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| TITLE | The Relationship between Perceived Leadership Practices and Organizational Culture within the Aerospace Industry |
| RESEARCHER | Bradley M. McCain School of Business and Entrepreneurship Nova Southeastern University Unpublished doctoral dissertation: Fall 2010 |
| OBJECTIVE | The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between employee perceived leadership practices and organizational culture within the aerospace industry. |

METHODOLOGY

The target population was defined as the U.S. space shuttle program aerospace manufacturing and production operations personnel. Survey data was obtained from employees of United Space Alliance, which consisted of 1,793 employees of varying job classifications. The survey was web-based and 367 surveys were completed (response rate = 20.5%). Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory—Observer and the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (Denison & Neale, 1996). The typical respondent was male (82%), in engineering (41%), non-management (87%), college educated (68%), 46.3 years of age, with 20+ years of service. Internal reliability coefficients in this study for the LPI-O were: .90 Model, .91 Inspire, .88 Challenge, .92 Enable, and .94 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently practiced leadership behavior was Enabling, followed by Modeling and Encouraging, and then Challenge and Inspire. Average scores from the sample respondents were generally lower than those in the Kouzes Posner normative database.

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Gender did not significantly differentiate for Model, Inspire, Challenge and Encourage; males reported significantly higher scores on Enable than did females. No significant correlations were found for any of the five leadership practices and respondent's age. ANOVA revealed no significant differences for any of the five leadership practices on the basis of work experience or educational level. The only significant differences on the basis of job category or hierarchical level were on the leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision. Regression analyses revealed that all six demographical variables (age, education, gender, job category, hierarchical level and length of time with the organization) accounted for very little variance in any of the five leadership practices (less than 2.4% in total). A three-factor solution for the LPI was generated by a factor analysis (68% of the variance), using Principal Component analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. Review of the items loading on the rotated component matrix, however, led the researcher to conclude: "These results provide empirical support for these leadership behaviors to be characterized within five practices" (p. 118).

The five leadership practices accounted for 24 percent of the variance in overall organizational culture, with the majority of this accounted for by the leadership practice of Challenge the Process. All five leadership practices were significantly correlated with the DOCS four cultural dimensions of Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability, and Mission. The researcher concludes that: "This finding supports and adds to the existing leadership literature that posits leadership behavior of varying constructs can and will promote change within an organization" (p. 150).

An unexpected finding was the inverse relationship between Encourage the Heart and overall culture score. The researcher suggests that "while the organization may have policies and procedures for distributing rewards and recognition fairly, the perception may be that leaders are not administering those procedures in an equitable manner. Another potential explanation is that high performers may be recognized more often, giving the perception of favoritism. Or, a lack of alignment between the respondent and organizational mission may render the practice ineffective" (p. 151).