Temporal Intelligence in Leadership
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Objectives and Background

Research has demonstrated time to be an important variable within an organization at both an individual and group level of analysis (Francis-Smythe & Robertson, 1999; Gevers et al, 2006; Rutoski et al, 2007). In fact a number of researchers have called for further work to be done in this domain (Ancona, Goodman, Lawrence, & Tushman, 2001; George & Jones, 2000). In response to this call, this paper will explore the role of time in leadership. Given the increased interest into leadership that has prevailed over the past few years, it is somewhat surprising that there is a limited understanding of how time permeates leadership. Moreover, the importance organizations attach to time is only too clear when organizational economic goals and measures of performance (such as monthly targets, productivity measures) are considered. However, organizations have limited capability to understand how time impacts in everyday work practices. This paper will present an account of time in leadership by introducing a model of Temporal Intelligence (TI). This model in current developmental progress integrates empirical and conceptual work to represent an individual difference factor in regards to a leader's behavioural awareness to different dimensions of time in workplace processes and behavioural responses to this awareness.   There is concern within the contemporary research arena that a preponderance of attention is directed towards the outcomes of leadership effectiveness rather than relevant individual characteristics (Gawith & Flaxman, 2007; Judge & Bono, 2000; Rubin et al. 2005). The importance of operationizing leadership effectiveness as a research variable is reflected in the end-goal of this project.   At the same time it is also recognised there is a need to identify a leader's temporally related individual characteristics that may potentially provide a fruitful basis for explaining leadership as a phenomenon and predicting effectiveness; this has clear implications on selection and development.

Design and Methodology

This paper is situated within a multi-stage research project: (1) develop a model of Temporal Intelligence based on a review of the time and leadership literature (2) develop behavioural descriptions relating to Temporal Intelligence employing repertory grid based interviews (3) develop a Temporal Intelligence questionnaire (self-report) (4) content validation of the TI questionnaire (5) examination of the construct validity of the TI questionnaire and (6) examination of the relationships between TI and leadership effectiveness (organizational and subordinate sourced). We are in the process of commencing work on stage 2 of the project.   Repertory grid based interviews are being conducted with leaders (n=16) from lower to director level within both the private and public sector. The interviews aim to evaluate and validate the conceptual based model and facilitate the generation of items for the TI questionnaire. Stage 2, 3 and 4 will be completed by January 2008.

Results

A leader's ability to perceive dimensions of time in workplace processes has been deemed critical to the leadership process (Halbesleben, Novicevic, Harvey, & Buckley, 2003). The notion of temporal dimensions originates from the works of Adam (1998) but has been adapted for organizational analysis (Harvey & Novicevic, 2000). The current dimensions of time in the TI model include timeframe, pace, temporality, synchronization, sequence, pauses, simultaneity and timelessness. This paper will explicitly link temporal dimensions to specific workplace processes involving leader-subordinate interaction. For example, pace is a referent of speed which has been adopted at a micro-process level, being pace of task delegation, task instructions, task feedback, social interaction and task progress. The underlying premise of TI is that leaders should reflexively regulate their behaviours based on understanding how the eight dimensions of time affect subordinates. Recognizing individual differences in temporal preferences (Francis-Smythe and Robertson, 1999), it is also argued that leaders should manage their behaviours based on their perceptual ability to identify the behavioural manifestations of these preferences among subordinates. Empirical evidence based on person-job characteristics fit studies (Hecht & Allen, 2003; Slocombe & Bluedorn; 1999) will be drawn upon to support this proposition. Research findings from stages 2 to 4 will be presented as behavioural illustrations.

Conclusion

In sum, this paper introduces a conceptual analysis of Temporal Intelligence supported by behavioural descriptions. The TI concept demonstrates how time is integral to leadership practice.