

Narrative Script for ISPP 2023 Paper Presentation

The Personality Profile and Leadership Style of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

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Slide 1: Title Page

In the summer of 2022 (as a summer research fellow) and in spring 2023 (for an empirical research project), I [Elise Vomacka] collected data and developed a personality profile of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, using Theodore Millon's conceptual model as adapted by Aubrey Immelman.

Slide 2: Definition of Personality

Psychology is the study of behavior (B) and mental processes (A and C). By mental processes, I mean cognition and affect. Personality is relatively consistent over time (temporal stability) and situations (situational stability). An accurate personality assessment should be conducted across the entire matrix of the person. The instrument we use to assess personality, called the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), assesses a broad range of attribute domains.

Slide 3: Definition of Personality (continued)

Personality is defined as distinctive, pervasive patterns of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating to others, that are both temporally stable and cross-situationally consistent.

High-level political leaders are usually in their 50s and 60s and – because personality becomes increasingly stable with age – it provides a firm basis for anticipating leadership behavior. At 45 years of age, Zelenskyy is relatively young; however, personality is sufficiently ingrained by age 40 to permit reliable predictions about political behavior.

Slide 4: Millon's Eight Attribute Domains

When evaluating personality, we should sample from all of its important domains. In Millon's model, personality is assessed across eight different domains, as you can see on this slide. However, in the indirect assessment of personality, we only evaluate the first five domains, namely, expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood and temperament, and self-image. We don't incorporate the last three domains on in at-a-distance personality assessment, because they are not amenable to indirect observation.

Slide 5: MIDC Taxonomy – Scales and Gradations

Our taxonomy (or classification system) contains 12 different personality patterns, or categories. Within each pattern, there are three gradations, ranging from normal (level *a*) through prominent (level *b*) to pathological (level *c, d*). A minor exception is the last two scales (9 and 10), which comprise just two pathological personality variants (levels *d* and *e*).

Slide 6: MIDC Score Sheet for Volodymyr Zelenskyy

The MIDC has 170 items (or, diagnostic criteria), which are represented by each of the boxes (or cells) on the score sheet. In the rows, you see the five attributes we study. The columns display the 12 personality patterns tapped by the MIDC. Affirmatively present diagnostic criteria score 1 point at level *a*, 2 points at level *b*, 3 points at level *c*, 4 points at level *d*, and 5 points at level *e*.

As shown at the bottom of the score sheet, affirmatively present diagnostic criteria are highlighted in bright green. If we think Zelenskyy possesses a particular personality trait but don't yet have enough empirical evidence to support that determination, we classify the diagnostic criterion as equivocally affirmative and mark it in olive brown. MIDC items where Zelenskyy does not meet the diagnostic criteria are classified as negative and highlighted in red. Finally, in cases where Zelenskyy does not meet the diagnostic criteria, but we cannot entirely rule out that possibility, the diagnostic criterion in question is classified as equivocally negative and highlighted in yellow.

Only affirmatively present items are scored; however, we also report MIDC scale elevations based on affirmatively present plus equivocally present diagnostic criteria as an estimate of the upper limit of Zelenskyy's scale elevations, somewhat akin to the notion of confidence intervals.

Slide 7: MIDC Scale Scores & Item Endorsement Rate by Attribute Domain

These two tables display the descriptive statistics and a summary of the results of the present study.

Table 1 depicts the total number of classifications we found affirmatively present and equivocally present in each attribute domain. Judging from deviations from the mean, it was easier to find information about Zelenskyy's expressive behavior and interpersonal conduct – most likely because those attributes are more commonly reported in the media. It proved more difficult to find items that addressed Zelenskyy's cognitive style and mood or temperament.

Table 2 shows Zelenskyy's lower and upper scores for each of the 12 MIDC scales. (Lower scores are based on affirmatively present classifications and upper scores are based on affirmative plus equivocally affirmative classifications.) As you can see, Zelenskyy obtained the most affirmative classifications on scale 3, the Outgoing pattern, followed ties scores on scale 2, the Ambitious pattern; scale 1B, the Dauntless pattern; scale 4, the Accommodating pattern; and scale 6, the Conscientious pattern. It's also notable that he obtained a slightly elevated scale 1A score (the Dominant pattern).

Slide 8: MIDC Profile for Volodymyr Zelenskyy

The MIDC profile for Volodymyr Zelenskyy is depicted in this line graph. On the graph, the solid line with circles is Zelenskyy's profile, based on affirmatively present diagnostic criteria only. The dotted line with diamonds is Zelenskyy's profile based on affirmative plus equivocally affirmative diagnostic classifications, yielding something analogous to a confidence interval or, more accurately, a range of scale elevations that likely encompasses Zelenskyy's true scale elevation. In the next several slides, I'll say a few words about his most prominent (or distinctive) scale elevations.

Slide 9: Primary Personality Pattern #1 – Outgoing

Zelenskyy's primary personality pattern is scale 3, the Outgoing pattern. The five bullet points represent some of the central traits associated with the Outgoing pattern. For example, outgoing personalities are confident in their social skills, charming, and have a personal style that makes people like them. Proneness to boredom and impulsiveness – listed in the bottom two bullet points – are associated with more extreme levels of extraversion than Zelenskyy's, whose profile elevation on the Outgoing scale is within the normal range (5–9), though equivocally at the lower bound of the prominent range (10–23).

Slide 10: Primary Personality Pattern #2 – Ambitious

Zelenskyy's second primary scale elevation occurs on scale 2, the Ambitious pattern. His personal charisma can be explained in terms of his primary Ambitious and Outgoing patterns because political charisma is typically a function of self-confidence in conjunction with extraversion.

Slide 11: Secondary Personality Pattern #1 – Dauntless

Zelenskyy obtained secondary elevations on three MIDC scales. The first of these was observed on scale 1B, the Dauntless pattern. This slide depicts the key characteristics of this personality pattern. If you look at the bullet point second from the bottom, Zelenskyy's courage in taking on Russia against overwhelming odds is clearly seen in his decision to stay and fight for Ukraine, even though the U.S. offered to evacuate him from Kyiv.

Slide 12: Secondary Personality Pattern #2 – Accommodating

Zelenskyy's next secondary elevation occurs on scale 3, the Accommodating pattern. In the interest of time, I will not discuss Zelenskyy's secondary personality patterns in great detail; suffice it to say that Zelenskyy's loading on this scale 4 is suggestive of a 'balanced' personality profile. Specifically, his accommodating agreeableness serves as a check on the dominant aggressiveness represented by his subsidiary scale 1A.

Slide 13: Secondary Personality Pattern #3 – Conscientious

Zelenskyy's third secondary scale elevation occurs on scale 6, the Conscientious pattern, which encapsulates his loyalty to his nation and his sense of duty.

Slide 14: Subsidiary Personality Pattern #3 – Dominant

Zelenskyy obtained a subsidiary scale elevation on scale 1A, the Dominant pattern, which is indicative of a strong, directive leadership style. Zelenskyy's MIDC scale elevation on the Dominant pattern just failed to reach the 'present' level of 5–9; however, the upper limit of his scale elevation falls within this range.

Slide 15: Proportion of Various Personality Patterns in Zelenskyy's Personality Composite

This pie chart offers a visual representation of the proportion of Zelenskyy's overall personality composite accounted for by his primary, secondary, and subsidiary patterns. Unlike most politicians studied in our Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, Zelenskyy's personality functioning is relatively evenly distributed across a broad spectrum of personality patterns, which suggests that he is able to adapt to a broad range of situations. The personality profiles of most politicians have spikes on just a couple of personality patterns – for example, dominance and narcissism. Because of his 'balanced' personality composite, no leadership limitations are immediately evident. (For example, Zelenskyy's profile reveals a balance between behavioral activation [scales 3 and 1B] and behavioral inhibition [scale 6].)

Slide 16: Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics

More information and updates: <http://personality-politics.org/ukraine/>

The full-length research paper, which will elaborate on Zelenskyy's leadership style, will be available on Digital Commons at http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/143/ by September 2023.