

NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING AND LEADERSHIP: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON LEBANESE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a field concerned with interpersonal communication to enhance individual as well as group dynamics. Consequently, new patterns of behavior and communication are developed and applied in many fields including the business field. Patterns encompass not only observable actions, but also the thinking processes and the organization of people's states-of-mind, including their emotions and how all senses are used to reach a point of attention or concentration. With the focus on creating models of human excellence, many applications of NLP have been developed including leadership related applications. A need to explore and assess NLP in the Lebanese work environment has been raised in order to define the workplace dynamics between leaders and subordinates as gleaned from data gathered from several Lebanese companies.

Accordingly, the main purpose of this paper is to assess NLP patterns and behaviors, as practiced by a sample of Lebanese employees and managers, in order to shed light on current leadership practices in the Lebanese workplace and the consequences of such a practice on the organization's objectives. This research is exploratory, descriptive and quantitative using a survey questionnaire. Results are expected to assess the workplace environment by defining the dynamics of the relationships between employees and managers that are believed to play a significant role in the assessment of the organization's health.

Keywords: Employees, Lebanon, Leadership, Managers, NLP, Relationships.

1. Introduction

Organizations nowadays hold the responsibility to deal with the dynamic changes imposed by the external forces of the business environment, since such changes affect their survival and sustainability for the coming years. Jones (2009) adds to the aforementioned by saying, “managing complex environments is a task beyond the abilities of most individuals, but an organization has the resources to develop specialists to anticipate or attempt to influence the many pressures from the business environment” (p. 28). To get a job done efficiently and to incite efficiency, middle and top managers necessitate excelling in their relationships with subordinates at all levels in order to act as catalyst of excellence and leadership. Neilson and Pasternack (2005) contend that “to generate consistently superior results, organizations need to unlock the trapped potential of their own employees by aligning individual actions with the actions of others and the interests of the firm as a whole . . . every day . . . at every level” (p. 15). To accommodate the aforementioned internal relationships, new management skills are in demand; one such skill is Neuro Linguistic Programming.

Linder-Pelz (2010) asserts that NLP is an approach “for enhancing group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, team morale and performance, motivation, buy-ins, responsibility, contribution and productivity” (p. 42). Von Rosing (2010) related NLP to leadership by saying that “NLP is an interpersonal communication model and an alternative approach to psychotherapy based on the subjective study of language, communication and personal change! Therefore, it can only influence the person, the way he/she communicates and thereby his/her leadership process” (Para 1). Von Rosing strongly believes that “the success of excellent leaders goes beyond having good employees, products and services, knowledge of those products and services, and knowledge of leadership techniques. Excellent leaders literally see the world differently.....they have a different mindset” (Para 2). Further, Cattelan (2015) contends that “Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) relates to the art of excellence and communication” (Para 1); “NLP is an approach to understanding and directing human experience, communication and behavior” (Para 3).

As observed in the aforementioned statements, NLP leads to a change in the mindset; it enhances leadership and has direct impact on productivity. Consequently, if leaders practice NLP principles, they will ultimately impact the economic wellbeing of their organizations, and on the long run, the economy of the nation. The subject related to the leaders’ approaches to their subordinates is of concern to Lebanese managers. Lebanese managers, males and females, of all categories, are known to play multitude of roles like their counterparts in other countries. Lebanese managers, males and females, work to fulfill the requirements of their respective organizations with one thing in mind: the creation of value to achieve competitive advantage. Therefore, they strive to keep abreast of all new management techniques and approaches that support their endeavors to excel within their organizations while benefiting their workforce by creating better work environment and healthy work relationships (Dr. Bassam Hamdar, Economist, personal communication April 20, 2015). Moreover, there is continuous concern for the observed boss-subordinate relationship since it may impact the employees’ performance over time. Consequently, there is a need to assess NLP patterns and behaviors, as practiced by a sample of Lebanese employees and managers, in order to shed light on current leadership practices in the Lebanese workplace and the consequences of such a practice on the organization’s objectives.

The research will also provide a brief review of the concepts governing NLP practices that confirm to the theories and principles of NLP and situational leadership. Recommendations of necessary steps to be implemented to introduce better work practices are provided.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Neuro Linguistic Programming*

NLP is a science founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in 1979. The founders developed a model for NLP based on the early work done by Bandler, who started by editing Gestalt Therapy transcripts. He quickly recognized the structure that the therapist follows/implements to create successful change. Back then, the therapist was not even consciously aware of the process. From this early experience, Bandler and Grinder developed the basic process upon which all NLP modeling is founded (Andreas & Faulkner, 1994, p. 48; Alder & Heather, 1999, pp. viii- ix). From a different point of view, O'Connor (2001) believes that NLP "began by studying the best communicators and has evolved into the systemic study of human communication. It has grown by adding practical tools and methods generated by modeling exceptional people" (p.1). Since 1994, NLP has been the basis of many approaches to communication and change. Bits of NLP have found their way into the business field practices such as sales training, communications seminars, business classrooms, and conversations (Andreas & Faulkner, 1994, p. 51). With time, NLP was popularized by John Bradshaw (Bradshaw, 2005), Anthony Robbins (Yakowicz, 2015), and others.

2.2 *Impact of NLP*

The fast development of NLP, tied with the systematic approach in its use, has led to the improvement of professionals' interpersonal communication. **Exhibit 1** provides a brief summary of areas of applications.

2.3 *NLP Definition*

NLP stands for Neuro-Linguistic Programming; "Neuro refers to the nervous system, the mental pathways of the five senses, hear, see, feel, taste and smell. Linguistic refers to the ability of using language and how specific words and phrases mirror one's mental world. Also refers to the 'Silent Language' of postures, gestures, and habits that reveals one's thinking styles, beliefs, and more. Programming is borrowed from computer science, to suggest that thoughts, feelings, and actions are simply habitual programs that can be changed by upgrading the Mental Software" (Andreas & Faulkner, 1994, p. 27). One simple definition of NLP is provided by O'Conner (2001) which defines NLP as "an accelerated learning strategy for the detection and utilization of patterns in the world" (p.2). On the other hand, Molden (2001) believes that Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a set of principles, models, and tools for learning, communication, and change. It describes the workings of the mind and how verbal and non-verbal language is used to communicate our thoughts. Furthermore, NLP relates to the art of excellence and communication. "NLP is a revolutionary approach to human communication and personal development. Some people call it 'the art and science of personal excellence' or 'the study of subjective experience'. It offers the state of the art skills in interpersonal communication and practical ways to change the way you think and behave" (Alder & Heather, 1999, p. xii). Also, in the electronic article "The Benefits of Neuro-Linguistic Programming", Kris Koonar (2015), defines NLP as: "a behavioral technology comprising of guiding principles, attitudes, and techniques about real life behavior resulting from the study of the structure of subjective experience, behavior, and communication. If behavior has a structure then NLP has captured it so that it can be learned, taught, and changed" (Para 1).

In summary, all definitions agree that NLP is a science that studies the success of people belonging to all walks of life, formulates several patterns that are believed to be the reason behind this success, and then teaches how one can clone this success in similar situations.

2.4 NLP Pillars

O'Conner (2001) and Molden (2001) contend that NLP has six pillars or principles. These pillars form the basic foundation that NLP was built upon. Studying these principles has a strong impact on understanding and applying the latter NLP process. The first principle states that a person is his/her own emotional store and level of skill; that is, a person is the most important part of any NLP intervention. NLP is a tool that needs practice just like any other tool used creatively. The success and failure with NLP is highly dependent on how resourceful and skillful one is. The second pillar deals with the presuppositions of NLP that form NLP's guiding central principles; these ideas or beliefs are presupposed, or not questioned, and are confidently acted upon. The third pillar deals with building "Rapport". Rapport is the core and essence state that two or more people experience. It is built when people experience a good feeling, continue with their own words, have no tension when being with others, and where no resistance exists to the other person's ideas. It is some kind of a bonding that takes place on the unconscious level. It is essential in any kind of good communication. The fourth principle is about defining the outcome or knowing what one wants; NLP practitioners are goal oriented. They begin with the end in mind, a leadership habit, as per Steven Covey (1989), the author of the book titled "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People."

According to Covey (1989), the fifth principle deals with "Feedback – or how will a person know he/she is getting what he/she wants"; getting feedback is highly dependent on one's senses: looking, listening and feeling what is actually happening is the center of the keen attention dedicated to goal achieving. The sixth principle is about "Flexibility - if what is one doing is not working, then one should do something else"; being flexible means focusing on the big picture and changing plans accordingly. If one plans a trip to the mountains with the family in the early morning and wakes up to know that a storm is coming shortly, he/she would focus on the bigger goal that is having fun with the family and would change plans accordingly instead of cursing and feeling frustrated the whole day or even worse, going out into the storm.

2.5 NLP Presuppositions

NLP presuppositions are the foundation for describing how the mind or brain works. It is a map that guides people to change thoughts, actions and feelings that in turn produce certain results. NLP has eleven presuppositions that are considered to be the principles and facts which represent the base concept for NLP. According to Molden (2001), these presuppositions are divided into three categories:

2.5.1 Category One

This category has three presuppositions and focuses on getting results that are based on a continuously monitored approach. The presuppositions are:

A. Generating new and not repairing old.

Molden (2001) believes that a great deal of time can be spent repairing systems that don't work very well, are outdated or have been neglected. Therefore, people should repair something to make it more effective, even though the repair is likely to bring only small improvements.

B. Feedback nourishes, failure saps energy.

This principle intends to "banish the term 'failure' from the context of human endeavor and restrict its use to non-biological systems." (ibid, p. 9). "For people, we will replace 'failure' with the concept of 'feedback' and introduce a simple loop mechanism called TOTE. A TOTE is a completed event. The letters stand for test-operate-test-exit" (ibid). The TOTE concept suggests that "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. If you want something new, do something new" (Andrea & Faulkner, 1994, p. 37).

C. Influence and control are gained through flexibility.

According to Molden (2001), business goals that are outdated, meetings with rigid agendas, and mistrust and low motivation that are the results of interfering managers, are all examples of inflexibility. The difference between rigid and flexible managers is that the former thinks of changing people or the system while the latter think of changing themselves to provoke change in others or the system. According to Molden, the latter managers belong to the category of leaders described as: "Learning to control business in the new era of leadership will require courage and break-thoughts in terms of the way people "normally" get things done. There is very little normality in the future" (p. 14).

2.5.2 Category Two

This category consists of two presuppositions that are intended to help achieve relationships that motivate and create high performance; relationships that have trust, sincerity, and understanding at their core. The said presuppositions are:

A. Resistance indicates lack of rapport

Andreas and Faulker (1994) has demonstrated that 83 percent of all sales are based upon the customer liking the salesperson. Rapport is a set of tools and skills that if applied and calibrated in a good manner would result in more fulfilling relationships. "The use of rapport is in direct relation to one getting one's view across: influencing, persuading, or having an effect on somebody to bring about change" (Alder & Heather, 1999, p. 53). "Rapport is essential to working relationships, especially if you want to be influential. We are more likely to respond positively to a colleague's ideas and suggestions when we have a rapport with them" (Molden, 2001, p. 17).

B. Intention and behavior are different

What NLP does is it "separates the intention behind an action from the action itself. Persons are not their behaviors. When a person has a better choice of behavior that also achieves their positive intention, they will take it" (O'Connor, 2001, p. 5).

2.5.3 Category Three

This category comprises of four presuppositions that are about taking responsibility for one's actions and the way others respond.

A. The meaning of one's communication is in the response of the recipient

"This response maybe different from the one you wanted, but there are no failures in communication only responses and feedback. If you are not getting the result you want to change what you are doing. Take responsibility for the communication" (ibid, p. 6).

NLP suggested that to handle an undesired response, one is to ask why such a response is generated so as to modify the communication method. Molden (2001) recommends that "Whenever you get a response you consider to be inappropriate in some way, rather than reiterate the same message, work with the response and be curious to understand it" (p. 27).

B. Perception is reality

"Reality exists only in the mind of the individual and, as no two minds are alike, we need concern ourselves only with perception" (ibid).

O'Connor (2001) argues that one does not know what reality is. People's senses, beliefs and past experience give them a representation (map) of the world from which to operate, but a representation (map) can never be completely accurate; otherwise, it would be the same as the situation (ground) it covers. One does not know the reality of the situation in question; the representation (map) is the perceived situation in question.

Figure 1 illustrates how an external stimulus passes through a filtration stage and then is mixed with the representation system, state and physiology before an action or a behavior takes place.

C. The mind and the body are parts of the same system

O'Connor (2001) contends that if one changes his/her posture, then one can change his/her state of mind and vice versa. "Mind and body interact and influence each other. It is not possible to make a change in one without the other being affected. When we think differently, our bodies change, when we act differently we change our thoughts and feelings" (p. 6).

D. A person is in charge of his/her mind and is responsible for the results

This presupposition is a synonym to proactive; Alder and Heather (1999) believe that one can think what he or she likes, chooses what has importance, changes his/her beliefs and values, and the way he/she reacts to people and circumstances. No outward circumstances can rob one of these basic human choices.

To conclude, the presuppositions are ideas or statements that have to be taken into account/consideration for a representation to make sense. Molden (2001) uses the analogy that within language systems a sentence is to be true for some other sentence to make sense, so are presuppositions to NLP.

2.6 Rapport – The Process

Rapport has been defined in item A, under the 2nd category of presuppositions. Alder and Heather (1999) assert that effective rapport involves matching, which in turn stems from the fact that people tend to like people who are like them; they get on better with them, and so communicate with them more effectively. Rapport is a highly desired state that leads to influence, "By influence I am referring to the process of engaging the thoughts of other people in such a way that they follow a direction in support of our own thinking, which concludes in a certain action being taken to our satisfaction. In this way we are being influential in our ideas" (Molden, 2001, p. 77).

Rapport can only be built when matching and mirroring the communication mediums and tapping into the representation systems of the person one is building rapport with.

An interesting concept to shed some light on is the mediums people use in communication. **Figure 2** shows how much of people's communication is carried out through different forms. The results reveal that the majority of communication is in the form of body language, to be followed by tone of voice. Words only accounts for 7%. Hence, Molden (2001) suggests that rather than putting the responsibility on the others to change themselves, one can develop his/her sensory acuity and respond according to what he/she is picking up. This can be done by calibration and tuning to the receiver's communication channel. Calibration is "the process of learning to read another person's unconscious, non-verbal responses in an ongoing interaction by pairing observable behavioral cues with a specific internal response" (ibid, p. 310).

Communication channels, on the other hand, are manifested by the sensory preference; that is, which one of people's five senses: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, gustatory, and olfactory is preferred for representing the world to the speaker. It should be noted that the latter two senses are less significant in every day's human interaction as per Alder and Heather (1999). As O'Connor (2001) states, no system is used in isolation, just as not only one sense is used to experience the world. Exhibit 2 lists different characteristics of people with different representation preferences on all of the matching and mirroring patterns.

A final tool that is needed for building rapport is reading eyes or "Eye Accessing Cues", based on the fact that the eyes are connected to the brain. Molden (2001) believes that there are distinct patterns of eye movements that are connected to the process of thinking. These patterns provide one with cues to a person's thinking strategy. Figure 3 shows different eye movements' cues, and highlights the cue's corresponding meaning.

Based on the above, and according to Molden (2001), the most common matching patterns are listed in **Exhibit 3**.

Mirroring is mainly matching the body language of the listener (other person), "You can also mirror body language by presenting a mirror image. This means that, unlike matching left with left and right with right, one mirrors left with right and vice versa (assuming both are facing each other" (Molden, 2001, p.76).

Mirroring and matching different patterns of a person during an interaction is called pacing. It is as if the other person is leading and the NLP practitioner is following. Leading is then used to test how strong the rapport is. "You can check if you have sufficient rapport with a person by starting to lead. If you adopt a different physiology, the other person will follow you if you have strong rapport. If not, keep pacing" (ibid, p.78).

2.7 Advantages of NLP

The application of NLP in the business sector has helped many people to achieve what some have considered impossible. A most recent case is that of the current United States of America's President Barak Obama in adopting the issue of change, and convincing the American public of his objectives; this was achieved by following NLP techniques and their benefits (Tantrum, 2013, Para 1). According to Alder (2002), the most commonly acclaimed benefits that are applicable to the individuals, to the groups and to the organizations are:

- “Controlling the way people feel
- Thinking positively
- Adopting goals that motivate and focus energy
- Overcoming negative effects from past experiences
- Replacing unwanted habits with more useful ones
- Attaining competences that people have seen others acquire
- Developing confidence
- Thinking Creatively
- Learning from others skills as well as knowledge
- Communicating effectively
- Offering an effective methodology for human change” (pp. 9-10).

Koonar (2015) contends that "The core of NLP is to change you from within. You get what you project to the outside world. If you show lack of confidence, you will surely be overlooked for major projects and promotions. At the same time if you project passivity and confidence you will get appreciation for your work, you can easily get jobs and so on. You will be able to talk to anyone, build a rapport with anybody; the possibilities are limitless" (Para 4).

2.8 Disadvantages of NLP

2.8.1 NLP and the Ongoing Debate about its Subjectivity

Derks, Lucas A.C. (2006) contends in his article “*Modelling as a misleading ideology in NLP*”, that “the need to define ‘pure NLP’ becomes urgent when one is confronted with NLP practice that diverts largely from the original formula. Since more and more people do business in NLP, the diversity increases” (Para 25). Furthermore, Derks asserts that “within the NLP community there is no formal board of approval that judges new models. If there was one, on what criteria could they base their decisions?”

It is my observation that new models are chosen on several criteria ordered as weighted in the real NLP world: 1) Marketing: A model adds market value to my training program. It is unique for my institute. It is appealing to workshop participants. (More success, health, power, sex and money with NLP); 2) From an NLP authority: It was introduced by a person with a name in NLP; 3) Usefulness: A model works. It has proven to be useful in my own work; 4) Conceptual aesthetics: Is it chosen because it is a beautiful model. It satisfies my needs for everything fitting in harmony; 5) NLP congruent: It fits in NLP concerning explicit and implicit values. It makes use of the client’s potential. It takes the larger system into account. And it can be translated in existing NLP vocabulary; and 6) NLP modelled: It is modelled from an expert in the correct manner” (Para 53).

Another researcher, Bradbury (2009), who runs a website that provides researched responses to frequently asked questions about NLP, describes many issues which contribute to the downside of NLP - using search criteria such as:

- "nlp does not work"
- "arguments against nlp"
- "why nlp does not work"
- "nlp therapy criticism"
- and so on

Bradbury identified the following criticisms:

1. Bandler and Grinder weren't more precise in their definition of NLP when they were just starting out

There doesn't seem to have been much of an effort to work out a draft of a detailed description of what NLP is about at the time when NLP was first being developed. For example, Bradbury’s belief that "NLP is the study of the structure of subjectivity" matches quite comfortably with John Grinder's more recent claims that NLP is nothing more than the process of modeling. But Bradbury continues his criticism by asking where does that leave "NLP is an attitude"? And having said that, it is only fair to point out that it is notoriously difficult to provide *exact* definitions in the context of "soft skills like coaching and mentoring".

2. Despite its emphasis on using "systemic thinking" and dealing with "the whole person", different "schools" have grown up within the NLP community which has become overly focused on one particular type of approach to using NLP.

As Wyatt Woodsmall (2005; cited in Bradbury) states, there are three main schools that can be distinguished from each other. These are presented in **Exhibit 4**.

Note: Woodsmall asserts that as a general rule, *all* of these approaches (**Exhibit 4**) should be

accorded equal value - though each situation may favor the use of one approach over the other two. The decision as to which approach is most suitable in a given situation should be based on an assessment of the situation - not on the basis of the assumption that one approach is inherently "better" than the other two.

3. The NLP techniques aren't as simple as is often claimed

Not every technique is appropriate in every situation. Part of the skills inherent in NLP is knowing which techniques are appropriate in any particular situation.

NLP may be relatively simple to teach - at a purely factual level - but it takes genuine experience to be able to use the techniques effectively.

4. Because there is no clearly defined theoretical dimension to NLP, it has accumulated a wealth of crud along with the good stuff.

NLP started out being entirely pragmatic. Except that there's no such thing as "entirely pragmatic". NLP started out on the basis of adopting behavior which had been shown to work. That didn't mean that *everything* was bound to work *all* of the time, for *everybody*, of course. Rather it provided a toolkit of proven methods and techniques from which practitioners could select whatever seemed most appropriate / effective in a given situation. In other words, by failing to deal adequately with the theoretical aspects of NLP, the original developers left the door open for the subsequent introduction of certain ideas and concepts into the "toolbox" - including techniques and methods which weren't "adopted" because they had already been found to work, but were created because someone thought they "ought" to work.

5. NLP attracts its fair share of extremists

There are people (trainers, authors, etc.) who have no interest in NLP other than making money out of it. Usually, no one can do anything about these people since they aren't breaking any laws.

6. There is *no* central organizing body for NLP

The absence of a central organizing body makes NLP almost impossible to regulate, and whilst various organizations have been set up as "professional bodies" for NLP practitioners, they may not be worth the reputation they claim to have. As a consequence, numerous ideas that are totally contrary to NLP have been introduced into the list of supposedly authentic NLP procedures.

7. NLP Techniques *can* be used for malicious and self-serving purposes

Despite the emphasis by "good" trainers and writers on using NLP to create "win/win" results, some of the NLP techniques can be used for malign purposes by people so inclined. For example, online groups interested in the use of NLP for making sexual conquests. There is also some anecdotal evidence that politicians in the UK and the USA (and maybe elsewhere) are beginning to use NLP techniques to influence the public's opinions (1phil4everyill, 2008).

8. And lastly, a limitation rather than an outright flaw, **the linguistic / language element of NLP: NLP was designed to work in English**

To put it another way, the linguistic elements of the NLP techniques *weren't* designed to work in any language other than English. For example, *phonetic, scope, syntactic* and *punctuation ambiguities*, adopted from the work of Milton Erickson, are all useful techniques for English speakers. But which, if any work at all in, say, German, Greek, Arabic or Chinese? On the plus side, are there linguistic constructions which will work in other languages which won't work in English? (Bradbury, 2009).

2.9 Applications of NLP

Many of NLP's tools and applications are widely used in business, management, education, training and therapy. Many people may have encountered and applied these principles in their life, without even realizing that it came from NLP (Holistic online.com, 2004). For example, NLP has been used by Bill Clinton and Barak Obama who were trained by Anthony Robbins, a master NLP trainer and the author of many books on the same topic (Kueek, 2015).

According to the Mind Bridge Training Group (2015), “mastery of applied NLP for business provides specific, learnable skills and techniques that will improve the level of performance, resolve sources of tension, overcome self-imposed limitations, and achieve higher levels of confidence in virtually any area of professional life” (Para 21). Also, “for a return on investment, many organizations around the world have used NLP to assist them in achieving their corporate objectives. NLP is useful in any situation in which people must communicate in order to produce positive results” (Para 22). Furthermore, Mind Bridge Training Group describes successful use of NLP projects as delineated in **Exhibit 5**.

2.10 Impact of NLP on Leadership

The interest in NLP by the business community has grown significantly over the last five years (Molden, 2007). The reason why NLP is popular amongst business leaders is because of the highly effective skills of communication, learning and change it has to offer. Moreover, according to Molden (2007, p. 7), the most widely used NLP model is the Universal Alignment model, also known as “neurological levels of communication learning and change”. This model was developed by Dilts & Bonissone (1993) and Bateson (2000). This model gives leaders the conceptual framework for working effectively with change at all levels. Moreover, Kane (2003) reports that Dan Harrison developed an array of practical tools to engage, motivate, influence and unleash creative talents. Moreover, he developed the Harrison Paradox Assessment which teaches business persons how to be a more rounded leader. **Exhibit 6** shows actual traits that Harrison Paradox Assessment deals with to incite leadership in people.

As has been mentioned earlier in the introduction, this paper aims to explore and assess NLP within the context of the Lebanese work environment in order to define the workplace dynamics between leaders and subordinates at several Lebanese companies. Accordingly, the next sections shall provide a brief summary of the concept of leadership, starting with definitions and ending up with the most recent developments in building better leadership practices in organizations.

2.11 Leadership

Jena McGregor (2014) cites MacGregor stating that “the function of leadership is to engage followers, not merely to activate them, but to commingle needs and aspirations and goals in a common enterprise, and in the process to make better citizens of both leaders and followers” (Para 5). While Jones & George (2008) define it as “the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals” (p.557). Others state that “Leadership occurs when particular individuals exert influence on the goal achievement of others in an organizational context” (Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 299). On the other hand, Byron (2010) and referring to James MacGregor Burns, contends that “leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations of both leaders and followers” (p. 7). To conclude, the common denominator to all what has been stated is that leadership is the application of influence from the leader on the follower(s) to achieve a vision or a goal with higher motivation and commitment.

2.11.1 Theories on Leadership

According to Robbins and Coulter (2009) people have been interested in leadership since they started coming together in groups to accomplish goals. However, it was not until the early part of the twentieth century that researchers actually began to study leadership (p. 387). Various approaches have been developed and evolved during the years to answer the question what makes an effective leader. "Leading is such an important process in all organizations: nonprofit organizations, government agencies and schools as well as for-profit organization that it has been researched for decades" (Jones & George, 2009, p.504). Approaches include: Trait Theories (Covey, 1989, 1992; Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 300; Jones & George, 2009, p. 504); Behavioral Theories (Robbins and Coulter, 2009, p. 389) manifested by two groups, emerging (Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 301) and assigned leadership (Kreitner, 1998, p. 455; Jones and George, 2009, p. 506); Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership (Kreitner, 1998, p. 457; Adler, 2008; Scholarblogs.emory, 2013; Leadership-Central, 2015, Para 7; Robbins and Coulter, 2009, p. 393); Contingency Theory (Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 306); House's Path-Goal Theory (Jones & George, 2009, pp.510-511; Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 306); Leader-member Exchange (Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007; Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 313); and, Transformational Leadership (Covey, 1991, p. 285; Johns & Saks, 2008, pp. 313-314; Jones & George, 2009, p.513).

Table 1 and Exhibit 7 list traits and personal characteristics related to effective leadership and their corresponding description, and the traits of centered leaders respectively.

On the other hand, **Exhibit 8** provides a summary of Behavioral Theories of Leadership.

2.11.2 Hersey and Blanchard's Leadership Model

Robbins and Coulter (2009) explain the Hersey and Blanchard's Leadership model by stating that "the managers need to adapt their style based on the subordinates' readiness, that is, the extent to which subordinates have the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task" (p. 393). The model classifies management styles into four classes: Telling/Directing, Selling/ Coaching, Participating/Supporting and Delegating.

2.11.3 Fiedler's Contingency Model

According to Jones and George (2009), "Fiedler's Contingency model states that the leader style is an enduring characteristic that managers cannot change. Consequently, for managers to be effective they need to be placed in leadership situations that fit their styles or situations need to be changes to suit the managers. Situations can be changed based on power position and task structure" (p. 509).

2.11.4 House's Path –Goal Theory

In his study, leadership researcher Robert House (1971; cited by Jones and George, 2009, p. 510) investigated what leaders do to motivate their followers to ultimately achieve group and organizational goals. Jones & George expose House's Path-Goal theory as a contingency model of leadership where leaders motivate subordinates by identifying the desired outcomes that they expect their subordinates to achieve, rewarding them for high performance and the attainment of work's goals in accordance to these desired outcomes, after clarifying for them the paths to the attainment of these goals. Furthermore, the Path-Goal Theory is concerned with four definite types of leader's behavior which are: **Directive** leaders who schedule work, maintain performance standards, and let employees know what is expected of them. This behavior is essentially identical to initiating structure (see Exhibit 8); **Supportive** Leaders who are friendly, approachable, and concerned with pleasant interpersonal relationships. This behavior is essentially identical

to consideration (see Exhibit 8); *Participative* Leaders who consult with employees about work related matters and consider their opinions; and, *Achievement-oriented* leaders who encourage employees to exert high effort and strive for a high-level goal accomplishment. They express their confidence in that employees can reach these goals (Johns & Saks, 2008, p. 306). Based on the aforementioned categorizations, for managers to lead effectively, their behaviors should be contingent on the nature of the subordinates as well as the type of work they do.

2.11.5 The Leader Substitutes Model

The Leader Substitutes model focuses on when leaders are not really needed because substitutes for the leadership are present. “A leadership substitute is something that acts in place of the influence of a leader and makes leadership unnecessary” (Jones & George, 2009, p.511).

2.11.6 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

In a study done in 2007, Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir found that followers experience both trust-building and trust-eroding incidents in their relationships with their leaders, and that followers may trust the leader in one respect (e.g. competence) but not in the others (e.g. benevolence). Clarifying further the theory, Johns & Saks (2008) contend that over time, leaders and employees, and through the course of their interactions, build unique and different types of relationships. In terms of LMX theory, “these relationships will differ in terms of the quality of the relationship. Effective leadership processes result when leaders and employees develop and maintain high-quality social exchange relationships” (p. 313).

2.11.7 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

So far, the theories stated depict various characteristics of what can be called transactional leadership, which basically means that leaders change realities of their particular world to nearly conform to their values and ideals (Covey, 1991, p. 285). Adding to the aforementioned, Johns & Saks (2008) explain that “transactional leadership as —employees perform well and the leader rewards them, the leader uses a participatory style, and the employees come up with good ideas” (pp. 313-314). While, Jones and George (2009) assert that “Transformational leadership occurs when managers change (or transform) their subordinates in three important ways: (1) managers make subordinates aware of how important their jobs are for the organization and how necessary it is for them to perform those jobs as best they can so that the organization can attain its goals; (2) they make their subordinates aware of the subordinates’ own needs for personal growth, development, and accomplishment; and, (3) they motivate their subordinates to work for the good of the organization as a whole, not just for their own personal gain or benefits” (p. 513). A summary of the contrasting characteristics of Transactional and Transformational Leadership is given in **Exhibit 9**.

2.11.8 The Transformational Leader

Johns & Saks (2008) contend that the transformational leader behavior is based on four key dimensions: “*intellectual stimulation*, where people are stimulated to think about problems, issues, and strategies in new ways. The leader challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits followers’ ideas; *individualized consideration*, which involves treating employees as distinct individuals, indicating concern for their needs and personal development, and serving as a mentor or coach when appropriate; *inspirational motivation*, involves the communication of visions that are appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders have a strong vision for the future based on values and ideals; and, *charisma*, or the ability to command strong loyalty and devotion from followers and thus have the potential for strong influence among them” (p. 314). Jones and George (2009, p. 514) manifest that a charismatic leader is an enthusiastic, self confident leader who is able to communicate his or her vision of how good things could be.

2.11.9 Summary

The literature review provided a first-hand overview of the basic NLP skills which improve and enhance communication, rapport building and goal setting. These skills are applicable to the business world and have a proven effect on the bottom line. Moreover, this paper also exposed a brief literature review of leadership and situational leadership. Combining the aforementioned contents serves the aim of the current study whose purpose is to assess the relationship between NLP and leadership within a context of an exploratory study applied to Lebanon.

Many leaders in businesses have turned to the creative and innovative aspects of NLP for inspiration in organizational development, total quality management, team building and strategic planning. Moreover, presentation skills and public speaking are an integral part of corporate life today. NLP self-management techniques, language patterns and goal setting are vital to have effective speaking patterns and peak performance (Lincoln, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

Academic research can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. The structure of the research purpose is of high importance (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 138). As the purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between NLP presuppositions and rapport within situational leadership styles, in a selected group of Lebanese companies, this research is exploratory in nature but shall use descriptive statistics to assess the behavior and attitudes to which the selected sample of Lebanese employees and managers conform to the theories and principles of NLP and situational leadership. "Exploratory studies aim for the basic knowledge within the research purpose. The purpose of such studies is to decide and demonstrate the character of a problem by collecting information through examination. These studies are conducted to create a basic understanding of conditions, events, and actions" (Yin, 1994). On the other hand, the objective of the descriptive study is to describe market characteristics or functions (Malhotra, 1996, p. 90); such description help in making complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts, and finding out who, what, where, or how much (Cooper and Schindler, 2003).

The research instrument is a survey questionnaire that is distributed to 35 employees from different areas and work environments, and interviews conducted with 36 managers. . The companies covered in the survey include: Khoury Hospital, Mobi, Aqua Techniques, Nsouli's Jewelry, Al Safadi textiles, Kharafi National, Al Liwaa Newspaper, Solider Real Estate, Phoenicia Intercontinental Hotel, Arab Open University and Audi Bank. This sample is relatively a small one due to time and cost limitations.

3.1 Sampling Procedures

The choice of the sampling technique depends on the feasibility and sensibility of the means of collecting data to answer the research question(s) and to address the researcher's objectives from the entire population under study (Saunders et al, 2000). The population of interest is divided into two groups; the first group is that of the managers who usually show leadership and effectiveness of performance; and, the second group represents the employees working in the same organizations to which the managers surveyed belong to. Both samples are subject to respond to the set questionnaires, giving their opinions on similar statements so that the researchers assess and identify differences which characterize the behavior of leaders toward subordinates within the same institutions. Accordingly, the research shall provide a gap assessment by comparing those who are influenced to reach goals (the employees) and those who are manifesting NLP factors in the leadership style utilized (the managers).

3.2 Questionnaire Development

Two questionnaires are used in the current research. The first is directed to the employees and the second is directed to the managers. The first questionnaire consists of four sections: the first assesses the traits and characteristics in the leader as perceived by the employee; the second assesses the characteristics and qualities of the follower or employee; the third contains questions to identify the follower's representation preference and his/her consciousness of pacing and leading; and, the last section contains the demographic questions. The 5-point Likert scale is used for statements in the first and second sections.

The second questionnaire also contains some questions which are related to the leader and follower interaction, and includes questions that assess the alignment of the leader with the NLP principles and presuppositions. The last two sections are similar to those of the first questionnaire.

All responses were entered to the SPSS program "Statistical Product and Services Solutions", a 2009 acquired IBM product (Hejase & Hejase, 2013, p.58). The study was performed using descriptive statistics; data tables including frequency and percentage distributions were used and supported by their respective figures. Moreover, cross tabs were performed to study relationships between variables that may add value to the findings.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Results of the Employees' Questionnaire

4.1.1 Demographics

Results show that respondents are 54% males and 46% females; the majority, or 57.1%, are 21 to 29 years of age; 28.6% are 30-35 years of age; and, the remaining are older than 36 years. All of the respondents speak Arabic as their first language; 40% have as a minimum a baccalaureate or technical baccalaureate degrees; and, 60% have a bachelor or masters degrees. Moreover, 23% of the respondents have less than one year work experience; 57% has 4 years as an average work experience; 14.3% has 11 years as an average work experience; and finally, 5.7% has more than 15 years of work experience.

4.1.2 Characteristics of the Superior

Table 2 represents summarized results manifested by the respondents characterizing their superiors at work.

4.1.2.1 Considering the boss as risk taker.

Table 2 shows that only 34.2% of the employees consider their superiors as risk takers; 42.8% does not see their bosses as risk takers; and, 22.9% abstained from giving their opinions. Their overall opinion has an average weight of 2.8571 on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being strongly agree. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement, or they were divided in opinion with some skewed towards disagreement.

4.1.2.2 Superior mingles with subordinates.

42.9% of the respondents agree that their superior mingles with them; 22.9% abstained from commenting; and, 34.3% disagree that their bosses mingle with them. Results show that the concerned Lebanese managers do not deal directly with their employees but rather delegate that to their second in command. One may observe that respondents abstaining from giving their opinions are almost one third in number, which is a fact to be observed. Lebanese subordinates shy away when asked to characterize their superiors for the fear of having their opinions shared with the managers. It is worth mentioning here that respondents were promised confidentiality by the researcher. The overall mean average reflects that respondents are indifferent.

4.1.2.3 Superior listens to subordinates' ideas and opinions.

Table 2 shows that only 57% of the respondents agree that their managers listen to their ideas and opinions. Almost 43% disagrees or did not give their opinions. The mean average for this statement is 3.4286. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement or they were divided in opinion with some skewed towards agreement.

4.1.2.4 Superior's attitude towards crisis.

The question statement is "Boss rolls with the punches when problems are faced." Table 2 shows that 54% of the respondents agree that their superiors are capable of dealing with the dynamics of the workplace, and with new situations. 25.7% are neutral in their opinion. Here the researcher may suspect that respondents did not understand the statement or abstained from talking about their bosses under crisis. 20% of the respondents feel that their bosses are not capable of dealing with work problems. The mean average for this statement is 3.3714. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement or they are divided in opinion with some skewed towards agreement.

4.1.2.5 The superior admires and shows interest in the employee.

Table 2 shows that 40% of the respondents agree that their bosses are positive and have empathy for them. 28.6% did not give their opinion. 30.5% disagree. The overall mean average reflects that respondents are indifferent.

4.1.2.6 Superior teaches subordinate everything he/she knows.

Table 2 shows that 25.7% of the superiors do not share what they know with employees. 22.9% are indifferent, and 51.5% agree that their superiors have taught them all what they know. The mean average for this statement is 3.2857. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement or they are divided in opinion with some skewed towards agreement.

4.1.2.7 Characterizing Superior's Support to the Subordinate

Table 3 shows that 71.40% of the respondents seek their superiors' support when facing job-related problems while 25.70% disagreed. Possibly those who disagreed have felt that they know their job very well. The mean average for this statement was 3.5143. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement or they are divided in opinion with some skewed towards agreement. On the other hand, those who got their superiors' support believe that their bosses are available. However, there are no comments about the frequency of such problems. Moreover, those 71% of the respondents could have not been given vital pieces of information, obliging them to approach the superior for help.

When the respondents were asked if they spoke about their personal problems with the boss, the majority of 74% disagreed. This result could possibly mean several things. One possibility is that the boss does not accept sharing personal problems, or the superiors feel that personal problems should be separated from work, or the subordinates shy away from their bosses fearing negative feedback or negative perception. The mean average for this statement is 1.9429. Therefore, the respondents clearly disagree with the statement.

The third statement dealing with knowledge, power and sharing is important. 51.40% of the respondents believe that their superiors feel that knowledge is power and certain things should be kept away. This approach is typical in Lebanon and is used with employees to keep them under control by making them vulnerable to the superiors' help. This third statement matches the result obtained in the first statement above. Moreover, the mean average for this statement was 3.2857. Therefore, the respondents feel either indifferent to the statement or they are divided in opinion with some skewed towards agreement.

4.1.2.8 Characterizing Oneself

Employees were given the opportunity to characterize themselves. **Table 4** summaries their responses. 71.40% consider themselves experts at what they perform at work. 25.70% are indifferent and only 2.90% disagreed. 68.60% declared that they do not need supervision in tasks they have the expertise in. Therefore, the grand majority feels they know their work. However, in **Table 3**, 71.40% are ready to seek help from their superiors if they face problems related to their jobs. If these two results are compared, one may possibly say that the superior is not really providing all the necessary information to their employees to carry out their jobs completely on their own. Such a finding is confirmed with the results reported for other statements of Table 4, where 65.70% require continuous support on tasks that are newly assigned; 65.60% are not fully satisfied with all areas of their jobs; and, 71.40% are generally satisfied with their jobs. Moreover, the mean average for most of the statements above is greater than 3.71. Therefore, the respondents incline to agree and reflect true feelings about the statements.

On the other hand, 95% of the respondents declared that they do their jobs successfully when their bosses provide them with the necessary help and support on those areas that the respondents feel to be new to them. This fact is highly confirmed by the average mean of 4.2286.

4.1.2.9 Characterizing Working with Others

Table 5 shows that respondents are effective team players. The majority, of at least 74% to 89%, agree with the four statements that describe group and team work, and how they see a relationship is built. The mean average for this set of statements is above 4.0, indicating full agreement.

4.1.2.10 Personal Initiative and New Ideas at Work

Respondents reflected, in **Table 6**, an average behavior (around 50%) towards how open their organizations are when new ideas are conceptualized, presented and perceived. The average mean of such behavior in the different organizations demonstrates either indifference or a slight skew towards agreement.

4.1.2.11 Interpersonal Communication Skills

Respondents agree by the majority or 71.40% that they are able to read the eyes of the other person and know if he/she is lying (see **Table 7**). The mean average here is above 4.0, indicating full agreement to such a statement. But only 45.70% of the respondents agree that they either change their voice pitch or the accent to match the other's voice pitch or accent in a conversation. These last two facts do not reflect if the respondents are either experts or not in manipulating their vocals in a conversation. The mean averages are approximately 3.1, indicating indifference.

4.1.3 Results of the Superiors' Questionnaire

4.1.3.1 Demographics

The superiors' sample consists of 36 respondents. Respondents are 56% males and 44% females; only 19.4% are 22 to 29 years of age, 22% are 30-35 years of age, 28% are 36-40 years and 29% are 41-50 years. 55.6% of the respondents speak Arabic as their first language, and 44.4% speak a variety of languages. 39% have a bachelor degree, 53% hold a masters degree, and 8% hold a doctorate degree. Therefore, the managers are highly educated.

Moreover, 11% of the respondents have less than one year work experience; 11% have 1-3 years; 50% have 6 years as an average work experience; 22% have 10-15 years; and finally, 5.6% have more than 15 years of work experience. Therefore, the responding managers can be labeled as experienced managers in their majority.

Results also show that 61.2% of the respondent managers belong to the middle-low level of management, and 28% belong to the middle-top level of management. Furthermore,

58.30% of the respondents are Lebanese managers working in Lebanese organizations, while 41.70% of the respondents are managers working within the United Nations International Force in the South of Lebanon. This last group of managers is the ones who speak several languages other than Arabic.

4.1.3.2 Characteristics of the Leader

Table 8 represents summarized results manifested by the respondents characterizing their leadership role at work.

4.1.3.3 Considering the leader as risk taker.

Table 8 shows that 69.4% of the managers consider themselves to be risk takers, 19.50% disagree, and 11.1% abstained from giving their opinions. Their overall opinion has an average weight of 3.7222 on a scale of 1 to 5; 5 being strongly agree. Therefore, the respondents feel slightly in agreement with the statement.

4.1.3.4 Superior mingles with subordinates.

75% of the respondents agree that they mingle with their employees; 16.7% abstained from commenting; and, only 8.3% disagree. Results show that contrary to the employees' opinions shown earlier, the Lebanese managers are concerned and deal directly with their employees; only few of them delegate the mingling to their second in command. One may observe that respondents abstaining from giving their opinions are around 17%, which is a fact to be observed. Some of the Lebanese managers shy away when asked to characterize their relationship with employees maybe because they fear that their opinions will reach the employees, who may take advantage of this knowledge. The overall mean average of 3.7500 reflects that respondents are slightly in agreement with the aforementioned observations.

4.1.3.5 Superior listens to subordinates' ideas and opinions.

Table 8 shows that 80.6% of the managers agree that they listen to their employees' ideas and opinions, 11% disagree, and 8.3% did not give their opinions in comparison to the employees' responses, whereby 57% agree, 22% disagree and 20% neutral when they were asked if their managers listen to them. One can notice here that there is a gap as to the listening issue.

4.1.3.6 Superior's attitude towards crisis.

The question statement is "Boss rolls with the punches when problems are faced." **Table 8** shows that 75% of the managers agree to the statement in comparison to 54% of the employees who confirmed that their superiors are capable of dealing with the dynamics of the workplace and with new situations. 8.3% are neutral in comparison to 25.7% of the employees as to the same issue. The percentage of the managers and of employees who disagree is almost the same. Maybe both parties did not understand the literal meaning of the statement. The mean average for this statement is 3.7222. Therefore, the managers feel slightly in agreement.

4.1.3.7 Subordinates look up to me when job related problems are faced.

Table 8 shows that 75% of the managers agree that they act as references to their employees when dealing with new tasks on the job in comparison to 71.4% (Table 3) and 65.7% (Table 4) of the respondent employees who have agreed with the fact. So, both parties have almost the same opinion as to the leaders giving new information and the employees receiving this new information to complete their jobs successfully.

4.1.4 Characteristics of the Leaders' Influence on Employees

4.1.4.1 Influencing decisions of subordinates and keeping good relations.

Table 9 shows that 72.2% of the superiors agree that they are able to influence their employees' decisions and still keep good relations with them. Maybe the managers are able to exercise influence because they have kept part of the information of the employees' jobs to themselves. However, this influence seems to be based on expertise as well as on their position as a leader. This fact is shown clearly in the statement "Influence and Control are gained through flexibility" to which managers almost agree unanimously (92%). The flexibility issue is also tested with the statement "Believing Knowledge is Power, not everything is shared", where only 61% agree and 39% disagree. Then the managers do provide information, depending on the circumstances. Moreover, almost 89% of the managers seek feedback when necessary. Furthermore, the responding managers were asked about how they built their relationship with subordinates, they supported their responses as follows: 83.3% agree this is done by showing empathy, 69.4% agree that people have what it needs to change (traits); 86.10% agree that people have potentials and that they can do things (attitude); and, 61% agree that they can read people's feelings by looking at them. Also, 70% of the managers believe that they generate new concepts instead of repairing old ones.

4.1.4.2 Leader's Attitudes toward Their Jobs and New Ideas

The first two statements of **Table 10** show an apparent division in opinions when dealing with reality and relationships. Although the two statements reflect a philosophical view about work environment, managers do not agree on what is reality, and on the role of resistance in people's relations. Moreover, respondents reflect an above the average behavior (55.5%) towards how open their organizations are when new ideas are conceptualized, presented and perceived. The average mean of such behavior in the different organizations demonstrates either indifference or a slight tendency towards agreement. Moreover, they felt similarly towards their job satisfaction. A possible consequence to the aforementioned analysis is to move to a different job in an organization that appreciates personal initiatives and growth.

4.1.4.3 Interpersonal Communication Skills

Table 11 shows that the managers agree by majority or 77.80%, same as their own employees (71.40%), that they are able to read the eyes of the other person and know if he/she is lying. The mean average here is 3.81 as compared to the employees' mean average of 4.0, indicating agreement to such a statement.

Similarly, the managers (~ 40%) and employees (only 45.7% on the average) agree that they either change their voice pitch or the accent to match the other's voice pitch or accent while engaged in a business discussion or job related conversations. These last two facts do not reflect if the respondents are either experts or not in manipulating their vocals in a conversation. The mean averages are approximately 3.1 indicating indifference.

As for the last statement, 75% of the managers agree that they get what they want by monitoring the response to their communication. One agrees with the aforementioned assessment since the skills of communication may either improve the outcome or simply create conflicts.

4.1.5 Summary

4.1.5.1 Summary for Subordinates' Responses

Results show that 42% of the respondents have disagreed with the statement that their boss is a risk taker and 22.9% have refrained from giving an opinion. Such responses lead the researcher to say that the persons

in charge lack a fundamental leadership requirement which is risk taking. Other required characteristics like “having vision”, “mingling with, listens to, respects and shares the knowledge with subordinates” and “having positive attitude towards crisis”, are manifested in the respondents’ responses with an overall 3.2 average (minimum of 3.02 and a maximum of 3.4286 on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being strongly agree), which means that the respondents feel either indifferent to the statements or they are divided in opinion with some skew towards agreement. Therefore, the researcher can claim that the respondents’ are not sure as to their leaders’ status.

Although the subordinates mostly agree that their superior has sociable traits and listens to them when business issues are discussed, this is not the case for the statement on sharing personal problems with the superior, where 74.30 % of the subordinates do not agree. This could be due to a general professional good practice, or the subordinates do not want to be subject to their bosses’ negative feedback or negative perception.

As for job expertise, 71.4% of the subordinates see themselves experts at what they are currently doing, with the majority (68.60%) agreeing that they do not need support when carrying out a task that they are experts at. Yet a big number (65.70%) of the subordinates require continuous support with their newly assigned tasks which they have had no previous experience with. This could indicate that the superiors are not sharing with their subordinates all required information to carry out the task successfully. Another argument could be that the subordinates are not really motivated to learn new skills or work with tasks they are not experts at.

The study supports NLP claim that people like people who are similar to them or remind them of themselves; a fact that is helpful to build rapport with other persons by using the techniques of mirroring and pacing where more than 74% of the subordinates believe that they are more spontaneous with people who remind them of themselves.

When it comes to the representation system, subordinates have been indifferent to most of the proposed representation systems with a slight tendency to acknowledge the use of a representation system. Results show that 51.40% of the respondents agree that they see, 51.50% agree that they hear and 48.50% agree that they visualize themselves presenting a new idea in a meeting room. Also, the majority or 71.40% agree that they can spot a lie by looking at one’s eyes, which supports the eye accessing cues approach suggested by NLP. On the other hand, the subordinates are indifferent with a slight tendency to agree that they tend to follow someone’s accent or voice pitch and tone in order to assess the type of message sent to them by their superiors. This might be due to the fact that they have never thought about this topic before, as this behavior happens on a subconscious level.

4.1.5.2 Summary for Superiors’ Responses

The outcome of the survey shows that the majority of the superiors see themselves owners of the fundamental characteristics of leadership tested in the survey. Although the degree of agreement varied slightly between risk taking, mingling and listening to subordinates’ ideas and opinions, positive attitude towards crisis and business problem solving skills, the highest agreed on statement is listening to subordinates (80.60%); yet, results from the subordinates’ responses does not show a strong agreement with this statement.

Other areas which the majority of superiors believe they have excelled in are influencing subordinates’ decisions while maintaining a good relationship (72.20%) and respecting them (83.30%); a fact that also

agrees with building rapport to reach successful outcomes as Molden contends, "Rapport is essential to working relationships, especially if you want to be influential. We are more likely to respond positively to a colleague's ideas and suggestions when we have a rapport with them" (2001, p. 17).

Although, the respondents' opinion in itself could be biased, the researchers can assume that superiors, even if they do not possess the trait they claim to have, acknowledge that being a superior requires the trait in question. Here, one may infer that the Lebanese leaders have to attain far more traits than what they already have. In this case, Dan Harrison's list of 12 traits could be a good start (Kane, 2003).

On the other hand, the majority of superiors agree to most of the NLP presuppositions, with the grand majority (91.60%) agreeing with the statement on influence and control vs. flexibility, while results in the same category indicate that superiors are not keen on agreeing that there is no reality and only perception (36.10%), and that resistance is an indication of weak relationship (41.60%).

Looking at the results of the superiors' representational system, the majority of the respondents (or 75%) agree that they can see themselves presenting a new idea in a meeting; thus, this category has a visual representational system, while 55.50% are auditory and 61.10% are kinesthetic. This makes perfect sense as one often moves from one representational system to the other, although he/she tends to use one representational system more than the others.

The results support NLP suggestion that people like people who are like them or remind them of themselves; a trait which is used in building rapport through mirroring & pacing (Molden, 2001, p.78) – more than 80% of the superiors believe that they are more spontaneous with people who remind them of themselves. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (or 77.80%) agree that they can spot a lie by looking at one's eyes, which supports the eye accessing cues approach suggested by NLP. On the other hand, the superiors are indifferent with a skew to agree that they tend to follow someone's accent or voice pitch and tone. This might be due to the fact that they have never thought about this topic before, as this behavior happens on a subconscious level.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research shows that there is a clear gap between the subordinates' and the superiors' opinion with respect to the fundamental leadership characteristics. The gap is clearly reflected in the magnitude, or degree of agreeability, of the superiors possessing these fundamental traits.

The surveyed subordinates have a tendency to agree on statements which imply that the superiors mingle with, listen to ideas and opinions, admire and respect subordinates; yet, this tendency is not as intense as the superior's opinion of these traits in themselves. Subordinates' agreeability on these statements has a maximum of 57.10% and a minimum of 40%; yet, the overall result is in the direction of agreeability. The only statement that subordinates are indifferent to or have slight tendency to disagree with is that their superiors are risk takers.

On the other hand, numbers show that superiors are confident of themselves, and that they possess all of the fundamental leadership traits stated in the survey, including risk taking. This is reflected in the degree of agreeability on the survey statements around the superior possessing this trait, which has a maximum of 80.60% and a minimum of 69.40%. The aforementioned difference in the degree or direction of agreeability with the traits' statements is expected and is in line with the NLP presupposition that states that there is no reality and only perception; this is in agreement with Molden (2001) who asserts that, "Reality exists only in the mind of the individual and, as no two minds are alike, we need concern ourselves only with perception" (p. 27).

Furthermore, 71.4% of the subordinates believe that they are experts at what they are currently doing, while 68.60% state that they do not need support when they are carrying out a task they are experts at. This result can be projected on the “Situational Leadership Model II”, and falls in the delegation quadrant where leaders have low focus on both the task and relationship (Robbins and Coulter, 2009, p. 393). On the other hand, 65.70% of subordinates state that they require continuous support on tasks that are newly assigned to them, and in which they have no previous experience. This falls into the coaching or selling zone of the “Situational Leadership Model II”, where the leader has to highly focus on both the task and the relationship with the subordinate (ibid).

The outcomes of the study confirm that both subordinates and superiors believe that they are more spontaneous in dealing with people who are like them or who remind them of themselves. The aforementioned is in agreement with Kris Koonar’s (2015) purposeful definition which presents NLP as a “behavioral technology comprising of guiding principles, attitudes, and techniques about real life behavior resulting from the study of the structure of subjective experience, behavior, and communication. If behavior has a structure then NLP has captured it so that it can be learned, taught, and changed” (Para 1). This finding can be utilized to boost performance in the case mentioned in the previous paragraph, as when leaders are coaching or selling subordinates. Other results emphasize that both subordinates and superiors have a tendency to agree on eye accessing cues, mirroring voice tonality, pitch and accent of the other, and have a preference for a representation system which can all be integrated to facilitate the work of the leader as a coach in the “Situational Leadership Model II”. Furthermore, the aforementioned results can also build on the validity of the Communication Influence Model used by NLP, suggesting that 93% of the communication is influenced by non-verbal communication (Molden, 2001, p. 75).

Finally, the superiors show high validation of the majority of the NLP presuppositions, but do not strongly agree with two presuppositions – one is that there is no reality and only perception, and the other is that resistance is a sign of weak relationship. Most of the respondents, who have not been introduced to the latter two concepts, cannot strongly acknowledge their validity as this works on the individual’s behavior and awareness, and needs a research instrument other than a survey to explain and make sure that the respondents absorb the full concept and can justify their opinions. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the superiors highly agree with statements in the questionnaire that carry the same meaning of the two presuppositions highlighted here.

Although NLP is not yet popular, as it is still relatively a recent concept, people and companies are becoming more and more aware of the concept and its tangible positive influence on the performance. According to Hejase (2015), “research focusing on business applications of NLP in the Middle Eastern region is not extensive and far from being comprehensive. There are only few studies that have addressed NLP applications in business in Abu Dhabi (Ahmad, 2013), India (Shiv, 2012; and Singh and Abraham, 2008), and Turkey (Özmen, 2009)”. The local study at hand, acknowledges the need for communication and people skills for both superiors and subordinates.

Business institutions that are serious about boosting the performance of their teams, invest in the continuous education of their staff. Thus, the researchers recommend that Lebanese firms invest in hosting workshops to coach both superiors and subordinates on NLP skills and techniques, yet this needs to be done in a systematic approach.

6. Limitations

Conducting this local exploratory study involving Lebanese management on the topic of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Leadership has faced several limitations:

1. **Sample Size:** The number of respondents in the study is 35 subordinates and 36 superiors. This number is only a small representation of the two categories of respondents in the area of the study, which could reach thousands.
2. **Generalization:** The results of the study cannot be generalized because the sample is not representative of the whole Lebanese community.
3. **Company Size:** The study referred mostly to large organizations in the economy. Smaller organizations' inclusion might have had an effect on the results.
4. **Respondents:** Although respondents were helpful in answering the questions, some were not very interested.
5. **Behavior monitoring:** Certain aspects of this study needed behavior monitoring of the respondents such as accent and voice tonality change when interacting with another colleague, as simply asking does not necessarily provide solid evidence since such a behavior happens on an unconscious level.

7. Future Research

The results of this research call for many future researches that assess areas not covered in this research. One area could be choosing a larger sample of people. Another one is conducting a study in a wider region. In addition, research instruments other than surveys could be used to approach the aspects of this study. An example of such is the 360-degrees survey.

Further studies could include more NLP patterns and models like meta-programs, belief systems, sub modalities, metaphor and anchoring.

Finally, behavior monitoring with audio visual aids could help a lot in conducting future research on topics as rapport (the leading and pacing concept), and many other NLP concepts that happen on the unconscious level.

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Exhibit 1: Area of Applications of NLP

- Building personal relationships.
- Having a positive mental attitude.
- Increasing self esteem.
- Focusing on goals and channel energy into achieving them.
- Feeling confident in whatever one attempts to do.
- Changing unwanted habits.
- Establishing rapport with clients, customers and work colleagues.
- Finding creative ways to solve problems.
- Acquiring the skills that one admires in others.

Source: (Alder & Heather, 1998, pp. xiii-xiv)

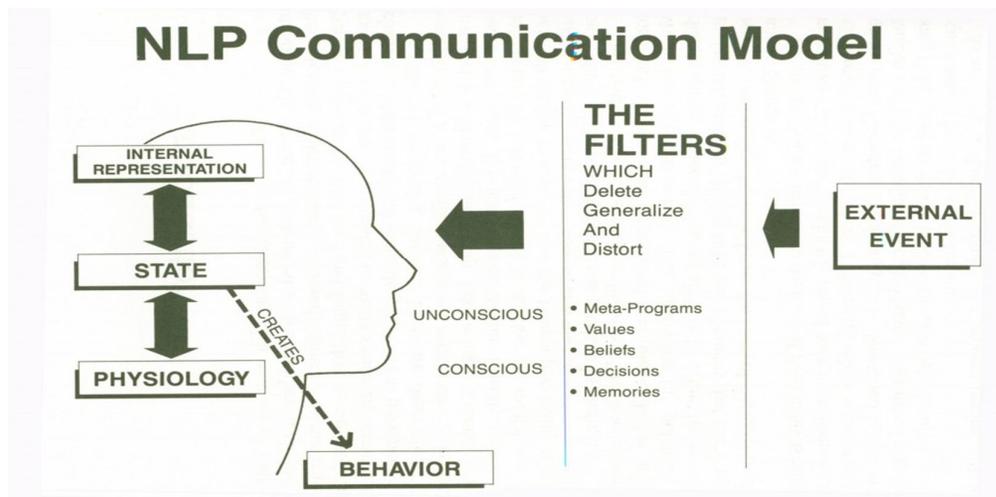


Figure 1: NLP Communication Model (Source: <http://www.englishskypehypnotist.com/nlp/>)

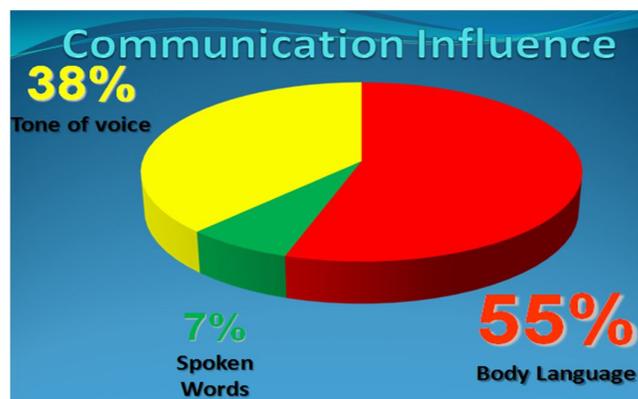
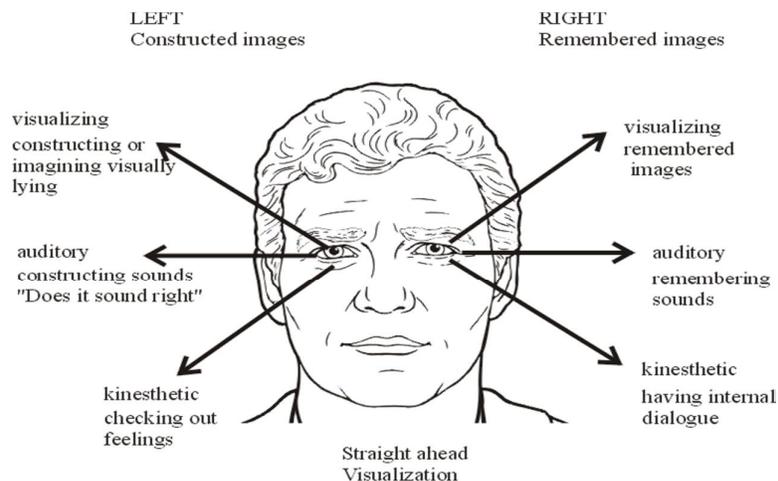


Figure 2: Communication Influence (Source: Molden, 2001, p. 75)

Exhibit 2: Representation Systems

	VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
EYE MOVEMENTS	Defocused.or up to the right or left.	In the midline.	Below the midline usually to the right
VOICE TONE AND TEMPO	Generally rapid speech, high, dear voice tone.	Melodious tone. resonant, at a medium pace. Often has an underlying rhythm.	Low and deeper tonality, often slow and soft, with many pauses.
BREATHING	High, shallow breathing in the top part of the chest	Even breathing in the middle part of the chest cavity,	Deeper breathing from the abdomen,
POSTURE AND GESTURES	More tension in die body, often with the neck extended. Often thinner (ectomorphic) body type.	Often medium (mesomorphic) body type. There may be rhythmic movements of the body as if listening to music. Head may be tilted to the side in thought in the telephone position*.	Rounded shoulders, head down,relaxed muscle tone,may gesture to abdomen and midline.

Source: O'Connor, 2001, p. 50



Eye positions as looking at another person

Figure 3: Eye Accessing Cues

Source: <http://www.wisdom-square.com/eye-accessing-cues.html>

Exhibit 3: Common Matching Patterns

- Body posture and position;
- Leg positions and configuration – leg crossed, tucked under, outstretched, resting on knee, resting on desk, and so on;
- Arm's position and configuration;
- Head's position – tilted up, down, to the side;
- Rhythmic tapping of fingers, hands, feet, head;
- Rocking motion;
- Gesture with hands, arms, head;
- Breathing – speed, depth, and location (chest or abdomen); and,
- Voice characteristic – pitch, tone volume, speed, and timbre.

Source: Molden, 2001, p. 76

Exhibit 4: NLP Schools of thought

- The "school of physiology and behavior" - the Klingon School, of which John Grinder is a leading exponent, puts emphasis on the value of physiological/behavioral modification as the key to changing everything else. In *Turtles All the Way Down*, for example, Grinder and De Lozier talk about how good it is to have a group-dancing session at the end of each day in order to help integrate that day's learning.
- The "school of the internal state" - the "hearts and flowers" or Doctor McCoy school, of which Woodsmall nominates Leslie Lebeau (was Leslie Cameron-Bandler) and Michael Hall as being leading exponents. In this case the emphasis is on changing one's emotional state as the "prime mover", so to speak.
- And thirdly we have the "school of internal processes" - the Mr. Spock School favored by Richard Bandler and Robert Dilts. Adherents of this school tend to emphasize techniques, such as the use of sub modalities.

Source: Bradbury, 2009. <http://www.bradburyac.mistral.co.uk/nlpfax20.htm>

Exhibit 5: Projects in which NLP has been used

- **Diners Club** trained every manager and representative in the customer service area in NLP skills for handling customer and internal communication. The net result was a 254% increase in customer spending, and a 67% reduction in customer loss. The Customer Service Department, previously a cost center, became a revenue-producing part of the organization.
- **BMW in England** modeled the communication patterns of the top performing people (1%) in sales. After determining the successful behaviors of these salespeople, the skills were taught to every salesperson in the organization. Sales of a new-introduced product greatly exceeded projections.
- **American Express** trained twenty-four line managers from all over Asia to become transformational trainers. With no previous training experience, these employees became the heart of “American Express Quality Leadership”; an area-wide initiative to encourage every employee to take personal responsibility for quality in customer service.

Source: Mind Bridge Training Group, 2015, Para 23.

Exhibit 6: Harrison Paradox Assessment Traits

Opinions (certainty and openness)
Decision Approach (analytic and intuitive)
Strategic (analyzes pitfalls and risking)
Delegation (authoritative and collaborative)
Innovation (persistent and experimenting)
Communication (frankness and diplomacy)
Power (assertive and helpful)
Motivation (self-motivated and stress management)
Self (self-acceptance and self-improvement)
Driving (enforcing and warmth/empathy)
Organization (organized and flexible)
Strategic Acumen (analyzes pitfalls and optimistic)

Source: Kane, 2003, p. 6.

Table 1: Traits and Personal Characteristics Related to Effective Leadership

Trait	Description
Intelligence	Helps managers understand complex issues and solve problems
Knowledge and expertise	Helps managers make good decisions and discover ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness
Dominance	Helps managers influence their subordinates to achieve organizational goals
Self-confidence	Contributes to manager's effectively influence subordinates, and to be persistence when faced with obstacles or difficulties
High energy	Empowers managers to deal with the many demands they face
Tolerance for stress	Helps managers deal with uncertainty and make difficult decisions
Integrity and honesty	Helps managers behave ethically and earn their subordinates' trust and confidence
Maturity	Helps managers avoid acting selfishly, control their feelings, and admit when they have made a mistake

Source: Jones & George, 2009, p.504.

Exhibit 7: Covey's eight traits of centered leaders

They are **continuously learning**: Attending classes, training sessions, and learning from their and other peoples' experience.

They are **service oriented**: Their vision of life is as a mission. Every day they wake up and wear their service hats.

They **radiate positive energy**: They are cheerful, hopeful, have a positive mental attitude towards life, optimistic enthusiastic and believing.

They **believe in other people**: Accept human weakness vs. hunting for mistakes. They believe that people may behave different than their real potential or intention. They are not judgmental and refuse to stereotype or label people.

They **lead balanced lives**: Are not extremists and do not see life as black and white. They have fun not on other people's expense. Sociable and think of long term, healthy relations.

They **see life as an adventure**: Not sure of what is going to happen in life but they trust it to be interesting and growth producing with many new territories to be explored.

They are **Synergistic**: They are the change factor. They make best of most of the situation they come in touch with. They are effective team players, complementing their drawback with others' advantages.

They **exercise for self-renewal**: They regularly exercise all of the dimensions of the human personality: Physical, spiritual emotional and mental.

Source: Covey, R.S. (1992).

Exhibit 8: Behavioral Theories of Leadership

<p>University of Iowa Effectiveness through leadership style There are 3 styles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Democratic style: involving subordinates, delegating authority, and encouraging participation. 2. Autocratic style: dictating work methods, centralizing decision making, and limiting participation 3. Laissez-faire style: giving group freedom to make decisions and complete work <p>Ohio State Two dimensions to leader’s behavior:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consideration: being considerate of followers’ ideas and feelings 2. Initiating structure: structuring work and work relationships to meet job’s goals <p>University of Michigan Two dimensions of leader behavior:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee oriented: emphasizes interpersonal relationships and taking care of employees’ needs. 2. Production oriented: emphasizes technical or task aspects of a job <p>Managerial Grid Two dimensions of leader behavior:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern for People: measured leader’s concern for subordinates on a scale of 1 to 9 (low to high) 2. Concern for Production: measured leader’s concern for getting job done on a scale 1 to 9 (low to high)

Source: Robbins and Coulter, 2009, p. 389.

Exhibit 9: Transactional and Transformational Leadership contrasted

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Builds on man’s need to get a job done and make a living	Builds on man's need for meaning
Is preoccupied with power and position, politics, and perks	Is preoccupied with purpose and values, morals and ethics
Follows and fulfills role expectations by striving to work effectively with the current systems	Designs and redesigns jobs to make them meaningful and challenging

Source: Covey, 1991, p. 285.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Superior According to Employees

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
Consider the Boss as Risk Taker	34.20	22.90	42.80	2.8571
Superior Mingles with Subordinates	42.80	22.90	34.30	3.0286
Superior Listens to Subordinates' Ideas and Opinions	57.10	22.90	20.00	3.4286
Superior's Attitude Towards Crisis	44.30	25.70	20.00	3.3714
Superior Admires and Shows Interest in the Employee	40.00	28.50	31.50	3.0857
Superior Teaches a Subordinate Everything he/she Knows	51.40	22.90	25.70	3.2857

Table 3: Characterizing Superior's Support to the Subordinate

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
Looking up for help when facing job related problems	71.40	02.90	25.70	3.5143
Speaking with the superior about personal problems	08.60	17.10	74.30	1.9429
Knowledge is power and not everything is shared	51.40	20.00	28.60	3.2857

Table 4: Characterizing Oneself

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
I am an expert at what I do	71.40	25.70	02.90	3.8857
I do not need supervision to finish a task I am an expert at	68.60	14.30	17.10	3.9143
When my boss helps me with a task that I am not familiar with, I tend to do it successfully	95.20	02.90	02.90	4.2286
I require continuous support on tasks that are newly assigned to me and on which I have no previous experience	65.70	31.40	02.90	3.7429
I am not satisfied with all areas of my job, some I am and some I am not	65.60	22.90	11.50	3.7429
One is generally satisfied with the kind of work done on the Job	71.40	14.30	14.30	3.7143

Table 5: Characterizing working with others

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
I like to work with other people and in groups	88.50	02.90	08.60	4.1429
I treat others as individuals and care about their feelings and opinions (having empathy)	88.60	11.40	00.00	4.2857
I am known for being optimistic	74.30	11.40	14.30	3.8571
One tends to feel more spontaneous with people who remind one of oneself	74.20	22.90	02.90	4.0000

Table 6: Personal initiatives and new ideas at work

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
When one has a new idea, he can present it in a meeting	51.40	17.10	31.40	3.3429
When one has a new idea, he can visualize him/herself presenting it in the meeting room	51.50	20.00	28.50	3.2857
When one has a new idea, he/she can visualize how he/she does in the meeting room	48.50	25.70	25.80	3.2571

Table 7: Interpersonal communication skills

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
One can know if someone is lying from the eyes	71.40	28.60	00.00	4.0571
Change of one's accent to an accent similar to the receiver when communicating	45.70	11.40	42.90	3.0571
When one is conversing with a person who has a high pitch, one tends to raise one's voice	45.70	11.40	42.90	3.1143

Table 8: Characterizing the Leader

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
I consider myself a risk taker	69.40	11.10	19.50	3.7222
Time is dedicated to mingle with subordinates	75.00	08.30	16.70	3.7500
I listen to subordinates' ideas and opinions	80.60	08.30	11.10	3.8611
Roll punches when problems are encountered	75.00	08.30	16.70	3.7222
Subordinates look up to me when job related problems are encountered	75.00	08.30	16.70	3.8056

Table 9: Characteristics of the Leaders' Influence on Employees

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
I influence decisions of my subordinates and still keep good relations	72.20	11.10	16.70	3.7500
I believe that knowledge is power, and that not everything is shared	61.10	00.00	38.90	3.3056
I treat others as individuals and with care	83.30	11.10	05.60	4.0000
I know how others feel by looking at them	61.10	27.80	11.10	3.8333
I generate new concepts instead of repairing outdated ones	69.50	19.40	11.10	3.6944
I look for feedback when something does not work, and assess what to do	88.90	02.80	08.30	4.0278
I believe that influence and control are gained through flexibility	91.60	02.80	05.60	4.0833
People have all they need to change	69.40	05.60	25.00	3.5556
If any person can do things, then other persons can do things too	86.10	02.80	11.10	4.0833

Table 10: Leader's attitudes toward their jobs and new ideas

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
There is no reality, only perception	36.10	27.70	36.20	3.0556
Resistance is an indication of a weak relationship	41.60	11.10	47.30	2.9722
When one has a new idea, he can present it in a meeting	75.00	08.30	16.70	3.7500
When one has a new idea, he can visualize him/herself presenting it in the meeting room	55.50	13.90	30.60	3.3056
When one has a new idea, he/she can visualize how he/she does in the meeting room	61.10	02.80	36.10	3.3333
One is generally satisfied with kind of work done on the job	63.90	08.30	27.80	3.4444

Table 11: The Leader's Communication Skills

Concept	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean
One can know if someone is lying from the eyes	77.80	11.10	11.10	3.8056
One tends to feel more spontaneous with people who remind him/ her of oneself	80.60	11.10	08.30	3.8611
Change one's accent to an accent similar to the receiver when communicating	52.80	19.40	27.80	3.3056
When one is conversing with a person who has a high pitch, one tends to reciprocate by raising his/her voice	38.80	25.00	36.20	3.0000
The perceived meaning of one's communication is in the type of the response received	75.00	08.30	16.70	3.7222