

# FIRO-B AND SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL: A CORRELATIONAL CONTEXT OF MIDDLE EASTERN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

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## Abstract

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The study is about the dimensions of interpersonal needs and aspects of leadership behaviour. It was a correlational study and used a standardized fundamental interpersonal relations orientation-behaviour (FIRO-B) and situational leadership questionnaire. The study was conducted over a period of 4 months and had drawn 200 respondents from the three levels of administration in an organisation's hierarchy from different firms in the UAE chosen randomly. The main tool of data collection was a structured questionnaire whose acceptability rate was 0.76 as per Cronbach's alpha. The research questions translated into objectives that guided the study were four, these were to find out *directing* related to FIRO-B parameters, to establish the relationship between *coaching* and FIRO-B parameters, to find out how *supporting* relates to FIRO-B parameters and establish how *delegating* is related to FIRO-B parameters. The findings were that *directing* has a near-perfect positive correlation with *expressed control (EC)* and *wanted control (WC)* (0.99). *Coaching* had a high correlation with *WC* (0.89). *Supporting* highly correlation with both *expressed affection (EA)* and *wanted inclusion (WI)* (0.99 and 0.88). *Delegating* had a very strong positive correlation with *expressed inclusion (EI)* (0.99) and a low positive correlation with *EA* (0.17). It concluded that different leadership dimensions correlate with FIRO-B elements at different levels.

**Keywords:** Situational Leadership, FIRO-B, Interpersonal Needs, Leadership Behavior, Middle East, Business Leadership

**Authors' individual contribution:** Conceptualization — P.K. and D.G.; Methodology — P.K.; Investigation — P.K.; Resources — P.K. and D.G.; Writing — P.K. and D.G.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term leadership is defined and coined in various ways. Leadership is the ability that is expressed by astounding leaders (Rickley & Stackhouse, 2022). The concept of leadership and behaviour has been studied by several authors (Gaur, 2019; Yadav, Mufti,

Mufti, & Qazi, 2021; Totman, 2021) however there is still a paucity of knowledge on leadership and behaviour in the middle east, and hence the gap this paper will fill. This paper advances such research through the contextualisation of the fundamental interpersonal relations orientation-behaviour (FIRO-B) with a situational leadership dimension

(SLD). This research paper is guided by four objectives. The specific objectives were to find out how *directing* relates to FIRO-B parameters, to establish the relationship between *coaching* and FIRO-B parameters, to find out how *supporting* relates to FIRO-B parameters and to establish how *delegating* is related to FIRO-B parameters. The ability to lead influences the people and the style of their working in the organisation. The correct definition of leadership depends on the interest under which this term is defined. Leadership enables an organisation to flourish (Brooks & Chapman, 2018), it can make or demean an organisation. Employees enjoy their work if they get proper direction in their activities. As part of the work process, if the leader guides the followers based on their situation and ability, it gives a boost to their working style. The growing literature in the field of leadership has expressed the need of analysing this domain from different perspectives and dimensions, for instance, the open leadership model of leadership (Gurr, Drysdale, & Goode, 2022), leadership complexity theory (Kumar, Sahoo, Lim, Kraus, & Bamel, 2022), the social exchange theory (Vermeulen, Kreijns, & Evers, 2022), the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) (Afshan, Serrano-Archimi, & Akram, 2022), and the six domains of leadership (Sim & Lind, 2016), etc. In this regard, the theoretical-conceptual and experimental perspectives are explored in this research article. Also, an effort has been made to understand the relationship between the dimensions of situational leadership and expressed alongside wanted needs of FIRO-B. This article focuses on an aspect of leadership that is defined by Hersey and Blanchard (1996) in situational leadership theory (SLT) which is compared with the FIRO-B concept developed by Shultz (as cited in Sayeed, 2010).

This paper is significant from three points of view, the first is from an academic and research perspective, it adds to the pool of knowledge in the areas of leadership and especially in the context of the middle east given the paucity of such. The second and third perspectives are specific to practice and policy of leadership and especially in organisations within the region and abroad, this is in terms of how they are run.

The paper has six sections. Section 1 introduces the reader to the concepts under consideration, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature, Section 3 analyses the research methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research on FIRO-B and the situational leadership model, contextualising middle eastern business leadership. Section 4 presents the findings of the research and these are discussed in Section 5. Section 6 is the last section of the paper which is the conclusion and some recommendations are given.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper is founded on the concept of the fundamental interpersonal relations orientation-behaviour instrument (FIRO-B) which assists individual managers and business leaders comprehend their behavior and how their subordinates or followers behave. The research is

led by relating the four leadership styles propounded by Hersey and Blanchard (1996) in the situational leadership theory to the parameters of FIRO-B. The study investigates the following questions:

*RQ1: How is directing related to FIRO-B parameters?*

*RQ2: What is the coaching relation between FIRO-B parameters?*

*RQ3: How is supporting related to FIRO-B parameters?*

*RQ4: How is delegating related to FIRO-B parameters?*

### 2.1. Nature of Hersey and Blanchard leadership style (situational leadership theory)

Hersey and Blanchard (1996) discuss four leadership styles in situational leadership theory, these styles are *directing*, *coaching*, *supporting*, and *delegating*. The scales for these four quadrants are taken as willingness to do the work and the ability to perform the task at hand (Hersey & Blanchard, 1972; Thompson & Glasø, 2018; Manyuchi & Sukdeo, 2021). These scales are comprised of four levels, determining the follower's state which are from D1 to D4. These levels represent the developmental level of followers concerning changing styles of leadership (Ribeiro, Feira, & Moreira, 2022). The different levels depict the different dimensions of leadership and the extent of the interrelationship between the task and the leadership.

The leadership style in this model suggests that the style needs to change as per the situation of the task and followers. Table 1 establishes that the D1 level means the followers are neither willing to work nor can perform the task, hence the leadership style to be followed is *directing*. At level D2, although the followers are still unable to perform but are transformed to be willing to work, and hence, the style followed is consultative or they can be coached in the task. The level D3 represents that the followers have good skills and the ability to perform but have lost the willingness and the style required in this scenario is participative or supportive. In level D4, when the ability and willingness are high the leader may just delegate the task and let the employees work freely on the task.

### 2.2. Research studies on situational leadership theory

Researchers also have compared the concept of SLT with behavioral and other contingency theories (Yukl, 2011; Burke, 2021; Adams & Webster, 2021). As SLT is also focusing both on task and people with its step to first analyze the task in hand, then second to analyze followers' (peoples') readiness. This is similar to Ohio and Michigan leadership theories (Bass, 2008; Glynn & DeJordy, 2010; Das, 2021; Vermeulen et al., 2022).

A study on the effectiveness of leaders' behaviour concerning situations was studied by conducting a study on a small group of companies in 2010. This study aimed to identify various effective leadership styles, orientation changes,

relating to tasks while depicting quality, and effectiveness in productivity, job satisfaction, and other situations. This study successfully demonstrated the connection between situational leadership and organizational growth (Larsson & Vinberg, 2010). Silverthorne and Wang (2001) conducted research on the magnitude of adaptive style, i.e., being flexible in leadership with regards to the task to be done and in the situation in which the task is to be done. This study highlighted the fact that an inflexible or in-adaptive style of leadership is not effective in an organization where quality and productivity are considered. But adaptive style is successful as it caters to follower readiness and takes the measures accordingly to increase productivity (Adams & Webster, 2021).

Thompson and Glasø (2015) tested the validity of SLT with regards to followers' competence and commitment. This study also emphasized the fact that the leaders need to consider the individuals as per the specific situation they are in and the leaders should be able to guide the followers for future opportunities as per the specific skills of the subordinates. These and various other studies (Stein et al., 2021; Shek, Zhu, Dou, & Merrick, 2021; Aust, 2022) are useful in highlighting the importance of SLT in comparison to the traditional theories in present-day dynamic scenarios.

When leadership has a clear understanding of SLT, it is necessary to understand an individual follower's personality through any personality test and then relate it to SLT. Through analyses of the personality of an individual with regards to the needs of a distinctive person, it can be determined which component of situational leadership can be dominant in an individual, which can make a person more influential for a particular style. Situational leadership theory determines four styles, namely, *directing*, *coaching*, *supporting*, and *delegating*. Although as per the theory and supportive literature review, it is suggested that an adaptive leader tends to be more successful in various dynamic situations (Silverthorne & Wang, 2001; Hale, 2022). But, these adaptive or situational styles also show a preference as per a person's personality needs and the nature of interpersonal behavior. This is the reason why a test of FIRO-B is chosen for comparison with SLT to get more accuracy for the leadership and interpersonal relation orientation.

The SLDs measured in this article can be categorised under high or low task focus and high or low relationship focus. The dimension of participating and *supporting* (S3) is high relationship focus and low task focus which relates to *followers* (D3) high competence and ability, but low willingness, another dimension is *coaching* (S2) which is the highest task focus and high relationship focus it relates to *follower* (D2), low ability but high willingness to work. Dimension of *directing* (S1) which is a high task and low relationship focus related to the *follower* (D1), low competence, and low commitment level. Another dimension of *delegating* (S4), low task focus and low relationship focus related to *follower* (D4), with high competence and high commitment level. These leadership styles cater to the appropriate follower level (Carton, 2022; Pratoom, 2018; Wright, 2017; Dunn, 2016), which is taken into account in the current paper.

### 2.3. The nature of FIRO-B

The concept of FIRO-B as an instrument was developed by Schutz (1958). Since then it has undergone various revisions (Schutz, 1958; Thompson, 2000; Yadav et al., 2021). Since its first publication, the FIRO-B has become a popular test for measuring leadership, team building, and interpersonal relations among organizations (Florance, 2022). This test is used for diverse purposes in several institutes such as organizations, military institutes, and numerous others (Mitra & Chatterjee, 2019; Carton, 2022). The test represents two sides of three interpersonal needs related to *inclusion*, *control*, and *affection*. All three needs are evaluated on a basis of whether they are 'expressed' or 'wanted'. A score of 0-7 would be for expressed need and this means that an individual takes initiative when with others, A score of 7-19 would mean that an individual may not be willing to have others take initiative. A medium score means score for expressed means that at times an individual would take initiative when with others and at other times may not. For satisfying the needs of interpersonal behavior individuals try to come on compatible with their personality in terms of expression of needs towards others and expectations from others (Thompson, 2000; Florance, 2022).

FIRO-B expresses the purpose of understanding the behaviour of an individual as per the interaction maintained by colleagues, subordinates, managers, and team members. The capacity of an individual to relate to the team members by enhancing the social bond and maintaining emotional bonds makes it useful when studying the dimensions of leadership (Thompson & Glasø, 2018; Kalangi, Weol, Tulung, & Rogahang, 2021)

Sayed (2010) studied the leadership behaviour of middle management cadre through a leadership style questionnaire and FIRO-B. The study conducted highlighted the participative and task-oriented leadership style regarding *inclusion*, *affection*, and *control* need. This justifies the implication of FIRO-B in the research on leadership. But, the present study aims to understand the situational context of a leader and the ability to perform in various situations corresponding to the six dimensions of FIRO-B. The social interaction index, which plays an important role in understanding the nature of interpersonal behaviour of future managers has been studied by Gaur (2019), indicating the interpersonal need of Arab business students regarding demographic structure. The importance of gender and academic level of students with regard to the training in interpersonal behaviour highlights the importance of considering these dimensions (Abd El Basset, Bell, & Al Kharusi, 2022).

Concerning leadership behaviour, Hurley, Feintuch, and Mandell (1991), studied the appraisal effect on the interpersonal behaviour of managers and subordinates. This study highlighted the task-oriented behaviour of a leader with the rise in self-acceptance attitude. Other studies analysing the productivity level concerning leader behaviour were conducted which had drawn a link between the *control* and *inclusion* need of FIRO-B to the way the leader establishes relations with their followers in varied environments (Keltner, 2021; O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1981).

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted to ascertain leadership styles and FIRO-B. It was a correlational study. The study respondents were drawn from 200 respondents who were from the three levels of administration in the concerned organisation's hierarchy, that is top, middle, and operational levels from different firms within the UAE. The sample of 200 was drawn randomly. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which was standardised. The questions in the questionnaire dealing with the variables used a 5-point Likert rating scale dimension in order to get the most reasonable response. All the measurable scales had an acceptable level of above 0.7 using Cronbach's alpha. The experimental design could also have been used to bring forth more results. In experimental design, the independent variables, in this case,

the situational leadership dimensions, could have been manipulated and their effect on the dependent variable (FIRO-B parameters) measured. The paper was developed after reviewing the literature of existing studies on the specific areas of situational leadership and FIRO-B and thereby establishing a gap. The dependent variable was FIRO-B parameters as per Thompson (2000) namely, *inclusion*, *control*, and *affection*, which are either in the expressing or wanted dimension. The independent variables were the situational leadership dimension (Hersey & Blanchard, 1972; Gates, Blanchard, & Hersey, 1976), also determined as per Yukl (2011) namely, *directive*, *consultative*, *participative*, and *delegative*. The interaction of the levels of the leadership and the leadership styles as depicted in the following table illustrates the context of the relationship, task and behaviour dimensions between the leader and the follower.

**Table 1.** Situational leadership dimensions

Levels	D1	D2	D3	D4
Ability/Willingness of followers	Low/Low	Low/High	High/Low	High/High
High or low task/Relationships	High task/ Low relationship	High task/ High relationship	Low task/ High relationship	Low task/ Low relationship
Leadership style	Directive	Consultative	Participative	Delegative

**4. RESULTS**

Through the analysis of the presented data, which was collected by means of a questionnaire, the research established the following findings.

**4.1. Demographics**

The total number of respondents was 200, with a response rate of 98.5 percent. From the study, it was established that 55.3 percent were females while the males were 44.7 percent. The table below shows a summary of the cases.

**Table 2.** Summary statistics

Demographic category	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Nationality * Industry	197	98.5%	3	1.5%	200	100.0%
Nationality * Responsibility level	197	98.5%	3	1.5%	200	100.0%
Nationality * Age	197	98.5%	3	1.5%	200	100.0%
Nationality * Gender	197	98.5%	3	1.5%	200	100.0%

On the nationality and gender category, Emirati males who participated were 44.2 percent, while Emirati females were 55.8 percent. The rest were non-Emiratis. The percentage of females was higher than that of males at 55.3 percent as compared to 44.7 percent. This primary demographic also indicated that there were more non-Emirati people male at 45 percent than Emirati males at 44.2 percent. The females were almost the same percentage at 55.8 percent Emirati and 55.0 percent non-Emirati consecutively. This is indicated in the following table:

**Table 3.** Nationality and gender

	Gender	Total	
		Male	Female
Nationality	Emirati	44.2%	55.8%
	Non-Emirati	45.0%	55.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>44.7%</b>	<b>55.3%</b>

Across tabulation of nationality and the industry where the respondents worked indicated that the majority of the workers were in

the manufacturing sector at 62.4 percent, the largest group of respondents here was found to be Emiratis in manufacturing at 67.4 percent. The service sector scored almost a third at 37.6 percent. Non-Emiratis were more in the service sector at 41.4 percent and the rest 32.6 percent were Emiratis. The percentage of participation in terms of nationality and industry is indicated in the following table:

**Table 4.** Nationality and industry

	Nationality	Industry		Total
		Service	Manufacturing	
Emirati	Emirati	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
	Non-Emirati	41.4%	58.6%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>37.6%</b>	<b>62.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

A cross-tabulation between nationality and the responsibility held by the respondent indicated that the majority of the respondents were working at middle-level management at 42.1 percent, however, it should also be noted that non-Emiratis scored a high percent at the operational level at

45 percent. In both cases of nationality, all the scores were less than 30 percent for top management. The highest score was 26.7 percent for Emiratis and 15.3 percent for non-Emiratis.

The highest score for the levels of responsibility was at the middle level, with Emiratis scoring 45.3 percent as opposed to non-Emiratis at 39.6 percent. This is indicated in the following table:

**Table 5.** Nationality and responsibility

		Responsibility level			Total
		Top management	Middle level	Operational level	
Nationality	Emirati	26.7%	45.3%	27.9%	100.0%
	Non-Emirati	15.3%	39.6%	45.0%	100.0%
Total		20.3%	42.1%	37.6%	100.0%

The age of the respondents was also cross-tabulated with nationality. The majority of the respondents were found to be within the 29-39 age group, they had a score of 47.2 percent of the total number. Under this category, non-Emiratis were many at 49.5 percent as compared to Emiratis at 44.2 percent. Under the highest category, that is the age group 40-49, non-Emiratis scored a low of 18 percent and the Emiratis were at a higher score of

22.1 percent. This higher category of age had the least overall score of 19.8 percent. It is worth noting that there are very few Emiratis in the upper age category at 18 percent. At the job entry-level age of 18-28, the scores were lower than the middle age at 33 percent as opposed to 47.2 percent. Emiratis scores higher in this category at 33.7 percent. This is indicated in the following table:

**Table 6.** Nationality and age

		Age			Total
		18-28	29-39	40-49	
Nationality	Emirati	33.7%	44.2%	22.1%	100.0%
	Non-Emirati	32.4%	49.5%	18.0%	100.0%
Total		33.0%	47.2%	19.8%	100.0%

#### 4.2. SLD score

The respondent's scores on the SLDs had been grouped into three categories, these were low, medium, and high scores. In the *directing* dimension, 75 percent of the respondents scored low, while for the *coaching* dimension those who scored high were 88 percent. The majority of those on the *supporting* dimension scored between 8.0-12.0 percent, whereas those in *delegating* dimension had medium scorers with the highest at 57 percent.

#### 4.3. FIRO-B correlation score

The scores for FIRO-B were based on the study's research question. Each of the situational leadership dimensions was correlated to ascertain the extent of their relationships. Each of the components of FIRO-B was correlated to the four leadership styles of the situational leadership theory. The reporting of the findings is as per the research questions. The first research question was on the relationship between *directing* and FIRO-B. The following are the correlation results.

**Table 7.** Relationship between *directing* and FIRO-B

	<i>Directing</i>	<i>EI</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>WI</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>Directing</i>	1						
<i>EI</i>	0.209984522	1					
<i>EC</i>	0.990979693	0.339115	1				
<i>EA</i>	-0.950163665	0.105281	-0.89981	1			
<i>WI</i>	-0.734293834	0.509507	-0.6367	0.909326	1		
<i>WC</i>	0.990979693	0.339115	1	-0.89981	-0.6367	1	
<i>WA</i>	0.097049768	0.993468	0.229554	0.218067	0.604364	0.229554	1

The table above clearly indicates that *directing* positively correlates with *expressed control (EC)* and *wanted control (WC)* to near perfection, however, *expressed affection (EA)* has a near-perfect negative correlation. The rest of the scores are very low, *directing* to *expressed inclusion (EI)* is at 0.2, whereas *directing* to *wanted affection (WA)* is almost 0.1. The second question was on the relationship

between *coaching* and FIRO-B. The correlation indicated that there was almost a perfect negative correlation between *coaching* with *EC* at -0.99 and *WC* at -0.99. *Coaching* was positively correlated to *EA* at 0.89 which is a high positive correlation, and *wanted inclusion (WI)* at 0.61. The table below shows the correlation results of the parameters for *coaching* the FIRO-B parameters.

**Table 8.** Relationship between *coaching* and FIRO-B

	<i>Coaching</i>	<i>EI</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>WI</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>Coaching</i>	1						
<i>EI</i>	-0.362368166	1					
<i>EC</i>	-0.999691705	0.339115	1				
<i>EA</i>	0.888704661	0.105281	-0.89981	1			
<i>WI</i>	0.617356118	0.509507	-0.6367	0.909326	1		
<i>WC</i>	-0.999691705	0.339115	1	-0.89981	-0.6367	1	
<i>WA</i>	-0.25364935	0.993468	0.229554	0.218067	0.604364	0.229554	1

The third question of the study was on the relationship between *supporting* and FIRO-B. The following are the correlation results.

**Table 9.** Relationship between *supporting* and FIRO-B

	<i>Supporting</i>	<i>EI</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>WI</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>Supporting</i>	1						
<i>EI</i>	0.045965746	1					
<i>EC</i>	-0.924163033	0.339115	1				
<i>EA</i>	0.998230707	0.105281	-0.89981	1			
<i>WI</i>	0.882977059	0.509507	-0.6367	0.909326	1		
<i>WC</i>	-0.924163033	0.339115	1	-0.89981	-0.6367	1	
<i>WA</i>	0.159652189	0.993468	0.229554	0.218067	0.604364	0.229554	1

It was established that *supporting* has a near-perfect positive correlation with *EA* at 0.99, it also recorded a high positive correlation with *WI* at 0.88. It was, however, negatively correlated to both *EC* at -0.92 and *WC* at -0.94 consecutively. This category's lowest correlation was *WA* at 0.15, and *EI* at almost no correlation at 0.045.

The last question of the study was on the relationship between *delegating* and FIRO-B.

The findings indicated that there was almost a perfect positive correlation between *delegating* to *EI* at 0.99 and *WA* at 0.99, however, it was least correlated to *EA* at 0.17. The other dimensions had low scores for instance both *EC* and *WC* scored 0.27 while *WI* scored 0.56 which was a moderate score. The following are the correlation results:

**Table 10.** The relationship between *delegating* and FIRO-B

	<i>Delegating</i>	<i>EI</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>WI</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>Delegating</i>	1						
<i>EI</i>	0.997780041	1					
<i>EC</i>	0.275712264	0.339115	1				
<i>EA</i>	0.171273153	0.105281	-0.89981	1			
<i>WI</i>	0.565678987	0.509507	-0.6367	0.909326	1		
<i>WC</i>	0.275712264	0.339115	1	-0.89981	-0.6367	1	
<i>WA</i>	0.998862031	0.993468	0.229554	0.218067	0.604364	0.229554	1

The correlation scores of the FIRO-B dimensions with the leadership styles lead to certain key areas worth discussing.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the research on the age indicated that the number of workers reduces only 19.8 percent of the workforce are at the top age category (40-49), this may be an indicator that the majority have either retired or gone back to their countries and corroborates with Warner and Moonesar (2019). In their study, Mitra and Chatterjee (2019), discussed the FIRO-B scale on the distinction between the manufacturing and service sector and found a significant difference in the scores of both. Conversely, in this research work, the scores of FIRO-B and the industry were not correlated, both service and manufacturing were treated as a demographic variable which showed that the majority of the respondents were from there. On the contrary, Bertolini, Borgia, and Siegel (2010) did a study, on the service sector, which represented the population of tax professionals and other accounting professionals. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference in the overall FIRO-B score.

As per the results, it has been established that those who scored high in *expressed control* and *wanted control* also scored high in *directing* same as conceptualized by Mitra and Chatterjee (2019). Also, *expressed inclusion* and *expressed affection* is positively related to the *supporting* or participative leadership style. Relating the FIRO-B scores to leadership dimensions, Sayeed (2010), concludes that *inclusion* and *affection* dimensions relate

significantly to the participative style of leadership, and on the contrary, no significance observed in scores of *control* needs to task-oriented leadership style which is similar to *directing* style according to this paper. According to the research questions, through the analysis relationships have been drawn in this article. The FIRO-B questionnaire has been related to leadership dimensions in previous works of literature (Jenster & Steiler, 2010; Brooks, 2007), but nowhere a conclusion is drawn for the relation between the situational leadership model and FIRO-B. This develops an equation that makes clear that if an individual has a leadership style more dominated towards *directing* then one might have an attitude of controlling and taking responsibility and also working in a routine job within instructions of others, this frames a complete directive personality. In coordination with this personality, the negative correlation between *expressed affection* and *wanted inclusion* backs up the traits. The second research question is determined to get the relation of FIRO-B with the second dimension of SLD, which states those who score high in *coaching* have strong expression of *affection* and might have a little bit of *wanted inclusion* due to which the personality characteristic can be determined towards training the weaker abilities of others and making them equipped. A similar result was shown by the study done by Furnham and Crump (2015), where the leaders had a high *expressed control* score and low *wanted inclusion*. Additionally, negative relation with *control* in both expression and wanted need proves that the leader with less control need, but more *affection* need in expression strives for *coaching*. For the third and fourth research questions, the relation is drawn between *supporting*

and *delegating* leadership styles with FIRO-B. The result indicates the *supporting* style, also taken as the participative style (Sayeed, 2010) in other research is showing a team relation as expressing *affection* and also demanding *inclusion*, with again a negative correlation in *control* need. As, both *coaching* style and *supporting* style are considered to be people-oriented styles (Duff, 2013) hence, are the styles negative in *control* need? The next one is *delegating* style in which the interpersonal need is high in *wanted affection* and *expressed inclusion* indicating the leader's role being significant towards making followers feel included by handing over responsibilities and giving less expression in both *control* and *affection* with leaving the work to be done by the followers and not engaging in micro-management. Previous studies dealt only with leadership style separately and FIRO-B dimensions individually. But due to the changing pattern of leadership, and more emphasis on contingency leadership theories highlighting the leader-follower relations (Vidal, Campdesuñer, Rodríguez, & Vivar, 2017; Kulkarni, 2017; Boehe, 2016) it becomes important to study the flexible pattern of leadership (Pant & Sinha, 2016).

## 6. CONCLUSION

The levels of operations of the respondents were top, middle, and operational level managers, and the age groups were grouped into three, 18–28, 29–49, and 40–49 years. Two major areas of business studied were the service industry and the manufacturing industry. The research was done to understand the personality dimensions of leadership style linked with interpersonal behaviour orientation. The growing nature of an organization needs to emphasize and match leadership style to interpersonal behaviour with the team as the leader to have an impact on followers requires to adapt from both sides. This research indicates, the correlation between situational leadership style and FIRO-B dimensions. After the analysis, a conclusion can be drawn that a leader has a particular personality and along with their dominant areas of leadership they also possess an interpersonal need that makes them act and perform in a set direction. The need pattern of an individual first highlighted by Maslow in 1943 in his need hierarchy model (Bharti, 2018) also establishes a connection with FIRO-B emphasizing the fact that the way an individual behaves depends also on the pattern of their need with the leadership behavior. Here, in this article these needs of FIRO-B namely, *inclusion*, *control*, and *affection* from both expressed and wanted dimensions established a correlation with SLD namely, *directing*, *supporting*, *coaching*, and *delegating*. The correlation can be significantly observed in *directing* (SLD) and *control* (FIRO-B), indicating that if an individual needs, to take responsibility and control under the category of high task focus then it is related to control behaviour. Another pattern of high relationship focus which is *supporting* and *coaching* relates to

*expressed affection* and *wanted inclusion*. The category of low task focus and low relationship focus has a low need of expressing any overt *affection* or *control* which reasons for the fact of remaining aloof from the followers. Although, the other dimensions related to the level of leadership and age of leadership and interpersonal behaviour can also be explored to give more accurate results which can be done in trailing research. Even elaborative research can be done by drawing a relation between each dimension of FIRO-B with each other and expressing it in several situations of leadership style to understand the variability. This paper will be important in the future as a source of literal reference and for those who want to have a better grasp of how leadership behaviour affects interpersonal relationships in an organisation. The findings established that the situational leadership dimension and the FIRO-B parameters have a certain relationship.

The findings of the research opened up new gaps for further research. Some key demographic factors that could have influenced the outcome would have been the culture of the respondent more specifically the element of religion, educational levels, work experience of the respondent, and exposure in terms of whether the respondent has worked in other environments for instance overseas. A cross-sectional study, between different regions, says the Gulf Cooperation countries (GCC), Middle East, and North Africa (MENA), South East Asia, and East Africa, where similarities and some dissimilarities exist. The sample in the future would possibly be made bigger and not restricted to two industries. Future research areas could use other analysis techniques like structural equation modelling to ascertain whether the findings would be similar. Further to this, the dimensions of leadership and FIRO-B, *pre* and *post*-pandemic (COVID-19) can also be researched. It would be worth noting how the scores of situational leadership after the pandemic, would compare with other studies conducted before the pandemic happened.

The practical implication of the paper is that organisations implementing this study would have a greater insight into leadership behaviour and how it affects relationships in the organisations. Leadership behaviour and interpersonal relationships are very critical to performance and a conducive organisations culture. The theoretical implication would be that the leaders would have a focal point of reference to regulate behaviour in order to stimulate a desirable interpersonal relationship with their followers. This would further feed the organisational policy formulation.

The research however may have some limitations in terms of duplication and generalisation in other contexts since the location and culture factors might have a role in the respondents' feedback. The sample frame possessed some limitations, specifically in terms of the size and type.

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