

UNCOVERING IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP BELIEFS: VARIATION BETWEEN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) EXECUTIVES AND BUSINESS EXECUTIVES IN A PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study to determine the variation of perception of competent leadership and leadership success between the business executive and the information technology (IT) management communities. This study involved the industry partner's deputy CEO (Deputy Director General), his first line reports (Executive Directors of eight divisions), the CIO, the first line reports (IT Branch Managers) and key business and IT managers. A total of 24 interviews were conducted. The results of the interviews are analysed using phenomenographical techniques. We found that the focus of leadership behaviour is different for the IT community to that of the business community. IT managers are more focused on developing teams to be highly skilled and autonomous, whereas business executives are focused on developing and articulating a vision for their division. These differences show variations in the beliefs of 'good leadership', and may in part, explain issues in the relationships between the two communities. The results demonstrate the applicability of phenomenographical techniques to determining implicit leadership beliefs. The combined qualitative/quantitative methodology used in this study may be applicable in studying variations in the perception of leadership in cross-cultural teams and in expectations of leadership in virtual teams.

Keywords: Information systems management, relationship management, leadership; organisational culture; interpretivist perspective.