

Individually Oriented Leadership

Research Thesis Summary

Introduction

In this summary we introduce the story behind the IOL Tool and provide you with insight into the research of Individually Oriented Leadership. We will take you through the research process from hypothesis and methodology, to the final product that today helps hundreds of companies develop their leaders.

The experienced managers and doctors, Ingrid Enander, Ph.D. and Maria Lundberg, Ph.D., met in 2005 at an Executive MBA program at the prestigious Uppsala University in Sweden. Both of them, with extensive academic research backgrounds and vast corporate manager experience, set out to redefine the way leadership is understood. They began with the idea that instead of generalizing leadership into styles, groups or characteristics why not simplify it and lead people on an individual basis. They titled this idea Individually Oriented Leadership (IOL), on the basis that the most successful leaders have the ability to practice different leadership styles to motivate different individuals. Therefore Enander & Lundberg's research had the following purpose:

1. Can we quantify and develop a measurement tool for IOL?
2. Can we evaluate the use of IOL in today's business climate?
3. Can we claim a correlation between the use of an IOL tool and an organization's results?

The hypotheses to all three questions was *Yes*.

Definition of Individually Oriented Leadership

The concept of IOL is based on the collected empirical observations over 18 years of managerial experience and education from the 1990s and 2000s. According to Enander & Lundberg, an Individually Oriented Leader is goal-oriented, driven, loyal, works with integrity and teamwork throughout the following process:

1. **Truly get to know your coworkers;** by recognizing their strengths, weaknesses, motivational factors and expectations.
2. **Create joy and results together;** by goal orientation, teamwork and individual motivation.
3. **Develop coworker's individually;** by building on individual strengths.
4. **Develop the organization;** by anchoring organization-level goals with each individual.

After defining the concept of IOL, the two researchers compared it to existing leadership models and concluded that it does not contradict popular leadership models but rather serves as a compliment. Like other leadership models, an Individual Oriented Leadership style focuses on the behavior and actions of a leader instead of their position. Naturally, Enander & Lundberg understood that it is not enough to just define a concept such as IOL, but equally important to validate it and relate it to the actual business environment.

Methodology

The next step in their research process was to create a survey that accurately measured and quantified the established definition of IOL. After rigorous testing and validation of their initial 126 statements they settled on 60 statements that also accounted for neutral base line measurement. The survey was then tested in a preliminary study in 2005 with 19 preselected managers from various companies. The study process was tested to maintain complete anonymity and security during the data collection. Additionally the preliminary study established a baseline for what constituted a good vs. a bad IOL score. In their main study, later in 2005, the process was kept intact and data collection was performed on 63 managers from 3 different companies of various size and profitability.

Conclusion and Continued Development

The results of their research revealed three interesting findings. First of those were that the study confirmed their first purpose to quantify and develop a measurement tool for IOL. With that confirmation and the scientific support from this study the IOL Tool was born. The second finding in their study was the confirmation of the ability to evaluate the use of IOL in today's business climate. Because they had established a baseline of what constituted an Individually Oriented Leader in the preliminary study, they could later confirm that in the main study. A final note from their research and the answer to whether or not IOL was correlated to an organization's results, they could not make such a claim based on the one time study.

Enander & Lundberg's research on Individually Oriented Leadership was the only project selected by Uppsala University Executive MBA for publication at the university's expense. However, the growth of IOL Tool did not stop here. Since the publication of Individually Oriented Leadership was released, the concept and assessment has been rigorously tested and validated by Ph.D. Ass. Prof Anders Hedin with hundreds of managers and global corporations. As a result of that validation, IOL Tool can claim to be a significant contributing factor to an organization's results and profitability. Today, IOL Tool presents a refined and streamlined assessment process that features automatically generated result reports customized for the individual leader's success.

"If you wish to motivate and lead teams, departments, and organizations made up of individuals, then enhance your performance by approaching them with the behavior of an Individually Oriented Leader"