Understanding Leader Identity & Influencing Factors

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Research Question
What are the factors that influence leader identity construction in professionals at different ages?

Target Audiences
Professionals who are or aspire to be effective leaders
Employers who are seeking to build more effective leaders

Methods
Mixed methods study
Step 1: Quantitative online survey to gather data and source interview participants. Questions about leader development tools used, leader self-perception. 113 responses.
Step 2: Qualitative interviews to discuss influential people and experiences on leader identity. 19 participants. + 2 interviews with talent development managers

Results
Survey: 73% said mentors were very helpful; Interview: Assigned mentors much less helpful
Both positive and negative influence; unique position to influence professionals’ leader identity
Influence of fathers became a theme repeated in 58% of interview participants, across all age brackets

Influences on Leader Identity
Mentors, coaches, role models
Turning points & events
Bosses
Families

Conclusions
• No clear point at which professionals move from one leader identity stage to another.
• The earlier influences and training come into play, the greater likelihood they are to become incorporated into leader identity development.
• Employers are waiting far too long to offer leader development training.
• Supervisors who are more cognizant of their influence on reports’ leader identity could have a more positive effect.

Key References

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Additional Info
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