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AN EXAMINATION OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP POWER BASE PERCEPTIONS

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This research investigated the relationship between the leader's perception of their power base and the follower's perception of the leader's power base. Two research questions focused the research. Leaders attempt to influence follower behavior (Weber, 1947; Lewin, 1951; Dahl, 1957). Hersey (1969) suggests that leadership equals influence. Furthermore, leadership is closely related to the concept of power (Stodgill, 1974). Yukl (1989) concluded that French and Raven's work (1959) enjoyed wide acceptance in trying to define the types of leadership. The Power Perception Profile developed by Hersey and Natemeyer (1979) includes French and Raven's (1959) five power bases, French and Kruglanski's (1970) information power and Hersey and Goldsmith's (1980) connection power. Results and discussion are included. Suggestions for future research are presented.

Introduction

There is extensive literature in reference to leadership and leadership success. Leadership is an attempt to influence the behavior of a subordinate. In fact, leadership could be defined as any attempt to influence, whereas "power is a leader's influence potential" (Hersey, et al., 1996, p.230). This research investigated the relationship between the leader's perception of his/her power base, the follower's perception of the leader's power base and the success of the organization as a measure of leadership effectiveness or success. Leaders attempt to influence follower Behavior (Lewin, 1938; Weber, 1947; Dahl, 1957). Hersey (1996) suggests that leadership equals influence.

Yukl, Gordon, & Taber reviewed literature in excess of a half century and state that hundreds of survey studies "have examined the correlation between leadership behavior and various indicators of leadership effectiveness" (2002:15). Yukl (1989) further refers to a quote from Stodgill who concluded after an exhaustive search of the literature that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (1974: 259). Stodgill (1974) further suggested that leadership is closely related to the concept of power. He also suggests that one of the ways a leader influences a follower is through power.

Haugaard discusses the link between power and goals. He states: "The power to realize goals is the capacity to get what you want done" (1997: 65). Getting what you want done is using one's ability or power to influence others to achieve one's goals. Flyvberg suggests that "power defines physical, economic, ecological, and social reality itself" (1998: 36).

French and Raven "define power in terms of influence" (1959: 150). The follower's behavior is

changed or influenced by the leader's use of one of the bases of power: coercive power, expert power, legitimate power, referent power, and reward power. Raven and Kruglanski (1970) added a sixth power base, information power and Hersey and Goldsmith (1980) introduced the seventh power base, connection power. The aforementioned seven power bases constitute the basis for this study of the relationship between perceptions and power bases.

In the literature, extensive research has been conducted testing the power bases for successful leadership. Natemeyer (1975) developed a table (table 1) summarizing the findings of Student (1956), Bachman, Smith, and Slesinger (1966), Bachman, Bowers and Marcus (1968), Ivancevich and Donnelly (1970) and Burke and Wilcox (1971). Most studies concluded that expert power and legitimate power were the most effective or successful sources of power.

French and Snyder (1959) examined leadership from a group influence perspective with all members having some level of influence over other members. Raven and Kruglanski (1970) studied the interrelationship between social power and social conflict. Their interest included the type of power base used by the leader and the extent to which power was utilized.

Yukl and Falbe (1991) suggested the importance of persuasion and charisma and further discussed the possibility of a two-tier taxonomy instead of the five proposed by French and Raven (1959). Their concerns included respondent bias as well as a focus on the importance of information power.

Purpose of the Research

In this study, the power or power bases used by the leaders has been investigated to determine successful

leadership as measured by the success of the organization. The research is based on the leader's perception of his/her power base as well as the follower's perception of the leader's power base.

This study seeks to discover which power base or power bases used by entrepreneurial leaders led to success in their organizations. The study examined successful leadership in entrepreneurial organizations (informal organizations), in particular heavy truck dealerships. The dealer principals (leaders) in this research are the entrepreneurs.

Conceptual Framework

This study identified leader power bases as independent variables with leadership effectiveness resulting in organizational success as the dependent variables. Research utilizing French and Raven's (1959), Raven and Kruglanski's (1970), and Hersey and Goldsmith's (1988) power base descriptors have wide acceptance in the academic literature.

Using French and Raven's five-power base typology, Student's (1969) research indicated that expert and legitimate power were the most effective. Bachman, et al. (1966) studied 36 branch offices of sales organizations. Their findings revealed that expert and legitimate power were the most effective. Bachman, et al. (1968) arrived at the same conclusions with one study involving 12 liberal arts colleges and another study with 21 public utilities. Both studies reaffirmed earlier results:

expert power and legitimate power were determined to be the most effective means for eliciting compliance from subordinates.

Ivancevich and Donnelly's (1970) research included 31 branches of a food products organization. The salesperson's perceptions for compliance were ranked on a one to five scale. Again, expert and legitimate power were ranked one and two. However, expert power and referent power were ranked one and two for performance.

Burke and Wilcox (1971) had similar results in their study of six large public utilities. Expert power and legitimate power were ranked one and two on a one to five ranking methodology, but expert power and referent power were ranked one and two based on subordinate satisfaction.

Natemeyer's (1975) dissertation, "An empirical investigation of the relationships between leader behavior, leader power bases, subordinate performance and satisfaction" was a precursor to Hersey and Natemeyer's power perception profile (1979). In the dissertation, Natemeyer (1975) developed a summary of findings of the previously mentioned studies. The table illustrates that expert and legitimate power rank number one or number two in importance for reasons for compliance in all of the studies. Table I was developed by Natemeyer (1975). It is a summary of findings of power base studies and their importance ranking (1 = most important reason for compliance; 5 = least important).

Table I: Power Base Studies by Natemeyer (1975)

	Expert	Referent	Legitimate	Reward	Coercive
Student (1968)	2	4	1	3	5
Bachman Smith Slesinger (1966)	2	3	1	4	5
Colleges Bachman	1	3	2	4	5
Ins. Agn. Bowers	1	4	2	3	5
Utility Marcus (1968)	2	5	1	3	4
Ivancevich Donnelly (1970)	1	4	2	3	5
BurkeWilcox (1971)	1	4	2	3	5

Demographic Data

The demographic data, Tables II – IX, is divided into two areas: demographics of the leader and the demographics of the followers. The demographic data of

the leaders (self) included gender, age, education, and work experience. The demographic data of the followers (others) also included gender, age, education, and work experience. The data in these tables below is purely descriptive.

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Table II: Leaders: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	12	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table III: Leaders: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 40-49	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
50-59	4	33.3	33.3	33.3
60 & Over	6	50	50	50
Total	12	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table IV: Leaders: Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High School Diploma	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
Undergraduate Degree	5	41.7	41.7	58.3
Graduate Degree	4	33.3	33.3	91.7
Post Graduate	1	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	12	100.0	100.0	

Table V: Leaders: Work Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3-5 years	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
6-10 years	1	8.3	8.3	25.0
11-15 years	5	41.7	41.7	66.7
21 or more years	4	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	12	100.0	100.0	

Table VI: Followers: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	50	69.4	69.4	69.4
Female	22	30.6	30.6	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Table VII: Followers: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 26-30	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
31-39	14	19.4	19.4	20.8
40-49	24	33.3	33.3	54.2
50-59	21	29.2	29.2	83.3
60 & Over	12	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Table VIII: Followers: Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High School Diploma	38	52.8	52.8	52.8
Undergraduate Degree	22	30.6	30.6	83.3
Graduate Degree	11	15.3	15.3	98.6
Post Graduate	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Table IX: Followers: Work Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-3 years	2	2.8	2.8	2.8
5-10 yrs	3	4.2	4.2	6.9
11 or more years	67	93.1	93.1	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Is there a relationship between the power base of the leaders and the success of the entrepreneurial organizations?

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between the perceptions that leaders have of their power base and the success of a heavy truck dealership? The following is the hypothesis derived from research question 1:

Hypothesis 1.

HO: There is no significant relationship between the perception of the leaders of their power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the perception of the leaders' of their power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between the perceptions that the followers have of the leaders' power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships? The following is the hypothesis derived from research question 2:

HO²: There is no significant relationship between the perceptions that the followers have of the leaders' power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships.

H1²: There is a significant relationship between the perceptions that the followers have of the leaders' power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships.

Independent Variables

This study evaluated the significance of seven independent variables. Five of the independent variables were derived from French and Ravens (1959) five part power base typology (coercive power, expert power, legitimate power, referent power, and reward power). The sixth independent variable (information power) was derived from Raven and Kluganski (1975) and the seventh independent variable (connection power) was derived from Hersey and Goldsmith (1980). In the following seven independent variables "O" represents the leader and "P" represents the follower:

1. Coercive power base: P perceives that O can punish P for non-compliance.
2. Expert power base: P perceives that O possesses extraordinary and applicable skills and knowledge for compliance.

3. Legitimate power base: P perceives that O has the title or right to demand compliance. Referent power base: P desires to identify with O and thus feels the need or obligation for compliance.
4. Reward power base: P perceives that O can reward or promote P for compliance.
5. Information power base: P perceives that O has access to useful information or knowledge concerning the organization that could benefit P.
6. Connection power base: P perceives that O has relationships within the organization that could be beneficial or detrimental to P.

Dependent Variables

Heavy truck dealership success was evaluated by measuring the dealerships' market share in the county that they are based as compared to the national (US) market share of the manufacturers represented by the heavy truck dealerships:

1. The perceived power base of the leader (dealer) of his/her power base and the compared market share of the heavy truck dealership.
2. The perceived power base of the leader as perceived by the followers and the compared market share of the heavy truck dealership.

Assumptions (Bias)

Followers were asked to evaluate the power base of the leaders. No individual follower perceptions were known by the leaders. Hopefully, fear of reprisal was minimized. Thus, it was assumed that the responses were free of bias.

Design of the Study

This research studied the relationship between leader power bases as the independent variables and organizational success as measured by market share as the dependent variable. It measured both the perception of the leaders' power base by the leaders and the followers' perception of the leaders' power base.

Hersey and Ntemeyer (1979) developed the Power Perception Profile used in this study. The survey's two versions measure the perception of the leader's power base by both the leader and the follower. Rahim (1988) introduced a multi-item scale (Rahim Leader Power Inventory) to measure the follower's perception of the leader's power base. He suggested that single item measurements used in previous research were not as reliable as multi-item instruments.

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The leaders’ power bases were measured by the Power Perception Profile both from the self-perception of the leader and the followers’ perceptions of the power base(s) used by the leaders. The questionnaire had 21 pairs of questions for both the leaders and followers. A total of 3 points were allocated among each pair of questions. The leaders (self) were asked to allocate points based on the perception of their leadership style. The followers (others) were asked to allocate points based on their perceptions of their leaders’ style.

Limitations

- 1. The surveys were administered to 12 established heavy truck dealerships. Results from the survey of related industries as in automobile dealership or unrelated entrepreneurial firms as in restaurants could be different.
- 2. Location could have an impact on the results if the surveys were from different geographic areas.
- 3. The surveys were taken from an average of six employees and one dealer principal from each heavy truck dealership. Surveys of all of the employees in the respective dealerships could have different results. However, the authors of the Power

Perception Profile suggest a sample of one leader and six employees per organization.

Survey

The Power Perception Profile surveys were distributed to 12 heavy truck dealerships. The dealerships are located in the four most populous areas in the State of Florida: Southeast Florida (Miami and Fort Lauderdale), South and Central West Florida (Fort Myers and Tampa), Central Florida (Orlando) and Northeast Florida (Jacksonville). Over a seven-week time frame, 84 surveys were completed for a 100 per cent completion rate. The 12 dealerships represent approximately one per cent of the total population of heavy truck dealers in the United States.

Power Bases

Leaders (Self)

Table X shows mean scores and standard deviations for each of the power bases. Referent power had the highest mean score of 1.6944 with a standard deviation of .29158. Coercive power had the lowest mean score of 1.2222 with a standard deviation of .37828.

Table X: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self – Expert	12	1.20	2.40	1.6500	.41887
Self – Informational	12	1.00	2.20	1.6667	.37497
Self – Referent	12	1.17	2.00	1.6944	.29158
Self – Legitimate	12	1.17	1.83	1.5139	.18060
Self – Reward	12	.67	1.83	1.3611	.36121
Self – Connection	12	.80	1.80	1.3833	.32427
Self – Coercive	12	.67	2.00	1.2222	.37828
Valid N (listwise)	12				

Followers (Others)

Table XI is a presentation of the mean scores of the followers’ perception of the power bases of their leaders

at each dealership. Expert power had the highest mean score of 2.1622 with a standard deviation of .18730. The lowest mean score was coercive power with a mean score of .9921 with a standard deviation of .26220.

Table XI: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self – Expert	12	1.75	2.47	2.1622	.18730
Self – Informational	12	1.42	1.86	1.5926	.12866
Self – Referent	12	1.20	2.00	1.6756	.24654
Self – Legitimate	12	1.30	1.81	1.5521	.16261
Self – Reward	12	1.13	1.83	1.4593	.20799
Self – Connection	12	.72	1.50	1.0717	.24813
Self – Coercive	12	.25	1.29	.9921	.26220
Valid N (listwise)	12				

A paired sample T-test was done to determine if there were any differences between the mean scores of the leaders’ perceptions of their leadership style and the followers’ perception of their leader’s style. Table XII

demonstrates that there were differences between expert power and connection power. Expert power had a t value of -4.550 and a p value of .001. Connection power had a t value of 2.558 and a p value of .027.

Table XII: Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair Self - Expert - Others 1 - Expert	-.5122	.38997	.11258	-.7600	-.26	-4.550	11	.001
Pair Self - Informational - 2 - Others	.0740	.41080	.11859	-.1870	.3350	.624	11	.545
Pair Self - Referent - 3 Others - Referent	.0186	.34764	.10035	-.2023	.2395	.185	11	.856
Pair Self - Legitimate - 4 Others - legitimate	.0382	.20396	.05888	-.1678	.0914	-.649	11	.530
Pair Self - Reward - 5 Others - Reward	.0982	.30194	.08716	-.2900	.0936	-1.127	11	.284
Pair Self - Connection - 6 Others - Connection	.3117	.42211	.12185	.0435	.5799	2.558	11	.027
Pair Self - Coercive - 7 Others - Coercive	.2301	.44128	.12739	-.0502	.5105	1.807	11	.098

Correlations of Power Bases

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the leaders' perception of their power bases. Table XIII demonstrates the following relationships:

1. Expert power and legitimate power where $r = .631$; $p = .028$.
2. Information power and reward power where $r = .589$; $p = .044$.
3. Referent power and connection power where $r = .742$; $p = .006$.

Table XIII: Correlations

	Self-Expert	Self- Information	Self-Referent	Self-Legitimate	Self-Reward	Self-Connection	Self- Coercive
Self-Expert Pearson Correlation	1	-.278	-.434	.631*	-.511	-.395	.019
Sig. (2-tailed)		.382	.158	.028	.090	.204	.953
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Information Cor.	-.278	1	-.296	-.418	.589*	.469	-.370
Sig. (2-tailed)	.382		.351	.177	.044	.124	.236
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Referent Cor.	-.434	-.296	1	-.344	-.320	.742**	-.382
Sig. (2-tailed)	.158	.351		.274	.311	.006	.221
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Legitimate Cor.	.631*	-.418	-.344	1	-.432	-.410	.283
Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.177	.274		.161	.186	.372
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Reward Correlation	-.511	.589*	-.320	-.432	1	-.306	-.142
Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	.044	.311	.161		.333	.660
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Connection Cor.	-.395	-.469	.742**	-.410	-.306	1	-.140
Sig. (2-tailed)	.204	.124	.006	.186	.333		.664
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Self- Pearson Coercive Cor.	.019	-.370	-.382	.283	-.142	-.140	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.953	.236	.221	.372	.660	.664	
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the followers' perception of their leader's power bases. There was an inverse relationship between Referent power and Expert power where $r = -.596$; $p = .041$. Results are presented in table XIV. To examine hypothesis 1:

HO: There is no significant relationship between the perception of the leaders of their power base and the

success of heavy truck dealerships.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the perception of the leaders of their power base and the success of heavy truck dealerships. A regression analysis was conducted. The results presented in table XV indicate that the leaders' perception of their power bases was a not a predictor for dealership success. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

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Table XIV: Correlations

	Others-Expert	Others-Information	Others-Referent	Others-Legitimate	Others-Reward	Others-Connection	Others-Coercive
Others-Expert Pearson Corr.	1	427	-.596*	.158	-.256	-.198	-.482
Sig (2-tailed)		167	.041	.623	.422	.537	.113
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Inform. Corr.	427	1	-.568	-.161	.008	-.201	-.209
Sig (2-tailed)	167		.054	.617	.981	.532	.514
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Refer. Corr.	-.596*	-.568	1	-.039	.052	-.375	.121
Sig (2-tailed)	.041	.054		.903	.873	.230	.708
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Legit. Corr.	.158	-.161	-.039	1	-.191	-.131	.523
Sig (2-tailed)	.623	.617	.930		.551	.686	.081
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Reward Corr.	-.256	.008	.052	-.191	1	-.407	-.129
Sig (2-tailed)	.422	.981	.873	.551		.189	.690
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Connection Corr.	.198	-.201	-.375	-.131	-.407	1	-.233
Sig (2-tailed)	.537	.532	.230	.686	.189		.466
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Others-Pearson Coercive Corr.	-.482	-.209	.121	-.523	-.129	-.233	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.113	.514	.708	.081	.690	.466	
N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table XV: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	4.374	23.541			.186	.862
Self-Expert	-.817	2.349	-.655		-.348	.746
Self-Informational	-.131	2.228	-.094		-.059	.956
Self-Referent	-.463	3.026	-.258		-.153	.886
Self-Legitimate	.891	2.849	.308		.313	.770
Self-Reward	-1.161	2.229	-.803		-.521	.630
Self-Connection	.164	2.237	.102		.073	.945
Self-Coercive	-.425	1.867	-.308		-.228	.831

a. Dependent Variable: Status: Successful vs. Unsuccessful

CONCLUSIONS

Success was measured by market share for a 12 - month period as reported by R.L. Polk & Company for the county in which the dealerships are located. Although some dealers had multiple counties in their territories, it was assumed that they would be most successful in their home county. The Dealerships' market share was then compared to the respective manufacturers' United States market share. Dealers that met or exceeded their manufacturers' market share were deemed successful. Since the dealerships in the study are not public companies, other forms of success measurement were not available.

The results using market-share as the measure of success were inconclusive. Only one- half of the dealers in the sample met the criteria for success. Furthermore, no single power base seemed to demonstrate success over the other power bases. Additionally, the dealers' perspective of their power bases did not demonstrate a significant relationship to success.

Since all of the dealerships surveyed were on-going businesses, perhaps the fact that they have been in

business for at least three and as long as 40 years could be considered a measure of success. The average length of time that the leaders had been in their job at the same location was 11-15 years. Using the Center for Leadership Studies' 18-point scale it should be noted that 10 of the 12 dealerships' followers (others) perceived that their leaders used expert power. Only two dealerships did not rank expert power as number one. Dealer 7 reported referent power as number one (12 points) with expert power number two (11 points). Dealer 9 reported the followers perceived that their leader used a tie between expert power and referent power (12 points each).

It could be suggested that the followers' perception of the power base used by the leaders is more significant than the leaders' perception of their own power bases. Using the Center for Leadership Studies' scoring system, expert power accounted for over 80 per cent of the followers' perception of their leaders' power base. Previous power base studies have primarily investigated large formal organizations. These studies typically conclude that effective or successful leaders use expert power or legitimate power leadership styles or power

bases. In this study, although the entrepreneurs were in very similar businesses, apparently their organizations and perceptions of their own leadership styles were very different. One simply cannot put entrepreneurs in a box and expect them all to use similar power bases for their leadership style.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research may attempt to examine other measures of success. Measurements may include job satisfaction, customer service indexes (CSI), employee turnover rates, and market orientation. Future research could look more closely at family dynamics in small informal organizations. Such things as power base perceptions from a sibling positioning perspective and power base perception differences in non-family members versus family members could be of interest.

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