

Chapter 7

Measurement of the Intention to Exhibit Leadership Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The leadership intention measure was developed to help organizations deal with the dynamic and complex realities of the 21st-century competitive global environment, which necessitates a more rapid and effective response to changes to survive. An effective approach for dealing with this reality is to involve employees in the various leadership processes for the organization. However, employees must be prepared to assume the responsibility for a more active leadership role. Before an organization can open their work environment for 'leadership in all', determining whether members have the intention to exhibit leadership is critical. Therefore, this scale is based on the reasoned action behavioral model of Fishbein and Ajzen to determine the intentions of employees for engaging in leadership behavior. The LIM scale was validated in an organization whose stated culture encouraged leadership behavior by all. Results indicate that this measure would be a valuable tool for assessing organization readiness for facilitating and enabling leadership behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes a scale to measure the intention of an individual in an organization to exhibit leadership behavior. The Leadership Intention Measure was developed to help organizations deal with the dynamic, complex, and multicultural realities of the 21st-century competitive global environment, which necessitates a more rapid response to changes to survive (Rost, 1991). An effective approach for dealing with this reality is to involve employees in the various leadership processes for the organization (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Raelin, 2003). However, employees must be prepared to assume the responsibility for a more active leadership role (Raelin). The leadership role described based on everyday influence processes by anyone in the organization derived from knowledge, the recognition of the need for a specific change, and the intention to influence others to accept the change idea and take implementation action. Before an organization can open their work environment for 'leadership in all', determining whether members

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have the intention to exhibit leadership is critical. Therefore, this scale is based on the reasoned action behavioral model of Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) to determine the intentions of employees for engaging in leadership behavior so that organizations can determine how best to facilitate and enable their more active involvement in organization success.

BACKGROUND

Leadership has been studied and debated for many years with numerous attempts to define what it means and how leadership theory should be developed and used in organizations. An extensive examination of leadership literature (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978, 1998, 2003; Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Goethals & Sorenson, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977; Harter, 2006; Heifetz, 1994; Hickman, 1998; Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Hollander, 1992; House & Aditya, 1997; Jacobs, 1970; Locke, 1991; McCrimmon, 2006; Murrell, 1997; Northouse, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Raelin, 2003; Rost, 1991; Selznik, 1957; Stogdill, 1948, 1974; Uhl-Bein, 2006; Yukl, 2006) leads to two conclusions: (a) the predominant leadership perspective is based on authority positions with associated assumptions about the appropriate leadership traits, characteristics, and behaviors and (b) everyday individual leadership behaviors in organizations have not been adequately addressed in the literature, and little is understood about the factors that encourage and facilitate the leadership behaviors that support organizational effectiveness (Heifetz), particularly in complex and dynamic work environments.

Leadership Perspective Appropriate to Complex and Dynamic Situations

This chapter views leadership from a non-positional perspective, as an influence process by anyone in the organization, not as something reserved for individuals in authority positions. In this perspective, any individual can offer an idea, question a weak or bad idea, stand up for a virtue, or even help a new employee figure out how to deal with a problem. These are all leadership acts. Leadership occurs when an individual recognizes the need for change and influences others to accept the change idea and take action to effect the change (McCrimmon, 2006). In this context, leadership is clearly not about authority or based on one individual. It is based on the situation and the specific change idea.

This perspective also changes how power is viewed and used in organizations. Power is often defined in the organizational literature as the influence of one person over another or group; where one has power and the other does not. In the positional perspective of leadership, power is mostly held and exercised by individuals in authority positions. In the non-positional perspective, power is based more on knowledge, expertise, or an excellent idea; where it is considered as a factor of competitive or cooperative interdependencies of people in the organization (Stacey, 2007). To Stacey, power is created within the relationships between individuals, rather than within the individuals themselves.

As we learned from Burns (1978), leadership is about influence. Influence is a form of persuasion. O'Keefe (1990) defined persuasion as a human communication designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes. Perloff (1993) added the context in which the person being persuaded has a degree of free choice. Greenleaf (1977) differentiated persuasion from coercion, as a response that is voluntary (based on free choice) as opposed to the overt compulsion or covert manipulation of coercion. Thus, persuasion carries with it the idea that the person being persuaded accepts the change

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