

Bringing Organizational Culture and Leadership to the **Bottom Line**.

Self and Colleague Perceptions of Leadership: Do Age Differences Exist?

SIOP

April, 29 2007

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The Changing Workforce

- Rapidly aging population
- Nature of the workforce will continue to change (Hatcher, 2003)
 - Workforce is aging
 - Employers more likely to hire older workers for traditionally “younger” jobs (Hirsch, 1990)
 - Organizational age grading is reversed (Lawrence, 1988)

Implications of the Changing Workforce

- Considerable interest in Aging and Work
 - Work-life balance (e.g., Baltes & Young, 2007)
 - Occupational health (e.g., Kawada, 2002)
 - Bias and stereotypes (e.g., Gordon & Arvey, 2004)
 - Retirement (e.g., Bennett, Beehr & Lepisto, 2005)

Studying Age and Leadership

- Research more sparse, but it is important to study (Kabacoff & Stoffey, 2001)
- Individuals of different ages prefer different leaders (e.g. Vecchio & Boatwright, 2002)
- Age differences impact leader behavior (e.g. Kakabadse et al., 1998)

Studying Age and Leadership

Unexplored questions...

- Do leaders of different ages perceive themselves differently
- Are there gaps between how leaders of different ages perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others?
- What are the implications of age grading reversal on how leaders are perceived?

Leader Self-Perceptions

- Older and younger leaders use different leadership styles (Oshagbemi, 2004)
- Older and younger managers differ in their self-perceptions of their careers (Lawrence, 1984)
- **Older and younger leaders are expected to differ in their self-perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses**

Leader Self-Perceptions in Comparison to Others' Perceptions

- Older perceived as slower, less creative, resistant to change (e.g. Rhodes, 1983)
- More positive evaluations of younger vs. older workers (e.g., Gordon & Arvey, 2004)
- Older study problems in light of past (e.g., Kabacoff, 2002)
- Older workers handle certain stressors better (Mayes et al., 1991)
- Older compensate for age related decline (Bunce & Sisa, 2002)
- Younger often lack experience (e.g. Kakabadse et al., 1999)

Leader Self-Perceptions in Comparison to Others' Perceptions

- Potential disconnect between how leaders of different ages perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others
- **How do others perceive leaders of different ages in comparison to how they perceive themselves?**

The Reversal in Age Grading

- Younger subordinates older supervisor fits traditional view of age sequencing (e.g., Vecchio, 1993)
- Status Incongruence
 - Discomfort or resentment when dealing with younger superiors (e.g., Cox & Nkomo, 1992)
 - Lower levels of liking (e.g., Tsui et al., 1991)
- **Supervisors who are rated by older Subordinates will likely receive lower ratings than those rated by younger subordinates**

Sample

- 1775 leaders
 - 25 different national and multi-national organizations
 - 22% female, 67% male
 - 68% Caucasian, 4% Asian, 3.5% Hispanic, 3.5% African American
 - 84(5%) under 30, 1381(77%) 30-49, 310(17%) 50 and over

Sample Cont...

- 1891 Peers
 - Leaders rated by 1-29 peers
 - Average 3.12
- 1800 Direct Reports (subordinates)
 - Leaders rated by 1-21 direct reports
 - Average 3.62
- 1376 Bosses
 - Leaders rated by 1-4 bosses
 - Average 1.22

Results – Leader Self Perceptions

- Leaders of different age groups differ in their self-perceptions of
 - Involvement { $F(2, 622) = 7.354, p < .01$ }
 - Under 30 significantly lower than 50 and over
 - 30-49 significantly lower than 50 and over
 - Adaptability { $F(2, 1576) = 3.031, p < .05$ }
 - Under 30 significantly lower than 50 and over
- Leaders of different age groups did not significantly differ in their self-perceptions of Consistency or Mission

Results – Self vs. Other Perceptions

- Young leaders underrate themselves in comparison to others' ratings
 - { $t(21) = -2.584, p < .05$ }
- Middle-age leaders overrate themselves in comparison to others' ratings
 - { $t(506) = 2.265, p < .05$ }
- No difference between older leader self-ratings and others' ratings

Results – Status Incongruence

- Younger subordinate ratings of older leaders (status congruent)
 - $M = 5.8936$
- Older subordinate ratings of younger leaders (status incongruent)
 - $M = 5.8308$
- Do not significantly differ

Discussion

- Older leaders rate their ability to build human capital, ownership and responsibility in their subordinates higher than either middle-age or younger leaders
- Older leaders rate their ability to translate the demands of the environment into action higher than younger leaders

Discussion

- Younger underrate, middle-age overrate, older are in-line with others'
 - Younger leaders lack confidence
 - Middle-age more comfortable with their role and abilities...overconfident
 - Older more realistic view of themselves

Discussion

- Leadership ratings are not poorer for status incongruent leaders
 - People are getting used to the organizational age grading reversal
 - Age empathy
 - Older subordinates do not rate younger bosses poorly because they know about experiences at all ages (Finkelstein et al., 1995)
- Having older subordinates is not necessarily problematic

Limitations

- Small number (comparatively) of younger leaders
- Experience?
- Power?

Next Steps...Investigating Gender

- Do male and female leaders perceive themselves as having different skill sets?
 - Important question to address for development
- Do others perceive male and female leaders as having different skill sets?
- Is there a disconnect between how female leaders see themselves and how others see them?
- How are female leaders viewed by their male subordinates in comparison to how they are viewed by their female subordinates?

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Thank You!

