Organizational and Staff Characteristics Associated with Aspects of Innovative Leadership in Outpatient Treatment Programs

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Research Rationale and Aims

➤ In an effort to respond to economic and socio-political pressures and to ensure success, it is becoming increasingly important for leaders to search for and implement new and innovative approaches to clinical practice and management.

➤ Leaders should evaluate the environment for innovative possibilities, including constraints and opportunities within and outside the organization (Conger & Kanungo, 1998).

➤ Leaders also need to encourage followers to challenge their own traditional ways of completing tasks and to include followers in finding creative solutions to common organizational issues (Podsakoff et al., 1990).

➤ It is possible that followers' personal characteristics and organizational circumstances could affect the degree to which staff members perceive their leaders as innovative.

➤ The current study is a first step toward understanding staff and program characteristics associated with two aspects of transformational leadership: demonstrating innovation and encouraging innovation.

Conger, J. A. & Kanungo, R. N. (1998). *Charismatic leadership in organizations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990).*Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organization citizenship behaviors. Leadership Quarterly, 1,* 107-142.

Research Questions

➤ Are clinical directors in substance abuse treatment programs perceived by their staff as encouraging and demonstrating innovative practices?

➤ Are staff perceptions of **encouragement** of innovation and **demonstration** of innovation differentially influenced by program, staff, and leader characteristics?

➤ For instance, while perceptions of leaders as demonstrating innovation may be impacted by a staff members' years of experience in the treatment field, perceptions of a leaders encouragement of innovation may not be affected by that experience.

Method

➤ 171 staff members from 44 outpatient substance abuse treatment programs located in four US regions completed the TCU Survey of Transformational Leadership (STL); program directors completed the Survey of Structure and Operations (SSO).

➤ Staff members rated their clinical director on encouragement and demonstration of innovative leadership, both included in the STL Intellectual Stimulation domain.

➤ Univariate analyses identified staff, organizational, and leader characteristics related to innovative leadership.

➤ Measures from the univariate analyses significant at $p < .10$ were subsequently included in multivariate models with leadership style (demonstrates innovation and encourages innovation) as dependent variables.

➤ Four separate multiple regressions were conducted, 2 with encourages innovation and 2 with demonstrates innovation as DVs. Separate models were run with staff characteristics (measured at the individual level of analysis) as predictors and program/leader characteristics (aggregated at the program level of analysis) as predictors.
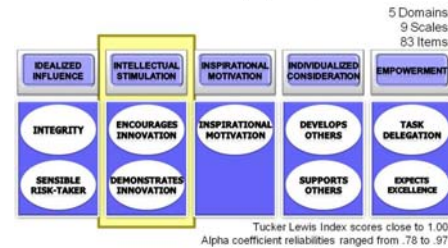
Sample Frame
Outpatient Drug-Free Programs
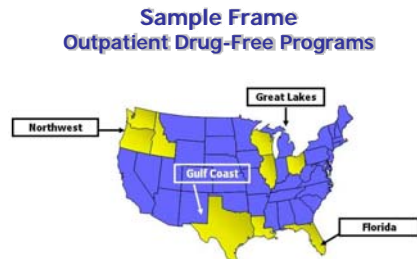
Potential Covariates of Innovative Leadership

Program Characteristics	% of Programs
JCAHO or CARF Accreditation	56%
Offer Case Management	71%
Dual-Diagnosed Clients (mean %)	37%
Service Onsite (mean)	12 of 33
Services By-Referral (mean)	9 of 33
Leader Characteristics	**% of Leaders**
Female	59%
Minority	77%
Staff Characteristics	**% of Staff**
Minority	31%
Employed in Treatment Field > 3 Years	68%
Same Job Position > 3 Years	42%
Caseload > 20 Clients	50%

Instruments

TCU Survey of Transformational Leadership (STL)

5 Domains
9 Scales
83 Items

Tucker Lewis Index scores close to 1.00
Alpha coefficient reliabilities ranged from .78 to .97

STL Measures of Innovative Leadership

Scale	Sample Items
Encourages Innovation (8 items)	Encourages ideas other than own; Suggests new ways of getting tasks completed
Demonstrates Innovation (7 items)	Tries ways of doing things that are different from the norm; Takes bold actions in order to achieve program objectives

Results: Descriptive Analysis

➤ Ratings of innovative leadership were generally high, suggesting that clinical directors in this sample of substance abuse treatment programs on average were perceived by their staff as actively encouraging and demonstrating innovative leadership.

➤ Directors were more often perceived by their staff to be encouraging of rather than demonstrating innovation.

Means and Alpha Coefficient Reliabilities for Innovative Leadership

|	α	M	SD
Encourages Innovation	.91	29.59	8.38
Demonstrates Innovation	.83	26.22	7.35

Possible score range 10 ("strongly disagree") to 40 ("strongly agree")

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Results: Regression Analysis

➤ Findings indicate that leaders are perceived as **demonstrating** more innovation by minority staff members, by staff that have been employed within the substance abuse treatment field for more than 3 years, and within programs that serve a greater proportion of dual-diagnosed clients.

➤ Leaders are perceived as more **encouraging** of innovation by staff employed in programs offering a greater number of services onsite.

Organizational and Staff Characteristics as Correlates of Perceived Innovative Leadership
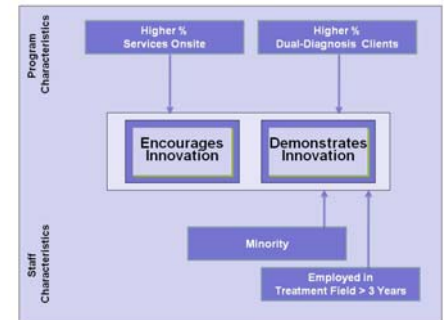
Applications

➤ Staff and organizational characteristics may influence perceptions of directors as innovators, particularly perceived demonstrations of innovation.

➤ Experienced staff members may be more aware of inherent organizational challenges and may more readily recognize directors' attempts to respond through innovation and environmental sensitivity.

➤ Training or open communication that sensitizes staff to organizational challenges and opportunities might help less tenured staff understand the culture that treatment leaders face.

➤ Directors in specialized dual-diagnosis programs may be perceived as demonstrating innovation in seeking ways to meet the specific treatment needs of their clients (e.g., mental health services).