

Open Manager: a study to confirm managerial implications

Tullio Menini

Abstract The job market and today's society are undergoing deep changes, driven by globalization and digitalization, which are happening at an increasing pace, making necessary to rethink leadership models and managerial competences of those involved in such jobs. In this context, the figure of the Open Manager has emerged, a leader capable of interpreting and promoting the values of collaboration, openness, network building and enhancement of their own team. Our work fits into this transformation, proposing an evaluation model aimed at identifying and developing the typical skills of the Open Manager, using a specific questionnaire built on solid theoretical foundations and tested across various business sectors, as a practical tool to profile managers and foster the spread of a new managerial culture.

Key words: Differential Item Functioning, Open Manager

1 Introduction

Specifically, the research began in 2020 and aims primarily to profile a new managerial figure, the Open Manager, by developing both an evaluation tool and a specific training model to support managers. The studies conducted (Bruttini et al. 2024; Bruttini et al. 2025) have confirmed on the one hand the actual emergence of a managerial profile closer to the culture of the Open Manager, and on the other hand the need to continue creating a new managerial culture, one that aligns with the ongoing cultural and technological transformations. The work evaluates different classification models applied to the results of the questionnaires, which reinforce certain "personas", meaning research-based profiles representing key figures,

Tullio Menini

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Naples L'Orientale;

e-mail: menini@unior.it

emerged from the methodological analysis. We recommend using these personas and their assignment as a classification tool for future submission of the questionnaire, in order to associate each new manager under investigation with the most relevant managerial profile.

In this contribution, new managers are interviewed using the questionnaire, with the double aim of verifying the generalization of the work through some methodological tools, such as the analysis for Differential Item Functioning (DIF), and of measuring the level of Openness in a new group of managers, comparable to the original reference group. The goal is to assign each individual a level of Openness based on the same metric previously built and validated, and to confirm the managerial implications arising from the classification. This work is the result of a joint research effort by a group including P. Bruttini, P. Mariani, T. Menini, C. Sartirana.

2 Delphi Study in Collectible Design

The aim of this work is the validation of a questionnaire for business managers regarding managerial styles, developed and tested within the Open MOOd research project funded by Fondimpresa since 2020, and its use to identify the level of Openness in newly interviewed managers, to identify the key differential characteristics of Open Managers. The motivation for this work is to offer a reliable and replicable model for evaluating managerial styles, useful both for research and for companies wishing to invest in the development of a new managerial culture oriented towards Open Leadership. The validated questionnaire serves as a starting point for future investigations, training interventions, and growth pathways, in line with the evolving needs of the labour market.

The rapid transformation process due to globalization and digitalization makes it essential to adjust the managerial approach to the evolving society and job market, responding to new needs and new modalities. Some modern developments, such as the use of massive online platforms, the widespread and transversal presence of data, or open-source movements, have increasingly contributed to transforming the dynamics of innovation and the concept of open innovation. Open innovation is becoming increasingly present in literature, as well as in the business and industrial world. It is moving beyond its traditional placement in the R&D departments of large companies and spreading across various sectors and companies of different sizes and histories. In this context, the new managerial figure of the Open Manager is increasingly emerging. This leader operates according to the principles of collaboration, openness, networking, and the empowerment of their own team, promoting trust and autonomy, and using digital technologies as enabling tools for collaboration and innovation.

The result of the analysis is used to evaluate hypotheses regarding the characteristics of managers, as previously identified in Bruttini et al. (2024), in relation to the response model related to the item “Regarding the characteristics of the Open Manager, within your company, how close do you feel to this value?”.

This element is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 10, and the results suggest that self-assessments are closely aligned with the measures estimated using the Partial Credit Model (PCM).

A comparison is made with the results of the first analysis conducted by Bruttini et al. (2024) using the new dataset, which outlines six distinct groups of managers showing behaviours similar to those emerged in the first submission, based on their responses to the questionnaire. By juxtaposing the distribution of responses to the questions within each group with the aggregated dataset, the study shows the different levels of openness that characterize each managerial group.

3 Conclusions

This research has validated the OPEN MOOd Questionnaire through a psychometric analysis process based on the Rasch model with item anchoring procedure and systematic DIF verification. The results converge toward conclusions of significant scientific and practical importance.

The total absence of bias ($DIF = .00$) and the homogeneity of distributions between the two groups demonstrate first and foremost that the instrument measures the "Openness" construct in an equitable and invariant manner across different cohorts, representing a solid methodological foundation for comparative and longitudinal investigations. Intergroup comparability is guaranteed on a solid psychometric basis, which allows attributing to each manager, regardless of cohort membership, an Openness profile on the same reference metric. Managerial profiles are furthermore interpretable and robust for future administrations, as the psychometric stability of the instrument has been empirically confirmed.

This robustness opens the possibility of conducting longitudinal monitoring on a shared and stable metric, allowing to track the evolution of Openness levels over time and evaluate the impact of training programs. Overall, these results support the validity of the Open Manager figure as a psychological construct and provide a solid empirical foundation for the development of the training model and for the implementation of managerial development programs consistent with current cultural and technological transformations.

References

1. Bruttini, P., Mariani, P., Marletta, A., Masserini, L., Zenga, M.: Defining the Open Manager: features and attitudes of a new professional figure. *Ann. Oper. Res.* (2025) doi:10.1007/s10479-025-06653-1
2. Bruttini, P., Gallo, M., Mariani, P., Menini, T.: Management styles and innovation. *Manag. Decis.* (2024) doi:10.1108/MD-09-2023-168.