shani (1982) found the Pygmalion Effect to be very much in existence there. Groups of trainees were randomly assigned to the defense force training instructors who were part of the study. The researchers observed that the instructors who were told that their trainees had high potential saw



that their trainees scored significantly higher on tests, were more positive, and liked their leaders more than the groups of trainees who were designated as being of normal or unknown potential. In short, the trainees who were perceived as possessing high potential demonstrated better results on the whole.

The "Pygmalion Effect" illustrates the power of perception described above (see Eden, 1990). Perception has been characterized as a sense-making process. As the results of the Eden and Shani study suggest, perception is a sensory process of interpretation and projection. While supervisor perceptions have been found to influence their employees' performance, prior research was unavailable for citation on whether their perceptions also influence the numbers and types of promotions that they award their employees. So this study attempted to discover the relationship between perceptions of ability and the number of promotions gained within management. Hypothesis 2 proposes that perceptions of the individual manager's ability will positive relate to the organization's decision to promote that manager.

H2: Positive perceptions of the manager's ability will positive relate to the organization's decision to promote that manager.

Personality traits

How do personality traits influence success on the job, if success is measured in terms of the number of promotions gained? Prior research has been surprisingly mute on this topic, although McClelland and Boyatzis (1982) studied a sample of AT&T managers and determined that personality characteristics, such as need for power and activity inhibition, predicted promotion patterns sixteen years later.

Personality traits have often been measured as the "Big Five" factors (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Digman and Shmelyov (1996) suggest that the "Big Five" model may be a universal model that is appropriate for the interpretation of personality across cultures and linguistic frames of reference. Barrick and Mount's (1991) meta-analytic investigation on the "Big Five" personality traits looked at the relationships between the personality dimensions (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience) and three job performance criteria (job proficiency, training proficiency and personnel data) for five occupational groups. The groups consisted of business professionals, police, managers, salespeople and skilled/semi-skilled employees. The results of the meta-analysis showed that conscientiousness showed consistent relations with all job performance criteria across all the occupational groups studied. For the remaining dimensions, results varied by occupational group and criterion type. For example, extraversion was found to be a valid predictor for managers and salespeople in all three performance criteria. Noteworthy in this finding is the fact that both occupations (management and sales) require social interaction dynamics. Extraversion and openness to experience were found to be valid predictors of the training proficiency criterion across organizations, but contrary to predictions, emotional stability was not found to be a valid predictor of any performance criterion.

Another meta-analysis (Ones, Visweswaran & Schmidt, 1993) discovered that personality-based integrity tests were related to job performance. Hogan and Ones (1997) went



on to suggest that since personality-based integrity tests have been related to the "Big Five" traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability, that there also exists a strong relationship between broad personality measures and job performance. While their proposal and findings extend the scope of our knowledge on personality effects, at this point in time little is known about the influence of personality traits on measures of career success, such as promotions, a gap that this research will address.

Organizations can benefit if they link the study of personality with the demands of jobs or positions. The greater the degree of fit between personality and the demands of the job or position, the better the manager's performance. Chatman, Caldwell & O'Reilly (1999) developed an ideal personality template to determine the degree of managerial fit between an individual and that individual's degree of career success in non-promotion terms. By utilizing a semi-idiographic approach within a longitudinal framework, Chatman et al. were able to determine the extent to which the sample of MBA students would be successful based on the salaries earned, their full-time/part-time work status and their job-change histories. The traits on the managerial template that scored highest on a nine point scale depicting the success criteria were: being productive, the ability to see to the heart of problems, high aspirations, dependability and responsibility, ethicality, assertiveness, verbal fluency, straightforwardness and forthrightness, high intellectual capacity, and social and personal perceptiveness.

While personality traits can be measured with many scientific instruments, the most widely accepted personality trait measurement system involves the use of the "Big Five" traits to broadly summarize the domain of individual personality. Hypothesis 3a suggests that organizations are more likely to promote individuals who demonstrate high scores on characteristics such as extraversion and conscientiousness within management. By way of support for this hypothesis, extraverted managers have been found to perform their jobs better while conscientious employees have been found to perform their jobs better across all occupational groups (see Barrick & Mount, 1991). While building upon these findings from previous research, this study theorized that since extraverted managers perform their jobs better and since better job performers are usually rewarded with promotions (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987), extraverted managers should also be rewarded with promotions (H3a). In a similar vein, it was also theorized that conscientious managers would receive promotions (H3a). As there is no definitive prior research to suggest that the traits of agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience are either linked with job performance or with promotions, H3b represents a null hypothesis. In other words, the traits of agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience are expected to have no significant influence on the number of managerial promotions gained.

H3a: Organizations are more likely to promote those individuals who demonstrate high scores on traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness within management.

H3b: The traits of agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience have no significant influence on the number of promotions gained in organizations.



Method

Design

This research was designed to obtain data on factors that influence managerial promotion decisions. Field data were collected from male and female managers from several different organizations. Target participant lists were purchased from a professional association that organizes professional enhancement seminars for corporate managers. The target participants were randomly selected from the management cadre, and from various organizations geographically dispersed across all fifty states in the U.S. They were selected from the public, private and service sectors. A survey questionnaire was specifically designed to measure the variables identified here and mailed to each target participant (See Appendix A). A follow-up reminder postcard was mailed to each target participant three weeks later in order to ensure an adequate response rate (see Dillman, 1978 for a review on mail survey procedures).

Of the managers to whom questionnaires were mailed, 325 (50%) were sent to female managers. Of the 650 mailed questionnaires, 186 were returned by the respondents. Of these, 2 managers declined to answer and returned blank survey instruments while 1 survey contained several missing responses. Of the original 650 mailed questionnaires, 183 were thus retained for the purpose of the study. The effective response rate to the present study after the reminder postcard was mailed was 29%. (See Table 1 for survey respondent descriptives.)

Of the studied population, 40% of the respondents belonged to organizations that were international in scope of operations, 28% to regional operations, 19% to national and 12% to local organizations. The mean age of the sample was 43 years, with a minimum of 24 years and a maximum of 63 years. As for education, 53% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree and 23% had a master's degree. The median annual salary lay in the range from \$60,000 to \$80,000 with the modal annual salary lying somewhere in the range between \$40,000 and \$60,000. The tallied results showed that 91.5% of the respondents were white.

Of the managers surveyed, 70% had received at least one promotion within management in the current organization in which they held membership. The number of promotions awarded did not differ significantly by respondent gender ($t(180) = 1.57, p = .12$). 96.7% of the respondents received promotions ranging between 0 and 5. Only 6 of the 182 respondents received between 5 and a maximum of 8 promotions.

The mean tenure in the respective organizations was 12.25 years for the whole sample, 14.33 years for the males and 9.92 years for the females. The average time that respondents held their present managerial positions was 3.92 years for the whole sample, 4.75 years for males and 3 years for females.

The Measures

The measures used to study the antecedent variables of inclusion in influential networks, perceptions of ability and personality traits are presented in full in Table 6 at the end of this paper.



Inclusion in Influential Networks

In this study, the extent of inclusion in influential organizational networks had been proposed to influence managerial promotions. Following Brass (1985), each focal respondent's relationship to the dominant organizational coalition was assessed on the basis of the following dimensions: career and friendship. The measure that was used to evaluate this variable followed the sociometric approach outlined by Duchon, Green and Taber (1986). It queried, "Excluding yourself, think about the small group of top-level management personnel who are the most influential members of your organization. Refer to these executives as person A, person B, person C, person D, person E and person F respectively. For each of these identified members, please indicate whether you consider yourself to be their close associate for purposes of career and/or friendship. In other words, are you part of these members' "inner circle." Circle "1" for "yes" if you are part of the member's "inner circle." Circle "2" if you are not.

Perceptions of Ability

An inventory was compiled to assess organizational perceptions of individual managerial ability, the second proposed influence on managerial promotions. Specifically, the organization's evaluations of each manager's decision making, interpersonal and work-related abilities were measured. No instruments were found available to measure this construct. Hence, perceptions of managerial ability were measured with a six item measure created for this study. The items included: "The organization that I work for thinks very highly of my decision making skills;" and "My supervisors at work believe strongly in my capabilities." The items were indexed on a seven point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Reliability estimates (Cronbach's $\alpha=.86$) for this measure indicated that the measure was highly reliable.

Personality Traits

Personality traits, the individual difference influences, were measured based on the five factor personality model. Although the personality structure itself has been found in many different test formats, no single standard measure of the five factors is available (McCrae & Costa, 1985). The five traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and culture. The trait ratings used to measure each of the five factors in this study were based on Norman's (1960) 20 item bipolar scale. This is the shortest available measure of personality traits, and parsimony was a significant criterion for its inclusion in the survey instrument designed.

This study replicated Watson's (1989) modification of Norman's (1960) personality scale as reported in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, via the use of a simple five point rating format. The reliability estimates, though low in some cases, were similar to those obtained by Watson. For each of the five trait measures, the reliability estimates (Cronbach's α) were found to be as follows: extraversion, .67; agreeableness, .51; conscientiousness, .40; emotional stability, .74; and culture, .54. The reliability estimates reported in Watson's study by individuals who self-assessed were as follows: extraversion estimate, .67; agreeableness



estimate, .48; conscientiousness estimate, .45; emotional stability estimate, .54; and openness to experience estimate, .49.

Promotions Received

All respondents held management positions at the time the questionnaire was mailed. Only the number of managerial promotions that had been awarded to the respondents' in the current organization were of interest to this study because ostensive barriers that happen to restrict mobility are generally specific to each organization.

Participants were asked, "Have you ever been promoted within management in your current organization (yes/no)?" If they responded yes, they were asked "How many promotions have you received within management in your current organization?" The value listed in response to this question was compared with the values that the respondent listed against the set of questions:

- "In your organization's structure, how many levels/grades are present in the management hierarchy?"
- "How many levels/grades are above you in management?"
- "How many levels/grades are below you in management?"

The total number of grades in each manager's organization were then computed by adding one to the total number of grades above (X) and below (Y). The reason for adding one was to denote the grade level that the respondent currently occupied. In other words, the total number of grades or levels in the managerial hierarchy was $X+Y+1$. The number of grades below the grade currently occupied by the respondent was then cross-checked against the figure listed in response to the question on the number of promotions gained in the managerial hierarchy of that organization, the tenure with the organization in which (s)he held membership, and the time at which the respondent had been promoted in order to verify that the respondent had in fact ascended the managerial hierarchy in that organization and had not been recruited from outside.

Control Variables

Education, tenure and age were used as control variables in the regression analyses presented here. The reason for using these variables is as follows: Wise (1975a) determined that better educated employees have greater promotion opportunities while Rosenbaum (1984) proffered that organizational tenure predicts promotion rates and that promotion chances decline with age.

Education was assessed by asking the respondents, "How many years of college education have you had?" This is a continuous variable measure, and also with the use of a categorical measure presented in Table 1. Their tenure in the current organization was appraised with the help of the question, "How long have you been with your current organization



(years/months)? _____ year(s), _____ month(s)." Age was measured with the question, "What is your age? _____ years."

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Results

The survey descriptives are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1 Survey Descriptives	
Surveys (N=183, Effective response rate=29%)	
	Number of questionnaires mailed=650
	Number of returned questionnaires retained for analyses=182
Organizational Scope of Operations	
	International=40%
	Regional=28%
	National=19%
	Local=13%
Respondent Age	
	Minimum age=24 years
	Maximum age=63 years
	Mean=43 years
Respondent by Sex Group (Total=183)	
	Men=97
	Women=86
Mean Organizational Tenure / Mean Tenure in Current Position	
	Men=14.33 years / 4.75 years
	Women=9.92 years / 3 years
	Whole sample=12.25 years / 3.92 years
Respondent Race	
	White=91.5 %
	Black=8.5 %
	Hispanic= --
	Asian= --
	Other= --
Respondent Education (Number of years of college education was also assessed with a continuous variable)	
	Bachelor's degree=52.9 %
	Master's degree=23.3 %
	Doctoral degree=0.6 %
	Professional degree=5.2 %
	Other=18 %



Respondent Annual Pay

Less than \$40,000=15.2 %
 40,000-60,000=31.5 %
 60,000-80,000=27 %
 80,000-100,000=14.6 %
 100,000-120,000=7.3%
 More than \$120,000=4.5 %

The means, standard deviations and correlations of measures from the study are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations												
Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 11
1. Age	42.77	8.39	X									
2. Org. Tenure (years)	11.84	9.29	.55***	X								
3. Education	4.44	2.74	0.09	0.02	X							
4. Extraversion	2.38	0.65	.12#	.18**	-0.01	-0.67	X					
5. Conscientiousness	1.83	0.44	0.03	.16**	-0.07	0.07	-0.4	X				
6. Agreeableness	2.3	0.53	-0.05	-0.09	0.06	0.03	.10#	-0.51	X			
7. Emotional stability	2.4	0.69	0.02	0.02	-0.03	0.03	.21**	.39***	-0.74	X		
8. Open to Experience	2.27	0.51	-0.08	.18**	.11*	.29***	.26***	0.09	.20**	-0.54		
9. Network Inclusion 1.73	1.67	0.07	-0.07	-0.01	-.09#	0.02	-0.09	-.15*	-0.03	X		
10. Ability Perceptions	5.64	1.04	0.02	-0.08	0	-.14*	-0.06	-0.01	-.13*	-.14*	.37***	X
11.. No. of Promotions	1.74	1.69	.14*	.42***	0.09	-.10#	-0.03	-0.09	-0.01	-0.02	.15*	.16* X

Figures in parentheses represent the Cronbach alpha reliability values.

N=183

$p < .10$ #

$p < .05$ *

$p < .01$ **

$p < .001$ ***

Inclusion in Influential Networks

Previous empirical research (e.g. Brass, 1985) has indicated that organizations are more likely to promote those who associate with the members of an organization's dominant influential network for the purposes of career and/or friendship. Prior to this research, the relationship had not been studied on a sample of corporate managers. Brass (1985) advocated that this be attempted. Table 3 presents the results for H1. The extent of inclusion in an influential network on number of managerial promotions was shown by a positive, significant standardized coefficient of .18. The increase in R^2 for the total model was 15% when inclusion in influential networks was entered into the model in Step 2 after the control variables had been entered in Step 1. R^2 increased from .19 in Step 1 to .22 in Step 2. This increase was significant



($p < .01$). Hypothesis 1 was thus supported, suggesting that the extent of inclusion in influential networks is directly and positively associated with the number of promotions gained.

Table 3 Regression of Managerial Promotions on Inclusion in Influential Networks After Controlling for Education, Tenure and Age.			
<u>Independent Variables</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>F</u>
Step 1	0.19		13.17 ***
Education		0.09	1.83
Tenure		0.48	33.22 ***
Age		-0.12	4.75 *
Step 2	0.03	7.03 **	
Inclusion in influential networks		0.18	
Total	0.22		11.98 ***
<i>N</i> =174			
$p < .05$ *			
$p < .01$ **			
$p < .001$ ***			

Perceptions of Ability

Using the theory of perception as its basis, H2 addressed the nature of the relationship between the organizational perceptions of the focal respondents' managerial ability and the number of managerial promotions obtained. This study predicted that the relationship would be positive. Table 4 depicts the hierarchical regression equation used to test this hypothesis. When managerial promotions were regressed on perceptions of managerial ability after controlling for education, organizational tenure and age, the R^2 value increased by 15%, from .19 to .22. The Beta weight or standardized regression coefficient was .18 ($p < .01$), indicating a positive, significant relationship between the two variables.



Table 4 Regression of Managerial Promotions on Perceptions of Abi After Controlling for Education, Tenure and Age.			
Independent Variables	R ²	Beta	F
Step 1	0.19		13.66***
Education		0.09	1.72
Tenure		0.49	35.20 ***
Age		-0.13	2.46
Step 2	0.03		7.38**
Perceptions of ability		0.18	
Total	0.22		12.47 ***
N=176			
p<.05 *			
p<.01 **			
p<.001 ***			

Personality Traits

H3a and H3b addressed the relationship between personality traits and the number of promotions gained, a relationship that has not been studied before. Nonetheless, past research has concluded that a positive and significant relationship exists between the personality traits of extraversion, conscientiousness, and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extraversion signals leadership and high energy levels while conscientiousness signals painstaking effort and dedication. H3a postulated a positive, significant influence of a manager's extraversion and conscientiousness upon the organization's promotion decisions in relation to that manager. H3b represents a null hypothesis for the influence of agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience on the number of promotions gained.

The five personality trait factors were entered into the hierarchical regression equation in Step 2 following the introduction of control variables in Step 1 (see Table 5). The five traits are usually referred to as the "Big Five" (McCrae & Costa, 1987). All these traits are supposed to encompass an individual's personality framework. The results obtained from this regression analysis indicate that extraversion had a significant relationship with the number of promotions obtained, but the direction was contrary to that proposed (Beta= -.17, p<.01). In other words, introversion was significantly related to managerial promotions. By way of contrast, conscientiousness was not significantly related to the number of managerial promotions awarded by the organization and gained by the manager. Agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience were not linked with the award of managerial promotions either.



Table 5 Regression of Managerial Promotions on Personality Traits After Controlling for Education, Tenure and Age			
Independent Variables	R ²	Beta	F
Step 1	0.19		13.66***
Education		0.09	1.72
Tenure		0.49	35.20***
Age		-0.13	2.46
Step 2	0.04		1.3
Extraversion		-0.17	6.11**
Agreeableness		-0.05	0.57
Conscientiousness		-0.11	2.3
Emotional Stability		-0.01	0.01
Openness to Experience		-0.1	2.13
Total	0.23		6.37 ***
N=176			
p<..05*			
p<.01 **			
p<.001 ***			

Discussion

This research posited that promotions have their roots in certain antecedents. The antecedents studied here are based in perceptual, cognitive and affective processes and in individual differences. They include the extent of inclusion in influential organizational networks, the perceptions of ability and personality traits.

Inclusion and Perceptions

The extent of inclusion in influential networks and organizational perceptions of the manager's ability were found to have a direct, positive effect on the number of managerial promotions gained. The results corresponded with the influence of extent of inclusion in influential networks on promotions to supervisory positions found by Brass (1985). Likewise, the latter findings on the influence of organizational perceptions of managerial ability provide support for Markham, Harlan and Hackett's (1987) thesis that ability is an important criterion of evaluation in promotion decisions. Positive perceptions of ability and an inclusive trusting relationship in organizational networks can be linked with positive managerial behaviors that help facilitate employee career success. Such positive managerial behaviors could take the form



of providing employees with constructive feedback, training and development opportunities and challenging assignments, and permitting shared decision making.

Sitkin and Roth define trust as a "belief in a person's competence to perform a specific task under specific circumstances" (p. 373). When individuals are included in influential networks and when organizations have high perceptions of their abilities, organizations engage in the development of "trust as an institutional arrangement" (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). On the other hand, if individuals are excluded from influential networks or if organizations have low perceptions of their abilities, organizations give vent to distrust. Distrust has been defined as a prevailing "belief that a person's values or motives will lead them to approach all situations in an unacceptable manner" (Sitkin & Roth, 1993, p. 373). If there is a preponderance of distrust in organizational members or circumstances, individuals might have to spend a good deal of their time responding to the distrust with "protective self-preservation" (see O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold & Griffin, 2000) communications. Depending upon individual differences, the short-term result could well be increased stress and/or lowered productivity or withdrawal from the mainstream in some. Future research would benefit from attempts to integrate the study of trust and distrust with the study of promotions and ascendancy in organizations.

Which Individual Differences Are Desirable?

The personality traits of extraversion and conscientiousness were hypothesized to influence the number of managerial promotions obtained while agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience were hypothesized to have no influence on the number of managerial promotions obtained. The analyses showed that conscientiousness did not have a significant influence on managerial promotions and, as expected, agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience did not either. Extraversion, in contrast, was negatively and significantly related to the number of managerial promotions bestowed upon the manager by the organization. The pattern of results acquired in relation to the personality trait variables were surprising. Introversion, not extraversion, was positively and significantly associated with the receipt of managerial promotions while conscientiousness displayed no association with the number of managerial promotions gained.

Extraversion, by definition, represents dominance, urgency and gregariousness (Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp & McCloy, 1990) and has been linked to performance in the managerial role. Barrick and Mount (1991) determined that extraverted managers perform their jobs better. This study projected that since extraverted managers perform their jobs better and since better job performers are rewarded with more promotions (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987), extraverted managers should also be rewarded with more promotions. Yet, introversion was found to be positively and significantly connected with the number of managerial promotions gained by the manager. What this result may show is that in order for individuals to ascend the corporate hierarchy, introversion might be a useful trait to possess, and that furthermore, the described link between job performance and promotions might not hold true for the occupational group of managers. Instead of social gregariousness, overt qualities of dominance and boisterousness, higher levels of management might demand greater contemplation, planning ability and social reserve. This is correct because management is involved with several resources -- including the human resources and team efforts. Conscientiousness further demonstrated no



significant effect upon the number of managerial promotions obtained in this study. What could possibly matter more to the organization than the conscientiousness of its managerial teams, or the promotions it awards to those managers whose teams deliver sustained or exceptional results?

While this study was conducted at the individual level of analysis, Newman, Wagner and Christiansen (1999) studied the influence of personality in teams, the second level of analysis in organizational literature. Specifically, Newman et al. studied two aspects of the personality composition of teams, team personality elevation (TPE) and team personality diversity (TPD). TPE is a team's mean level on a particular personality trait or set of traits while TPD is the variance or the differences among team members on the personality trait(s). Newman et al. found that for the traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience, TPE predicted team performance while the TPD of extraversion and emotional stability predicted team performance. Across all the five studied traits, TPD was found to be linked with team performance. In other words, their results suggest that heterogeneity within teams best describes high performing work teams because each member brings unique attributes to the team experience. Newman et al.'s findings present two interesting ideas. When observed from the context of the findings of this study, this paper has already indicated that teams might have an important bearing on which managers eventually receive more promotions, and that heterogeneity is the key to high performance. What is also being suggested here is that teams can gainfully consist of a heterogeneous blend of introverts and extraverts, managers can be reward-worthy introverts, and that conscientiousness on the part of the manager's team members might actually enhance the managers' reward-worthiness. The second interesting idea derives directly from the first. A very ripe potential avenue for research would involve examining the influence of personality on the reward and promotion process within a team-based environment.

A more detailed look at the personality framework reveals that it is also possible that that the "Big Five" dimensions actually mask potentially important differences between individuals (see Block, 1995). Agreeableness, Block elaborates, is a multi-dimensional construct that includes altruism, straightforwardness, trust, modesty, compliance and tender-mindedness. Chatman, Caldwell and O'Reilly (1999, p. 516) further elucidate that all of these dimensions "might be related to performance in organizational settings in very different, and potentially inconsistent ways." The task for future research would then involve exploring the multi-dimensionality of the personality constructs and also involve figuring out how they thereby impact promotions in organizations. Newman, Wagner and Christiansen (1999) seem to have tapped into this idea when they utilized the two personality inventories, the Personal Audit Inventory (PAI) (Science Research Associates, 1989) and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1987) to study work teams personalities and their effect on job performance. They indicated that extraversion comprises the variables of dominance (CPI), sociability (CPI), seriousness (PAI) and social presence (CPI), and that conscientiousness consists of firmness (PAI), achievement via independence (CPI), achievement via conformance (CPI), status (CPI) and responsibility (CPI). A multi-dimensional approach to the study of the "Big Five" could potentially provide more interesting, varied and rich insights.

In summary, this research pointed out valuable links between social mechanisms in organizations such as inclusion in influential networks and perceptions of ability, and between



individual difference variables such as personality traits on the rewards that organizations bestow upon their managers in the form of promotions. It has also pointed out potential areas for future research which include the examination of promotions and their antecedents within team settings, as well as, the incorporation of more complex, reliable and valid measures to study both team and individual level variables. A brief description of the possible limitations of the study follows.

Possible Limitations of this Study

A potential limitation is that the internal consistency reliability estimates of some of the personality trait measures were low. This could have had an effect on the inability to detect a significant influence of the conscientiousness trait on the number of promotions gained. However, as indicated earlier in this paper, the estimates were consistent with those published by Watson (1989). For future research endeavors, perhaps the design of a new personality scale, the adoption of the method utilized by Newman, Wagner and Christiansen (1999) when they drew on two established inventories, or even modifications to Watson's scale might be appropriate. While dwelling on personality traits, we might also add that the research presented here focused on studying the hypothesized directional relationships between the personality traits of extraversion and conscientiousness on managerial promotions based on observations gained from prior research. In other words, the literature helped shape the hypotheses regarding extraversion and conscientiousness. While analyzing the data gathered for the study, however, all five personality trait variables were entered into the regression equation as explanatory variables. This approach was considered to be both reasonable and appropriate because these identified traits constitute the "Big 5" traits that have been identified as the umbrella that encompass and parsimoniously define human personality. Interestingly enough, and in line with the reasoning followed here, none of the other three personality traits of agreeableness, emotional stability or openness to experience were found to display any significant association with the number of managerial promotions obtained.

Second, the study used only self-report measures on a sample of managers affiliated with a professional organization that organizes training and development seminars. The latter indicates the managers' interest in career development; although, it could lead to questions about whether affiliation with a professional organization could have led to biased results. Future research could therefore also include supervisor assessments, or 360-degree reports, to gain more scope and depth on the topic, as self-reports alone might provide limited perspective. Yet, it is fascinating to note that Watson's (1989) paper pointed to a surprising degree of convergence between self-report assessment and significant others' assessments on personality measures; hence, the value of studies such as these, which are based on self-report measures alone, need not be diminished.

Third, this was a cross-sectional study. In the future, we could also benefit from a series of longitudinal studies that track managers' promotion patterns at more than one point in time.



Appendix A

Survey Measures for Influential Network Inclusion, Perceptions of Ability and Personality Traits

Influential Network Inclusion Measure

Excluding yourself, think about the small group of top-level management personnel who are the most influential members of your organization. Refer to these executives as Person A, Person B, Person C, Person D, Person E, and Person F respectively. For each of these identified members, please indicate whether you consider yourself to be their close associate for purposes of career and/or friendship. In other words, are you part of these members' inner circle. Circle "1" for yes if you are part of the members' inner circle. Circle "2" if you are not.

	Yes	No
Person A	1	2
Person B	1	2
Person C	1	2
Person D	1	2
Person E	1	2
Person F	1	2

Perception of Ability Measure

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that your supervisors and organization might have about you. With respect to the feelings of supervisors and the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives provided below each statement.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. The organization that I work for thinks very highly of my decision-making skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My supervisors at work know that I do my work well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My supervisors at work believe strongly in my capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The organization that I work for thinks very highly of my decision-making skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My organization strongly believes that managers of high ability should be rewarded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My supervisors at work pay careful attention to my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Personality Traits Measure

The items listed below ask you to report what kind of person you think you are. Each item consists of a pair of characteristics. Each pair symbolizes opposites. Which means you cannot be both at the same time.



The numbers 1-5 form a scale between each pair indicated below. Choose a number which describes where you fall on the scale. For example, if you are a very talkative person corresponding to the left extreme on the first item you might choose 1. If you are a very silent person, you might choose 5. If you are about average on this dimension, being neither very talkative nor very silent, you might choose a 3.

1	Talkative	1	2	3	4	5	Silent
2	Frank, open	1	2	3	4	5	Secretive
3	Adventurous	1	2	3	4	5	Cautious
4	Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	Reclusive
5	Good-natured	1	2	3	4	5	Irritable
6	Not jealous	1	2	3	4	5	Jealous
7	Mild, gentle	1	2	3	4	5	Headstrong
8	Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	Negativistic
9	Fussy, tidy	1	2	3	4	5	Careless
10	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	Undependable
11	Scrupulous	1	2	3	4	5	Unscrupulous
12	Persevering	1	2	3	4	5	Quitting, fickle
14	Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	Calm
15	Excitable	1	2	3	4	5	Composed
16	Hypochondriac	1	2	3	4	5	Not so
17	Artistically sensitive	1	2	3	4	5	Insensitive
18	Intellectual	1	2	3	4	5	Unreflective, narrow
19	Polished, refined	1	2	3	4	5	Crude, boorish
20	Imaginative	1	2	3	4	5	Simple, direct



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