

TITLE Leadership Styles Perceived and Preferred by Generation Employees

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OBJECTIVE The purpose was to determine if members of Generation Y attending adult programs at a U.S. college preferred certain transformational leadership behaviors, to consider how these preferences related to those leadership behaviors by which they perceived being led, and to determine the relationship between these preferred and perceived leadership behaviors and job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The target population for this study was U.S. born Generation Y members between the ages of 18-28 that were attending an adult program at Centenary College in New Jersey during the months of August and September 2008. The criteria for these participants were that they had to have been born between the years 1980-1989 and of the 815 students contacted, 175 met the criteria; and of these only 104 were U.S. born and could participate in the study. Each participant was asked to complete the LPI-Observer and 58 people did so, and answered a question about their year of birth and satisfaction with their job. Participants completed the LPI-Observer in both a perceived (actual) and preferred (ideal) response format. Cronbach alphas (internal reliability) for the perceived version were .88 Model, .93 Inspire, .93 Challenge, .91 Enable, and .95 Encourage. Cronbach alphas (internal reliability) for the preferred version were .66 Model, .86 Inspire, .83 Challenge, .77 Enable, and .92 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

Enable was the leadership practice with the most frequent use, followed by Encourage, Model, Challenge and Inspire. The rank order was the same on the preferred use version. All five of the preferred use of the leadership practices was significantly higher than the perceived usage. Furthermore, job satisfaction scores were significantly correlated with perceived leadership for all five practices. On the preferred use of the leadership practices, only Inspire, Challenge, and Enable were significantly correlated with job satisfaction. The average correlations for job satisfaction with perceived leadership practices was .50 ($p < .01$) and .26 ($p < .05$) for preferred leadership practices. Regression analysis with perceived and preferred leadership practices as independent variables was significant and accounted for 51 percent of the variance around job satisfaction.

The author concludes:

The results reinforce the need for leaders of Generation Y employees to practice the five LPI leadership styles, some of which may differ significantly from their standard behavior” (p. 152)... (and) indicate that members of Generation Y desire and prefer leaders who Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart” (p. 157).