RELATIONSHIP OF LEADERSHIP IMPORTANCE RATINGS AND LEADERSHIP
COMPETENCY RATINGS ACROSS ADJACENT MANAGEMENT LEVELS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Joshua L. Goldman, B.A.
Denton, Texas
May, 1998

Effective leadership can and does influence organizational performance. The Executive Success Profile, a multi-rater feedback instrument, was used to gather perception data on 51 executives and 310 senior managers of a large Fortune 500 electronics manufacturing company in regards to three critical leadership dimensions: visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective. Paired t-tests were run to compare the means of the two samples. Significant differences were found between executives and senior managers on the perceived importance of and ability to perform on the empowering others dimension. Additionally, correlational measures indicate a statistically significant relationship between importance and competence ratings on the empowering others and global perspective dimensions for executives, and on the empowering others dimension for senior managers.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Customer focus, global competition, technological advances, changing demographics, and an increased appreciation of people resources are examples of the many factors that are changing, and will continue to change, this country's economic landscape. Organizations that are to remain productive and viable in this changing environment will need, more than ever before, effective leaders.

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, in their 1985 work, Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge, illustrate this concept by stating, "A business short on capital can borrow money, and one with a poor location can move. But a business short on leadership has little chance for survival" (p. 20). Sloan, Hezlett, Kuncel, and Sytsma (1996) note that leadership failures can lead to "shaken investor and public confidence, lost market share and stock value, and demoralized and decimated workforces" (p. 3).

Understanding successful leadership involves recognizing that the terms leadership and management, though both important, and often used interchangeably, are not synonymous. Top "managers" focus on efficiency; whereas, top "leaders" focus on effectiveness (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 21). This distinction is important. Efficiency connotes getting work done expeditiously and with minimal waste. Kouzes and Posner
(1987) assert, "Traditional management teaching focuses our attention on the short term, the Wall Street analysts, the quarterly statement, and the annual report" (p. xvi). Traditional managers excel in functions that impact the short-term and maintain the status quo: developing metrics, applying rewards and recognition, managing time and budget (Implementation Management Associates, Inc. [IMA], 1995), setting policies, and following procedures (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

Effectiveness, on the other hand, implies being able to produce desired outcomes and extraordinary successes. However, to achieve these results in a constantly mutating environment, effective leaders must look beyond the traditional role of management and be willing to motivate and inspire, define and reinforce culture (IMA, 1995), challenge the status quo, think "out of the box", foster change, and focus on the future (Bennis, 1991).

Currently, in this country, organizations are over-managed and under-led (Staub, 1993). If these institutions intend to survive into the next century, this will need to change. The top managers and executives within an organization will need to become more effective leaders. Jerry Junkins (1993), former chairman, president, and CEO of Texas Instruments, reinforced this concept by stating:

Leaders today are dealing with a far faster pace, and so they need to be acting more instead of reacting. The template by which leaders have been developed, promoted, and recognized in the past is changing. Unless we're willing to throw the old template away, we're going to perpetuate the same old directions and
leadership styles that have not succeeded. (cited in McFarland, Senn, &
Childress, 1993, p. 50)

Therefore, a new template needs to be created to avoid perpetuating the old, unsuccessful styles of leadership. Effective leaders must learn to operate from an anticipatory position in an attempt to positively influence and manage change.

Current research indicates that leadership can and does influence organizational performance (Conger, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Sarros & Woodman, 1993). Thus, it is important to determine the characteristics necessary for effective leadership. However, identifying these characteristics is not a simple exercise. The fact a singular, agreed-upon definition for leadership has not been identified is a significant barrier. In his 1974, *Handbook of Leadership*, Ralph Stogdill, of Ohio State University noted, "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (cited in Sarros & Woodman, 1993, p. 3).

Additionally, for many years, it was thought that great leaders were "born" not created. This theory held that a small number of people are predestined for greatness (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). However, in the 1940s, Stogdill disproved this theory. He conducted an integrative review of over 100 leadership studies. The results of his analysis determined that leaders do not possess special traits that significantly differentiate them from non-leaders (cited in Sashkin, 1987).

It is more probable that successful leadership is a function of both certain crucial leadership attributes and environmental and intra-organizational conditions (Sarros & Woodman, 1993). Therefore, since the 1940s, management science theorists and
researchers have focused on identifying the specific attributes (behaviors, abilities, skills, competencies, and attitudes) critical for effective leadership in various different environments and contexts.

For example, Sarros and Woodman (1993) used the Australian Leadership Inventory to collect data from 282 executives to determine the attributes perceived as most critical for leaders in an Australian context. Their nine-month investigation revealed five leadership attributes key for positive organizational outcomes: vision, setting objectives, decision making, team building, and charisma.

In another study, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985) spent two years observing and conducting a series of interviews with 90 successful leaders from both the private and public sectors. They found that this group was rather diverse in terms of personality, appearance, and leadership style. As the authors state, "They were right-brained and left-brained, tall and short, fat and thin, articulate and inarticulate, assertive and retiring, dressed for success and dressed for failure, participative and autocratic" (p. 25-26). Bennis and Nanus identified far more distinctions than commonalities. However, four attributes emerged as common to all 90 leaders: attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and the deployment of self.

In addition to the two studies mentioned above, a number of research-based models of effective leadership attributes have been developed in recent years. These include models developed by Campbell & Kraut (1990), Development Dimensions International (1980), and Personnel Decisions International (1996). An examination of these models reveals a high degree of agreement. For example, empowering others,
setting goals, gaining commitment, teaming, innovating, maintaining a global perspective, visionary thinking, providing coaching and feedback, and motivating others are all leadership attributes encountered across models.

All of these attributes are important for effective leadership; however, depending on environmental and intra-organizational conditions, certain attributes play larger roles than others within a particular organization. These conditions include organizational culture, geographic location, industry type, political climate, economic factors, competition, and corporate vision and mission.

For the Fortune 500 electronics manufacturing company investigated in the present study, three critical leadership attributes were identified: visionary thinking, empowering others, and maintaining a global perspective. Following is an in-depth discussion of these three key leadership attributes.

Visionary Thinking

Despite the many definitions of vision and visionary thinking that exist (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 89; Harper, 1991; Kenney, 1994; Kotter, 1990; Laszlo, 1994; Senge, 1994, ch. 44), a review of the literature reveals one critical principle that permeates all. Quite simply, at the broadest level, vision relates to a futuristic ideal state. Burt Nanus (1992) elaborates on this principle by stating:

A vision is a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization. It is your articulation of a destination toward which your organization should aim, a future that in important ways is better, more successful, or more desirable for your organization than is the present (p. 8).
Visions supply organizations with a destination and sense of bearing; thus, metaphorically speaking, a vision is like a compass. It is an invaluable tool in the journey from one point, the present, to another point, the future.

As an organization makes this journey, visionary thinkers, then, must not only be capable of visualizing "an ideal and unique image of the future" (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, p. 85), but they must also be able to "read the compass". In other words, visionary thinkers must demonstrate the behaviors needed to realize their vision, because a vision, as Burt Nanus (1992) explains, "is only an idea or image of a more desirable future" (p. 8).

Sarros and Woodman (1993) found that visionary leaders are recognized for their energy, hard work, commitment, courage, and risk-taking behavior. Edwin Land (Polaroid), Sanford Weill (American Express), and Henry Ford (Ford Motors) are prime examples of leaders that exhibited these attributes. These leaders based their strategies for change on their dreams and their visions for the future. Their visions continue to profoundly influence succeeding generations (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Another example of a visionary leader is William Paley. In 1928, Paley took the helm at CBS. At that time, CBS was losing money and was an insignificant player in the television industry. He realized that by aggressively working to expand his audience base, the company would become more attractive to advertisers, and thus, more financially viable. Therefore, he started giving away free programming to affiliate stations. Ten years later, CBS had 114 stations and was earning $27.7 million (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 87-88).
Most executives and managers fail to have as clear a vision as these leaders.

Strangely, they tend to focus instead on the short-term: improving year-end profitability numbers, providing damage control, and responding to unforeseen market situations (Harper, 1991).

In the decades following World War II, the consequences of this shortsighted perspective were not apparent. During these years, the United States experienced widespread growth and prosperity. The world market was expanding at a remarkable pace, and the demand for American products and services from both domestic and foreign customers was unheralded.

Hammer and Champy (1993) explain, "Deprived of material goods, first by the Depression, then by the war, customers were more than happy to buy whatever companies offered them" (p. 15). Quality and service were not major concerns. Management's primary responsibility was to make certain products or services got to market to meet the consumers' high-volume demand.

However, much has changed since the 1950s and 60s. Today, executives and managers compete in a different economic arena, one in which American organizations no longer have a monopoly. Organizations in this country must now operate in an intensely competitive and constantly changing global environment. Survival is therefore dependent on having a competitive advantage. Visionary thinking can provide this advantage by moving an organization from a reactionary to an anticipatory mode.

An organization can only react to change a given number of times before it fails to survive. Eventually, to succeed, its leaders must become proactive and attempt to predict,
plan for, and influence the future. Buhler (1993) states, "perhaps the greatest edge that an organization can have is to be on the forefront of change" (p.18).

For example, the Atlantic Richfield Company, an integrated oil company, noticed an elevation in the levels of air pollution in major U.S. cities. They were also aware of a push by regulatory groups to remedy this by limiting gasoline powered vehicles. By being proactive and taking these external factors into account, Atlantic Richfield envisioned, then developed, a low-emissions gasoline. The achievement of their vision gave them an enormous competitive advantage. Atlantic Richfield initiated change and set the industry standard on emissions. Competitors, to survive, were forced to adjust and try to catch-up (Nanus, 1992).

Kotter (1990) asserts that vision and direction setting are the keys to change, and that producing change is the primary responsibility of leaders. Visionary leaders realize that it is precisely because of rapid change that thinking ahead and planning for the future are so vital.

Executives are often quick to exclaim, "Things are changing so quickly it is too hard to plan far ahead" (Harper, 1991, p.13). However, Harper (1991) asserts, "Companies will succeed only to the extent they are led by executives who have the vision to see the opportunities and the ability to strategically position their companies to harvest them" (p.13).

By proactively anticipating obstacles, leaders can prepare for contingencies and provide their organizations with a competitive advantage. Laszlo (1994) states:
A manager with visionary skills alone has the potential to save an organization immeasurable amounts of time and money, increasing productivity by keeping the organization from either continuing on a course toward crisis, steering the organization back on to the path toward quality or just reducing the overall number of crises. (p.75)

For example, when Sarah Nolan became president of Amex Life Insurance, a subsidiary of American Express, a number of divisions were doing quite poorly. As is often the case in the insurance industry, responsiveness to customers was slow. Nolan asked five "leaders", from various divisions, to assist her in revitalizing the business.

These leaders envisioned a future in which Amex was more customer responsive, and they initiated changes uncommon to their industry to achieve this vision. They instituted open offices, cross-training, and they cut the levels of hierarchy from ten to three. The results of these changes were faster customer service, faster processing of applications, and increased profits. One division increased profits 700 percent and another division won the American Express President's Quality Award (Ray & Rinzler, 1993).

Leaders like Sarah Nolan and her team understand and demonstrate the value of long-term, forward thinking. These leaders are effective because they envision the future state of the world well before their competitors, they consider the major environmental factors that might influence their future, they set a direction and develop strategic plans to get there, and they communicate and foster support within the organization for the dream (Belasco, 1990; Laszlo, 1994).
Many leaders, however, merely implement a short-term or medium-term approach when positioning their organizations for the future. These leaders are not truly visionary. Much of the following discussion on strategic positioning is based on the work of Stephen Harper (1991).

Harper defines the short-term approach as leveraging off the resources that are presently available. In addition, short-term managers feel that very little can be changed. Harper calls organizations run by short-term executives either “laggard” or “reactive” companies. In a laggard company, the leadership fails to realize until entirely too late that the market they are in is saturated or degenerating. These organizations rarely survive.

In a reactive company, executives "react" to changes in their primary market. When profits begin to decline, they realize that it might be time to find "greener pastures." However, developing new technologies and positioning the company for a new market can take a considerable period of time. Therefore, reactive organizations often experience lean times as they transition.

The medium-term approach involves modifying or implementing some new methods for accomplishing present organizational objectives. Harper calls organizations run by medium-term executives “proactive companies”.

Proactive executives grant their companies considerably more lead time for identifying and developing strategies to take advantage of emerging markets and opportunities. They do this by monitoring their rate of growth. When they begin to
detect a slow down, they begin to reposition their organizations. These organizations are a step ahead of reactive competitors.

Harper calls organizations that implement a long-term approach “visionary companies”. Visionary leaders envision a desired future state for their organizations. Once a vision has been created, these leaders must then be willing to change anything and everything to achieve the desired future goal. This includes locations, markets, industries, culture, reward systems, and products. Harper (1991) states:

If executives want to transform their companies, then new markets will need to be researched, new prototypes will have to be created and test marketed, new technologies will need to be adopted, new production and distribution capabilities will need to be developed, new skills will need to be learned, and financial reserves will have to be set aside. (p. 17)

These activities do not occur overnight, but by focusing more attention on them, and less on short-term bottom-line gains, visionary leaders can help organizations achieve their visions and gain a competitive advantage by initiating change and positioning themselves to take advantage of new opportunities.

Empowering Others

In recent years, empowerment, like visionary thinking, has fast become one of the most commonly encountered concepts in management science literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Block, 1987; Guillory and Galindo, 1994, Kanter, 1983; Kizilos, 1990; Pearlstein, 1991). Oddly, despite widespread usage, theorists have yet to agree upon a common definition for the term.
A review of the literature, however, reveals that the majority of empowerment
definitions focus on issues of power and control. Thornton (1992) explains:

The concept of power as the key component of empowerment lies in both its
theoretical base, and the social/political environment in which we live. In a large
part, social structures are constructed and continue to function in a manner which
supports and reinforces the welfare of the most powerful (p. 12-13).

Over the years, management science literature has fortified this position, encouraging
leaders to broaden their power bases and providing strategies and tactics for extending
their circles of influence (Conger, 1989).

Even as early as the 16th century, Niccolo Machiavelli, in his infamous handbook
on leadership, *The Prince*, imparted to his readers the concept that only by invoking fear
and hoarding power could an individual become an effective leader (Thompson,
1532/1988). Leaders and organizations in this country have traditionally adopted this
Machiavellian approach.

Beer (1991) explains that employees begin a process of disempowerment when
they join a traditional, patriarchal organization. Beer argues that most adults, off the job,
have the power to make critical decisions; however, at work they are stripped of this
ability. Traditional organizations ask employees to submit to authority and trust the
decisions of management.

In recent years, however, a growing number of theorists (Beer, 1991; Bennis &
Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1989; Covey, 1993; Peterson, 1993; Putman, 1991) have begun to
investigate the notion "that organizational effectiveness also depends on the sharing of
power - that the distribution of power is more important than the hoarding of power" (Conger, 1989, p. 17). Effective organizations need leaders capable of empowering others.

For example, General Motors (GM) used empowerment principles to turn around their failing Fremont, California plant. This plant, called the "Battleship", shut down four times in 20 years, and was finally closed in 1982. However, in partnership with Toyota, GM reopened the plant and established an environment in which employees felt a sense of ownership for their work.

Managers served as facilitators and coaches rather than imposers of strict codes and guidelines. This effort resulted in increased employee satisfaction, productivity, and cost savings. One manager claimed that the more the decisions were made at the lowest levels, the lower the costs and the higher the productivity and quality of work (Ray & Rinzler, 1993).

Kizilos (1990) explains:

Empowered people do not view themselves as the victims of circumstance, but as shapers of their own destinies. The company's competitive problems become their personal challenges, and they try to meet those challenges. According to enthusiasts, empowerment is the most basic-and most promising-way to revitalize American industry and improve our competitiveness in the global marketplace. (p. 48)

Jaffe and Scott (1992) echo this concept by stating, "As organizations have depleted their capacity to tap non-renewable resources for competitive advantage, their human capital
(creativity, innovation, and intrinsic motivation) has become the key to success" (cited in Ray & Rinzler, p. 140).

A number of case studies cited in the literature demonstrate the direct and positive impact empowering others can and does have on organizational success (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Betof & Harwood, 1992; Conger, 1991; Kizilos, 1990; Peterson, 1993; Shelton, 1991).

Organizations cited in these case studies include: Federal Express, Florida Power and Light, Scandinavian Airline Systems, Saturn, Dana Corporation, Cadillac, and Smith International. Benefits reported by these organizations include increased commitment (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), quality, service, synergy, responsiveness (Shelton, 1991), organizational effectiveness (Conger, 1991), innovation (Peterson, 1993), and productivity (Ray & Rinzler, 1993). In addition to these case studies, Maccoby (1992) also found empirical evidence of a positive correlation between high scores on empowerment measures and profitability in a number of Swedish and U.S. businesses.

An often cited case study on the impact of empowering leadership is that of Ford Motor Company. During the 1970s, Ford, as well as the other large U.S. automakers, was losing market share and billions of dollars to the Japanese. At this time, a definite dividing line existed between labor and management. Labor felt no ownership for their product, and quality consequently suffered.

In response to the crisis at hand, Ford's leadership began involving employees in decision-making activities. Ford utilized and depended upon employee input for designing, manufacturing, and improving their automobiles. Ford employees shared in
both the accountability and the credit for the product. The result was an increase in productivity and quality, and in 1986, for the first time in 50 years, Ford profits exceeded those of General Motors. In addition, only Ford, among U.S. automobile manufacturers, increased sales from 1986 to 1987. As Ford discovered, the ability to empower others can be a powerful tool for gaining a competitive advantage over competitors.

Empowering others is a difficult task. Not all experiments with empowerment have proven successful. Peterson (1993) contends that empowerment is a cultural issue. Leaders must diagnose the culture to determine the specific methods best suited for implementing empowerment within their organizations. Empowerment involves engendering in others a belief in their own personal self-efficacy through the identification and eradication of conditions that cultivate feelings of powerlessness (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Several management science theorists (Bandura, 1977; Beer, 1991; Betof & Harwood, 1992; Conger, 1989) have identified behaviors and techniques leaders can utilize to accomplish this goal. For example, Alfred Bandura (1977) identified four methods for communicating empowering information to others:

1. **Provide positive emotional support during experiences associated with stress and anxiety.**
2. **Provide words of encouragement and positive persuasion.**
3. **Model effective behaviors.**
4. **Provide experiences and opportunities for actual successful task mastery to occur.**
Bandura theorized that individuals believe they have power over their lives when they feel adequately capable of coping with environmental demands. Thus, to truly empower others, leaders must change internal belief systems and equip people with the skills needed to address change.

Conger (1989) conducted a study on the leadership styles of eight highly effective chief executive officers and executive vice-presidents of Fortune 500 and successful entrepreneurial companies. Many of these leaders were characterized as empowering. Their actions were perceived by others to restore personal power, self-efficacy, and self-confidence.

The leaders in Conger's study implemented creative techniques to alleviate feelings of powerlessness within their respective organizations. They did this by providing a positive emotional atmosphere, rewarding and encouraging those around them in visible and personal ways, expressing confidence, fostering initiative and responsibility, and building on success.

Betof and Harwood (1992) identified five ideas that empowering leaders must instill in others:

1. People are part of the management and can improve the organization.
2. Good ideas they have will be implemented.
3. Suggestions they make will be appreciated and rewarded, even if they are not accepted.
4. People can be trusted with responsibility.
5. They are respected for their ideas and judgment.
Peter Block, in his 1987 best-seller, *The Empowered Manager*, states, "the promise of empowerment is that it will dramatically increase the sense of responsibility and ownership at every level of the organization, especially at the bottom where products and services are delivered and customers are served" (p. xiv). Leaders capable of identifying and implementing the appropriate empowerment techniques for a given culture are positioning themselves to fulfill the promise of empowerment.

**Global Perspective**

In the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan wrote about the concept of a global village. He believed that eventually people would come to consider themselves all part of one tribe. In essence, all people would develop a global identity along with a national identity (cited in McBride, 1992).

As the end of this century approaches, McLuhan's prediction has not yet been fully realized; however, with the advent of highly sophisticated and efficient modes of communication, relatively free-flowing resource transfer, and clear recognition of the potential for mass markets (Rhinesmith, Williamson, Ehlen, & Maxwell, 1989), a global economy has certainly emerged.


Increasingly we are becoming citizens of the world. The organizations for which we work are either entering the international marketplace or being affected by the global economy. Whether a company is actively marketing its products internationally, manufacturing in other countries, or "merely"
facing the need to address competition from abroad, the global economy affects its business. (p. 557)

Thus, organizations cannot operate in ignorance of economic factors outside national boundaries and expect to remain competitive. McBride (1992) states:

We are becoming more global and less international. The growth of regions at the expense of nations, and the growth of interdependence at the expense of national sovereignty, are parts of the process which has become known as globalization. (p. 49)

Social and economic changes in Europe have and will continue to influence how the world conducts business. These changes include the rise of capitalism in Eastern Europe, the continued growth of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the creation of the 12 nation Economic Community (Gerevas, 1991).

Success in a global market necessitates taking world economic developments into account, and organizing businesses across borders in a manner that maximizes opportunities. The two primary ways to organize have been either multinationally or globally. Multinational corporations use foreign operations to augment international sales and distribution capabilities. The corporate headquarters retains responsibility for setting mission and strategy and allocating resources, but decision-making falls to the local operations for selling, marketing, and manufacturing within their regions (Rhinesmith et al., 1989).

In contrast to regionalization, global corporations view the entire world as one market. Rhinesmith et al. (1989) explain:
Such an organization is always looking for potential products or businesses. It delivers them in the best markets from the lowest cost positions and with the most appropriate management resources, largely without regard to where dollars, people, resources and technology reside. (p. 26)

Then, by definition, global enterprises are characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and entrepreneurialism. These organizations must identify and permeate potential markets, anywhere on the globe, before local or international competitors are prepared to compete.

However, as global organizations develop global strategies, they must take care not to ignore local customs, culture, values, and behaviors. Randolph (1990) explains, "successful organizations must have the right balance between a global perspective and a local market flexibility" (p. 49). As the world market continues to grow and change, successful organizations must utilize leaders with this understanding.

Rhinesmith et al. (1989) state:

A global company is more than just a U.S. company with some offshore operations; it takes more than frequent flyer miles to become a global leader.

Today's cosmopolitan executive must know what to do when competitive advantage is fleeting, when change becomes chaos, and when home base is the globe. (p. 25)

Therefore, it is crucial that organizations identify, recruit, and develop leaders who are capable of knowing what to do to gain competitive advantage in the global arena. Davis et al. (1992) explain:
To successfully manage in this global economy, it is essential to understand how world events affect your business, how business practices in other cultures affect your own work, how to conduct business and manage employees in other cultures, and how your culture affects business in other countries. (p. 557)

However, maintaining a global perspective and recognizing the ramifications of world events is a difficult task. Ronald Gerevas (1991) discusses a number of barriers that U.S. organizations face when recruiting and developing global leaders. For one, U.S. corporations must overcome the "America rules the world" attitude. American managers often appear oblivious to the impact of the expanding world market. They still falsely believe that the U.S. dominates, and will continue to dominate, the world market. In demonstration of this point, Gerevas sites a Wall Street Journal survey that asked a number of U.S. and Canadian CEOs to identify the home nation of their toughest competitor. Eighty-one percent answered Canada or the U.S. When asked to name the home country of their toughest competitor five years in the future, 73 percent gave the same answer.

Another barrier is the "it won't happen to me" phenomena. In this case, U.S. executives agree that global economic developments will impact American business as a whole, but not them personally.

A third barrier is the need for instant gratification. In the Wall Street Journal survey mentioned previously, only 32 percent of the U.S. and Canadian CEOs polled felt prepared to wait more than 4.3 years to get a return on their international investment. In contrast, 63 percent of Japanese CEOs indicated a willingness to wait more than 6.6
years. This focus on the short-term can adversely impact U.S. leaders abroad as they attempt to develop new markets and negotiate with foreign counterparts.

Also, for many years, a stigma was attached to overseas assignments. International assignments derailed careers. Managers accepting an international assignment often returned to the U.S. to find no available positions, or to discover that in their absence that those who had remained in the U.S. were promoted in their stead. Therefore, many leaders are wary of embarking on a global career path.

However, even if an organization can recruit a leader not hindered by these attitudes, that individual still may not have all the necessary skills to become an effective global leader. During its many years of experience locating global managers, the international executive search firm of Heidrick and Struggles developed a list of five key attributes for successful global managers (Gerevas, 1991):

1. They possess multiple degrees. It is preferable that the degrees come from institutions in different countries.
2. They speak at least three languages. One of these languages should be English.
3. They maintain a diverse lifestyle. This can mean the leader has worked in a foreign country, traveled extensively, or have family members of a different nationality.
4. They have worked for an organization headquartered in a foreign country.
5. They have demonstrated global leadership ability by successfully building and leading multi-country organizations or operations.
Obviously, the pool of leaders that meet these specific criterion is very small. Thus, organizations must recruit qualified candidates and subsequently develop their global leadership skills. Effective development of these skills involves a combination of formal training (McBride, 1992; Randolph, 1990) and expatriate assignments (Milmo, 1993; McClenehen, 1993).

A number of theorists and researchers (Barnum & Gaster, 1991; Davis et al., 1992; Gerevas, 1991; Milmo, 1993; McClenehen, 1993; Rhinesmith et al., 1989) have identified additional attributes that contribute to the effectiveness of a global leader. These include having the ability to effectively lead a diverse group of people, understanding how to lead multicultural teams, managing accelerated change (Rhinesmith et al., 1989), understanding the impact of international events on business, having a strategic mind-set (Milmo, 1993), possessing conversational skills in a host nation's language, and knowledge of local customs, values, and beliefs (Gerevas, 1991).

As competition continues to get fiercer in the world market, global leadership becomes crucial for survival. The leaders that can most capably recognize shifts in the global marketplace and craft appropriate global strategies will provide their organizations with an immense competitive advantage.

Problem Statement and Presentation of Hypotheses

This study was conducted at a Fortune 500 electronics manufacturing company headquartered in the southwest United States. At the time of the study, the organization employed approximately 55,000 people worldwide. The company requested this investigation as a follow-up to a strategic job analysis conducted in 1992 with a small,
select sample of the company’s leadership. The job analysis revealed the following three competencies as critical for effective leadership within the organization:

I) **Visionary Thinking:** This competency gives leaders direction by providing them with an ideal future state in which to strive. This is critical in an economic environment in which the only constant is change and the only certainty is uncertainty.

II) **Empowering Others:** This competency allows leaders to maximize their human resources. In a fiercely competitive market place, human capital can ultimately become the difference between success and failure.

III) **Global Perspective:** This competency is essential for leaders operating in a global market. Leaders that take advantage of emerging markets and opportunities will give their companies a tremendous competitive advantage.

Many researchers and theorists have chosen to explore leadership without differentiating between levels of management (Block, 1987; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Nanus, 1992). Using Personnel Decisions International’s (PDI) Executive Success Profile (ESP), the present study will determine if significant differences exist between executives and senior managers on their perceptions of the importance of the above mentioned leadership dimensions. In addition, the study will examine whether or not there is a perceived difference in the level of competence displayed by executives in comparison to senior managers.

By comparing self importance ratings, in null hypothesis 1, a determination can be made on whether agreement exists between executives and senior managers on the perceived criticality of visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective to
their jobs. By examining others ratings on level of competence, in null hypothesis 2, it can be determined if there is a perceived difference in effectiveness between executives and senior managers.

In null hypothesis 3, the ESP data will be used to explore the degree of association between importance and competence in each of the three leadership dimensions for both executives and senior managers. Null hypothesis 3 asks the question, do leaders that perceive a skill to be important also tend to perform that skill at a higher level of competence? Do they walk the talk?

Finally, null hypotheses 4 will look at the impact level of agreement with their boss, on the criticality of a skill, has on perceived level of competence for both executives and senior managers.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The subject pool was composed of 420 executive and senior manager assessment center participants from across various functions and groups within the organization. Each subject had attended an assessment center sometime between 1990 and 1994. Participation at the senior manager level and above was mandatory for all.

As part of the assessment center process, data was collected on each of the subjects using the Executive Success Profile (ESP). However, not all participants were measured with the same version of the ESP. In 1993, the ESP was updated, and the measurement scale for degree of competence was revised. Therefore, data collected from the 59 participants attending assessment centers subsequent to 1993 were not included in the study.

For the purposes of this study, the remaining 361 subjects were classified as either executives or senior managers. Executives are defined as officers of the corporation or of one of the five autonomous business units. Senior managers are defined as managers reporting directly to an executive. The executive sample totaled 51 and the senior manager sample totaled 310 subjects.
mean age of the responding sample (n = 49) to be 44.4 years, with a range of 37 - 58 years. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the responding sample (n = 49) were male and four percent (4%) were female. In regards to highest level of formal education obtained, eight percent (8%) of the responding sample (n = 49) have a doctoral or professional degree, thirty-one percent (31%) have a master’s degree, thirty-three percent (33%) have some graduate work, and twenty-nine percent (29%) have a bachelor’s degree.

Review of the senior manager sample data revealed the mean age of the responding sample (n = 330) to be 47.1 years, with a range of 32 - 63 years. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the responding sample (n = 288) were male and nine percent (9%) were female. In regards to highest level of formal education obtained, fourteen percent (14%) of the responding sample (n = 285) have a doctoral or professional degree, fifty-two percent (52%) have a master’s degree, thirteen percent (13%) have some graduate work, eighteen percent (18%) have a bachelor’s, and two percent (2%) have some college or technical training.

**Instrument**

The ESP is based on an executive success model first developed by PDI in 1987. The model is composed of 22 competencies deemed critical for success at the executive level. The model was developed from a review of published research and in-depth strategic job analysis interviews conducted with over 60 executives sampled from across a wide spectrum of industries. Revisions to the model were made in 1991 and again in 1993 (PDI, 1994).
The ESP questionnaire is divided into three sections: competency ratings, importance ratings, and background information. Section one of the ESP questionnaire asks respondents (subject and subject’s boss, direct reports, and peers) to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, the subject’s degree of competence on 140 specific items. Each item included in the questionnaire was selected based on statistical analyses of item-scale correlation, relationship to performance and potential ratings, and reliability (PDI, 1994).

Section two asks the subject and their boss to rate, on a 7-point Likert scale, the criticality of the 22 competencies to the subject’s current job. Respondents are also instructed to rate no more than seven of the competencies as Critically Important (6 or 7), and no more than eight as Very Important (3, 4, or 5). The third section is composed of 20 questions designed to gather background and demographic information.

**Procedure**

As part of the prework requirement for attending an assessment center, subjects were sent a packet of ESP questionnaires. Each participant was asked to complete a Self Questionnaire, and to distribute up to fourteen Respondent Questionnaires to others: bosses, direct reports, and peers/colleagues. Once completed, questionnaires were sent to Minneapolis, Minnesota for scoring by PDI. In turn, PDI generated reports of the data for presentation to the center participants.

For the purpose of this study, the self and boss importance ratings and the self and average of others competence ratings for visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective were extracted for statistical comparison. For analysis purposes, if a
respondent group rating was not available for a given subject, that subject’s data was not used.

Data Analysis

Null hypothesis 1, that there is no significant difference between executive and senior manager self importance ratings on the visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective dimensions was tested using three paired t-tests.

Null hypothesis 2, that there is no significant difference between executive and senior manager performance ratings by others on the visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective dimensions was also tested using three paired t-tests to compare the means of the two samples.

Null hypothesis 3, that there is no significant association between importance and competence for visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective for both the executive and senior manager samples was tested using six Spearman rank correlations. Spearman coefficients were used rather than the more common Pearson coefficients because they are less sensitive to outliers.

In null hypothesis 4, self and boss importance ratings were compared for each subject in both the executive and senior manager samples. These comparisons resulted in the establishment of three independent variable groups: agreement on criticality of a leadership dimension, boss rates higher, and subordinate rates higher. These groupings were created for all three leadership dimensions.

Executive and senior manager competence scores were then analyzed for each leadership dimension to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between
the competence ratings of boss-subordinate pairs that agree on importance and those that disagree. This hypothesis was tested using three 1x3 analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study affords understanding into the differences between levels of management on how others perceive their performance, on how they themselves perceive the importance of certain leadership competencies, and on the relationship between these two variables. However, there are some limitations to this study.

The ESP is a 360-degree feedback tool, and is subject to many of the limitations of this type of instrument. The ESP is designed to measure perceptions, not absolute truths. The ratings come not from a trained, objective third-party, but rather from the individuals that work most closely with the subjects, as well as from the subjects themselves. This makes the ESP highly subject to rater biases. For example, most self-raters tend to be subject to halo effects and leniency biases; they overestimate their own abilities (Fox & Dinur, 1988).

Another limitation of the study was the ability for subjects to disseminate feedback surveys to whomever they chose. Some subjects may have received feedback only from those they felt would rate them as strong performers; other subjects may have distributed surveys more at random.

As mentioned previously, Section Two of the ESP asks the subject and the subject’s boss to rate, on a 7-point scale, the criticality of 22 leadership competencies (Appendix B). The respondents were also instructed to rate no more than seven of the competencies as Critically Important (6 or 7), and no more than eight as Very Important
(3, 4, or 5). In this study, only three of the 22 competencies were examined. Therefore, the forced distribution may impact the ratings given the three selected competencies.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Null Hypothesis 1

A series of paired t-tests were conducted to test the null hypothesis that no significant difference exists between how executives and senior managers perceive the criticality of visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective.

As indicated in Table 1, for the visionary thinking dimension, the mean rating for the executive sample was 5.45 and for the senior manager sample $m = 5.23$. A paired t-test ($t = .90$) indicated difference between the two means of .216 ($p = .368$). For the global perspective dimension, the executive sample $m = 5.1$ and the senior manager sample $m = 5.35$. A paired t-test ($t = -1.19$) indicated difference between the two means of .25 ($p = .234$). As indicated by p-values less than .05, there does not appear to be a significant difference, at the 95% confidence interval, between executive and senior manager perceptions on the importance of either visionary thinking or global perspective.

For the empowering others dimension (See Table 1), $m = 4.84$ for the executive sample and $m = 4.06$ for the senior manager sample. A paired t-test ($t = 2.90$) indicated difference between the two means of .780 ($p = .004$). Therefore, the results indicate that executives do in fact perceive empowering others to be a more critical leadership dimension than managers a level below them in the organization.
Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Executive and Senior Manager Self-Importance

Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Dimension</th>
<th>Executive Ratings</th>
<th>Sr. Manager Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionary Thinking</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Others</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspective</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 2

To test the null hypothesis that no significant difference exists between executive and senior manager competence on the visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective dimensions, three paired t-tests were utilized to compare the mean ratings by others for the two samples.

As indicated by the data reported in Table 2, for the visionary thinking dimension, the mean competence rating for executives was 3.69 and \( m = 3.63 \) for the senior manager.
sample. A paired t-test ($t = 1.04$) indicated difference between the two means of .052 ($p = .297$). For the global perspective dimension, $m = 3.66$ for both the executive and senior manager samples. A paired t-test ($t = .029$) indicated difference between the two means of less than .002 ($p = .977$). Therefore, there appears to be no significant difference, at the 95% confidence interval, on how others perceive the competence of executives and senior managers at visionary thinking and global perspective.

However, the results indicate that executives are perceived as more competent than senior managers at empowering others. For the empowering others dimension, $m = 3.74$ for the executive sample and 3.64 for the senior manager sample (See Table 2). A paired t-test ($t = 1.98$) indicated difference between the two means of .097 ($p = .048$).

Table 2

**Means and Standard Deviations of Competence Ratings on Executive and Senior Manager Samples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Dimension</th>
<th>Executive Ratings</th>
<th>Sr. Manager Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>$m$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionary Thinking</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Others</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspective</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Null Hypothesis 3

Spearman rank correlations were run to test the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between importance and competence ratings on visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective for either the executive or senior manager samples.

For the executive sample (See Table 3), a significant and directionally appropriate correlation was found between importance and competence on the empowering others, $r = .319, p < .05$, and global perspective, $r = .289, p < .05$, dimensions. The correlation coefficient computed for visionary thinking, $r = .219, p > .05$, was found to be relatively weak and non-significant.

Table 3

Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients Computed Between Importance and Competence Ratings for Executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Ratings</th>
<th>Importance Ratings</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary Thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the senior manager sample (see Table 4), the importance-competence correlations for both visionary thinking, \( r = .089, p > .05 \), and global perspective, \( r = .009, p > .05 \), were found to be non-significant. However, a significant and directionally appropriate correlation was found for the empowering others dimension, \( r = .256, p < .05 \).

Table 4

**Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients Computed Between Importance and Competence Ratings for Senior Managers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Ratings</th>
<th>Importance Ratings</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
<th>( n )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary Thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis 4:

To test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the competence ratings of boss-subordinate pairs that agree on the importance of a leadership dimension and those that disagree, three 1 X 3 analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted.

As indicated in Table 5, the results supported the null hypothesis for all three measured leadership dimensions. No significant relationship was found between level of
agreement on the importance of visionary thinking ($F = 1.91, p < .14940$), empowering others ($F = .10, p < .9087$), or global perspective ($F = 1.65, p < .1935$) and perceived level of competence.

Table 5

**Comparison of Means Among Levels of Agreement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Visionary Thinking</th>
<th>Empowering Others</th>
<th>Global Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n  m   SD</td>
<td>n  m   SD</td>
<td>n  m   SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating Higher</td>
<td>94 3.66 .323</td>
<td>122 3.65 .305</td>
<td>86 3.69 .322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating Higher</td>
<td>188 3.61 .312</td>
<td>148 3.65 .350</td>
<td>190 3.67 .295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratings Equal</td>
<td>66 3.69 .401</td>
<td>65 3.67 .328</td>
<td>70 3.61 .319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

One of the questions this study sought to answer was whether or not executives and senior managers differ on the competencies they perceive as critical for successful leadership. The hypothesis being tested in this case was that no difference would be found. This result was expected because both levels of management work in close concert with one another.

As predicted, for the visionary thinking and global perspective competencies, the test of the hypothesis revealed no difference between executives and senior managers. The hypothesis, however, did not hold true for the empowering others competency. Executives were found to consider empowering others significantly more essential for strong leadership than did senior managers.

Julian Rotter's (1966) theory of locus of control may shed some light on the findings of the above hypothesis. Rotter explains that people who feel they can effect the outcome of a situation are said to have an internal locus of control. Executives are directly responsible for shaping and influencing the direction and strategy for an organization. To accomplish this, they rely heavily on the experience and knowledge of their most senior managers. Thus, both levels of leadership have the opportunity to exert
considerable influence over their own futures. To positively impact their fates, executives and senior managers simply realize that visionary thinking and global perspective are essential.

The theory of locus of control also provides an explanation for why executives find empowering others to be a more critical leadership competency than senior managers. For executives, control is internal. Executives tend to naturally feel empowered because they have the information, resources, and authority for making tough decisions and influencing the strategic direction of their organizations. As a means for remaining competitive in a faster, fiercer world market, many executives have deemed empowerment as critical not only for themselves, but for all levels of an organization.

Senior managers, by virtue of being a level removed from the top, may feel that rather than inherently being empowered, something is being done to them; control is external. Kizilos (1990) points out, “you can’t give power to someone. If you’re giving them the power, it implies that you have it and they don’t. If you give it, you can take it away.” Thus, senior managers likely do not feel truly empowered.

Unlike executives that see empowerment as the sharing of power and responsibility, many senior managers probably see empowerment as simply another corporate program or initiative supported by training and rhetoric from the top. Bill Byham, author of Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment, points out, “if someone sells it to you as a program, you better watch out because it’s almost certain to die like lots of other programs have died” (Kizilos, 1990). If senior managers do not feel empowered
themselves, they likely do not consider empowering others to be as essential a competency as do executives.

In addition to examining how important executives and senior managers view visionary thinking, empowering others, and global perspective, this study also looked at whether or not a difference in their level of performance was perceived by others. As in the previous hypothesis, the expected outcome was that no difference in competence would be found between executives and senior managers. The hypothesis held true for visionary thinking and global perspective, but for the empowering other competency, executives are perceived as more competent than senior managers.

The difference in ratings given executives and senior managers is likely explained, in some way, by the results of the previous hypothesis. If executives feel that empowering others is a more critical leadership dimension, it comes as no surprise that those around them see executives as more competent at performing the task than senior managers who do not consider the competency to be nearly as critical. Again, the explanation for why both levels do not find empowering others equally as important a competency is likely a result of their respective levels within the hierarchy of the company. Pearlstein (1991) explains, “it is not some impersonal organizational force that empowers, but individuals to whom others report”. As explained above, executives tend to feel naturally empowered by virtue of their position. It is likely, for this reason, that they are more bought into the idea that empowerment can provide competitive advantage. Others can sense the passion behind their rhetoric.
Senior managers, on the other hand, may feel empowerment is a program or corporate initiative thrust upon them that will eventually die. Therefore, they are less likely to give their power away to their subordinates. They may only pay lip-service to the concept of empowering others as they do not see the utility of it for themselves or the organization. Obviously, for this reason, they are going to appear less empowering to others than the executive group.

A third question posed by this study was, do leaders that perceive a skill to be important also tend to perform that skill at a higher level of competence? It was conjectured that the answer to this question could go one of two ways. One possibility was that a relationship would be detected for both executives and senior managers on all three tested leadership dimensions. Correlation does not equate to causation, but it is logical for one to assume that if a leader considers a particular leadership dimension to be critical, that he or she will also put forth more effort in trying to perform that set of skills.

A second possibility was that there would be no relationship between the two variables. It was postulated that some leaders can appear highly competent despite not being fully committed to the idea that a particular dimension is critical to their job performance. At the same time, other leaders may consider a dimension to be essential, but have others perceive their performance as less than optimal.

Strangely, in this study, neither of the two above mentioned possibilities came to bear exactly as predicted. A statistically significant correlation was found, at the 95% confidence level, between importance and competence ratings on the empowering others
and global perspective dimensions for executives, and on the empowering others dimension for senior managers.

Upon closer examination, however, the data appear to more strongly support the second possibility. Despite being significant, the relationship between the variables for executive visionary thinking ($r = .219$) and executive global perspective ($r = .281$) are relatively weak. Also, at a confidence level of 99%, correlation between importance and performance are no longer significant on any of the competencies for the executive sample.

The only significant dimension at the 99% confidence level is empowering others for senior managers. As evidenced by the results of the previous hypotheses, when leaders feel strongly, one way or the other, about a given leadership competency, those around them are likely to sense the strength of their convictions and make judgments about their level of competence. Empowering others is an area where senior managers tend to have strong feelings, and thus, a relationship between importance and competence ratings is detected.

Finally, the current study examined the impact agreement between a leader and their boss on the importance of a leadership competency would have on how others perceive that leader’s competence. As hypothesized, agreement had no impact on how others perceive performance. Simply stated, leaders might disagree with their bosses about what is critical to their jobs, but this is not an important variable in predicting perceived competence. Rather, a variety of other variables likely contribute to how others perceive level of competence.
Future Research

The present study investigated differences between executives and senior managers on three leadership competencies deemed important in previous research. On two out of the three competencies, no differences were found. This may be due in part to the fact that the executive and senior manager samples used in this study are not easily differentiated from one another. To get a clearer distinction regarding levels of management and leadership competencies, future research should compare executives with middle-management.

Significant differences between executives and senior managers was found on the empowering others competency. Future research needs to focus on why this occurred. Perhaps further study will investigate the impact of empowerment programs versus empowering environments. This would get at the issue of internal and external motivation.

The competencies studied in the present study are just three of 22 that comprise the Executive Success Profile. In light of the fact that differences were found on one of the selected competencies, an investigation of all the competencies might reveal additional distinctions between executive and senior manager values and perceived performance.
REFERENCES


