

The Causes and Consequences of Leader Credibility in Public Organizations

Background

Leadership can clarify and prioritize organizational goals as well as motivate employees to behave in a way that leads to the attainment of these goals. However, practicing leadership is a challenging endeavor. The credibility of leaders is often at stake because they find themselves in a cross pressure: At one and the same time, they must both be loyal to their principals and live up to the promises they have given to their employees. For public leaders, this is even more difficult because they operate in political hierarchy with many stakeholders, volatile and often times conflicting goals and their employees are typically highly professionalized workers with strong values and professional norms.

We know that credibility is considered the most important characteristic of a good leader – both according to the leaders themselves and their employees. But what role does leader credibility play for leaders to successfully support and create organizational performance with their leadership behavior? This question, we have very little research that sheds light on.



Objective and methods

The overall purpose of this PhD-project is to provide knowledge about the importance of leader credibility for leadership in public organizations to the benefit of both the public leadership research and practitioners of leadership.

Theoretically the project contributes by conceptualizing and defining leader credibility as well as develop a theory of the causes and consequences of leader credibility. The project draws on insights from the fields of public administration, psychology and leadership and management.

The research design is based on a combination of longitudinal studies of public organizations across countries, survey experiments and potentially a large-scale field experiment in Denmark. Hence, the project contributes with a thorough empirical examination of the phenomenon.

The following questions will be guiding the project:

- What is leader credibility?
- What causes leader credibility?
- What are the consequences of leader credibility for organizational performance in public organizations?

Additional information

The project is led and conducted by PhD student Mads Pieter van Luttervelt. He can be contacted on mpl@ps.au.dk and please, do not hesitate to do so. Professor Lotte Bøgh Andersen is the main supervisor and Professor Simon Calmar Andersen is the co-supervisor.



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