

Leader Identity Development of Emerging Front-line Leaders



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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Background | 7 |
| Relevant Literature | 9 |
| Research Focus and Questions | 19 |
| Methods | 20 |
| Findings | 33 |
| Discussion | 46 |
| Recommendations | 50 |
| Limitations | 54 |
| Conclusion | 56 |
| References | 57 |
| Appendix A – Associate Total Population and Sample by Location and Function | 60 |
| Appendix B – Survey Instrument | 61 |
| Appendix C – Interview Protocol | 64 |
| Appendix D – Front-line Leader Achieved Sample by Location and Function | 65 |
| Appendix E – Quantitative Data Summary by Survey Question | 66 |
| Appendix F – Survey Question Validation | 67 |
| Appendix G – Quantitative Data Summary by Construct | 69 |
| Appendix H – Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice | 70 |

Executive Summary

This study will explore how leaders emerge, using related scholarship to undergird and frame the exploration. The study will focus on a specific family-owned enterprise and its cohort of front-line leaders. The company recently shifted to a new company structure (L., personal communication, February 28, 2020). Spans of control were tightened, driving up the number of leadership positions needed to manage the business. As a result, a large number of front-line leaders have stepped into leader roles for the first time. L. says, “As a new leader, no one necessarily tells you what to do,” as she makes the point that many of their front-line leaders’ biggest challenge is how to make the mindset shift required to lead effectively. (L., personal communication, February 13, 2020).

DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) theory of leadership identity construction posits that individuals must construct a leader identity in a social construct alongside their individual cognitive development as a leader. DeRue and Ashford argue that leader identity is “reciprocal and mutually reinforcing” and develops as individuals engage in behaviors of asserting leadership that are then either accepted or rejected by would-be followers (2010, pp. 627-8). Over time, these repeated cycles of asserting leader identity and then being accepted construct leader identity (or not if rejected). Leaning heavily on the work of DeRue and Ashford (2010), the specific research questions for this study are:

1. Have front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement?
2. Do front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership?
3. Do front-line leaders perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader?
4. How clear, visible, and credible were front-line leaders’ respective assumptions of their roles as front-line leaders?
5. Do front-line leaders claim leader identity?

Quantitative and qualitative input gathered with surveys and interviews indicate that front-line leaders experienced:

- Strong levels of self-identification as a leader,
- Moderate levels of the antecedents required to assert themselves as leaders, and
- Moderate levels of the conditions that make it more likely that they will actually assert their leadership.

The company should consider the following recommendations:

- Continue the study.
- Pilot front-line leader communities of practice.
- Affirm assertions of leadership when it happens.
- Understand how front-line leaders perceive the rewards of being a leader.
- Revisit the existing posting and selection process for filling open front-line leader positions.

A number of limitations must be acknowledged as a caution against drawing definitive

conclusions from this study. They are:

- The effects of COVID-19,
- Technical issues with survey administration,
- Associate access to the survey, and
- Low response rate.

Introduction

Leadership is a concept that likely conjures as many interpretations and meanings as there are individuals contemplating its significance. Countless articles, books, workshops, podcasts, and development programs have explored its meaning and effect. Both academia and industry have explored leadership for decades. In practice, leadership is often thought of as something that *just happens* when an individual takes on an organizational position of a certain title or label—director, senior consultant, vice-president, or principal. Yet, I have observed that the title and the effect do not always occur together. Why is this? How does one’s leadership ability emerge and develop? Does a title make a difference? Is being a leader anchored in your position, development of a particular skill set, how you see yourself, how others see you, or something else?

This study will consider questions of how leaders emerge, using related scholarship to undergird and frame the exploration. The study will focus on a specific family-owned enterprise, CPGC¹, and its cohort of front-line leaders. I will begin with a discussion of CPGC and the challenges its front-line leaders appear to be experiencing. Next, I will review relevant literature to provide context for the conceptual framework that I have selected to guide the study. The specific research questions will be presented as will the methodology for conducting the study. Then, I will discuss the findings of the study. Finally, I will recommend a course of action for CPGC to address the findings of the study.

¹ The focal organization for this study has requested anonymity and will be referred to as Consumer Packaged Goods Company or CPGC. Employees of the organization will be referred to by their first initial only.

Background

T. founded CPGC in 2015 and continues as its chairman and CEO. As a consumer-packaged goods company, the business sells, manufactures, and distributes internationally recognized consumer products. Discussions with D., Senior Vice President of Human Resources, and L., Director of Talent & Learning, revealed that, in addition to managing its traditional business well, CPGC's leadership team is now focused on emerging opportunities such as e-commerce and digitalization (D., personal communication, February 7, 2020) and has implemented new technology solutions to support the business and its customers (L., personal communication, February 13, 2020). The company recently completed a review of its go-to-market (GTM) model, which drove a shift to a new company structure (L., personal communication, February 28, 2020). The GTM change broadened the type of customers that customer-facing front-line leaders would support, requiring them to learn how to support customers with a wider range of business models and product needs. As part of the reorganization, spans of control were tightened, driving up the number of leadership positions needed to manage the business. As a result, a large number of CPGC's "first-line" and "second-line" leaders (roughly aligned to supervisors, managers, or equivalents) have stepped into leader roles for the first time. This combined population of mostly new front-line leaders is being asked to lead in the midst of a wave of change and challenge including a workforce with pockets of notably high turnover (between 0% and 88%, averaging 41%), particularly in key functional areas like production, merchandising, and warehousing (D., personal communication, February 7, 2020; L., personal communication, February 13 and July 16, 2020). This emerging generation of leaders includes existing front-line leaders, individuals promoted from within CPGC, as well as new leaders brought in from outside the company (L., personal communication, February 28, 2020). CPGC's HR team acknowledges that its leadership development investment in its

front-line leaders has been limited and needs to be refreshed to produce the kind of leader effectiveness needed (L., personal communication, February 28, 2020).

During discussions on February 13 and 28, 2020, L. offered examples to illustrate some of the areas of opportunity for front-line leaders. Like many organizations, CPGC has replaced traditional annual performance review processes with more frequent on-going feedback discussions. L. has observed that the daily, weekly, and monthly feedback that front-line leaders are asked to provide to their teams has become a transactional, “check-the-box” exercise for many leaders. Front-line leaders are not engaging with their teams and finding ways to help workers see the value and impact of their work. They are not listening, talking, and working with their teams to identify root-causes of operational issues. It is unclear what these leaders understand their role as leaders to be. L. says, “Those concepts aren’t always innate. As a new leader, no one necessarily tells you what to do,” as she makes the point that many of their front-line leaders’ biggest challenge is how to make the mindset shift required to lead effectively. She goes on to share that front-line leaders are doing “too much managing and not enough leading” (L., personal communication, February 13, 2020).

Relevant Literature

The literature offers many areas of research that are relevant for this study including two that seem to be particularly pertinent. First is the definition of leadership, the definition of management, how they differ, and whether any difference matters. Clarity around definitions of leadership and management is relevant because it enlightens an understanding of CPGC's expectations of its front-line leaders—are the front-line leaders managers, leaders, or a bit of both? Second is an exploration of how individuals develop a leader identity. L.'s comments about CPGC's front-line leaders' mindset challenge in owning and developing a sense of themselves as leaders suggests the relevance of this area of the literature. The conceptual framework that will form the foundation for this study emerges from this second area and will be explored in detail.

Leading and Managing

Innumerable studies, articles, and books have been produced by both scholars and practitioners about leading, leadership, managing, and management. Yukl (2012) observed the different taxonomies, assumptions, and theories of leadership from the 1970s to the early 2010s and called out four meta-categories. One sees leadership as task-oriented, focusing on the efficient and reliable accomplishment of work by leveraging the right resources (e.g., people, equipment, etc.). The second is relations-oriented and seeks to increase the quality of human resources and relations in organizations by supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering them. The third meta-category is change-oriented which focuses on innovation, collective learning and adaptation to change. The fourth is external leadership which involves representing and defending the interests of the organization externally. Yukl posited that none of the behaviors associated with any of the four meta-categories occurs in isolation and are likely situation dependent.

For purposes of this study, I will focus on leadership and management theories that seem most relevant to the issues facing CPGC's front-line leaders including Drucker's views on management, Burns' and Bass' (separate) work on transactional and transformative leadership, and Bedeian and Hunt's views on management and leadership.

What makes Peter Drucker's work relevant is his recognition of the social aspect of organizations and his handling of the role of managers in leading both traditional industrial workers and knowledge workers—both of whom are part of the CPGC workforce. Many acknowledge Drucker as the founder of what is thought of as modern-day management (KornFerry, n. d.). (Drucker generally used the term “management” rather than leadership, even writing in a 1947 Harper's article that, “Management is leadership.” Drucker never espoused an explicit theory on leadership.) Interestingly, by the 1980s, Drucker had overtly acknowledged the role of Frederick Taylor's scientific management in accelerating productivity of “totally unskilled, preindustrial people” (p.67) in the United States and the United Kingdom during World War I (Drucker, 1988). Drucker posited that the concept of *the organization* emerged as a result of a maturing industrial age in many developed countries that ushered in an era of collective work at scale that had not been seen widely before that time. These organizations counted on managers to direct the efforts of industrial workers, many relying on what became known as Taylorism with its emphasis on authority, control, and efficiency (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In his 1946 book *The Concept of the Corporation*, Drucker made the case that businesses are not just economic concerns but social ones as well (which links to the idea of leadership as a social construct, discussed in the upcoming section). He called organizations the representative institution of society (Drucker, 1946). His later works extended this thinking about organizations to their influence on the role of management, saying managers should enable workers with common goals and values and training and development (1954, 1988).

Views from Burns and Bass are relevant in that they could speak to the specific challenge L. calls out—the mindset of how CPGC’s front-line leaders see themselves. In the 1970s and ‘80s, theories around transactional and transformational leadership took shape. Bass (1995) quotes from Burns’ 1978 book *Leadership* and describes transactional leaders as ones who “approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another. . . . Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers. . . .” (p. 467). By contrast, transformative leaders are described as charismatic (though not all charismatic leaders are transformative) and capable of encouraging followers to give additional “. . . effort, creativity, and productivity” (p. 468). Bass’ (1995) subsequent study of the differences between transactional and transformative leadership espoused that transformative leadership is not a substitute for transactional leadership; rather, transformative leadership makes the transactional leader even more effective. Both traits exist in the most effective leaders. Bass and Avolio’s work on transactional and transformative leadership resulted in development of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), said by Judge (2008) to be the most extensively validated and commonly used measure of transformational and transactional leadership.

It is worth acknowledging the open question of whether CPGC wants its front-line leaders to be managers or leaders or some of both and whether there is a legitimate difference. Bedeian and Hunt’s work speaks to this issue. In their published correspondence, Bedeian and Hunt (2006) explored the definition of leadership. Bedeian questioned the traditional view of leadership as a structural construct characterized by formalized organizational hierarchies, positions, and authority. He argued, “Occupying or being appointed to a supervisory or managerial position doesn’t magically make one a leader” (p. 191) and described a conflation or confusion of management and leadership in the existing literature. In his response to Bedeian, Hunt suggested that whether a distinction between management and leadership exists and whether this matters is contextual and depends on the specific question being

explored or problem being solved. Hunt also claimed that leadership is a subset of management and that both are required for an organization's success.

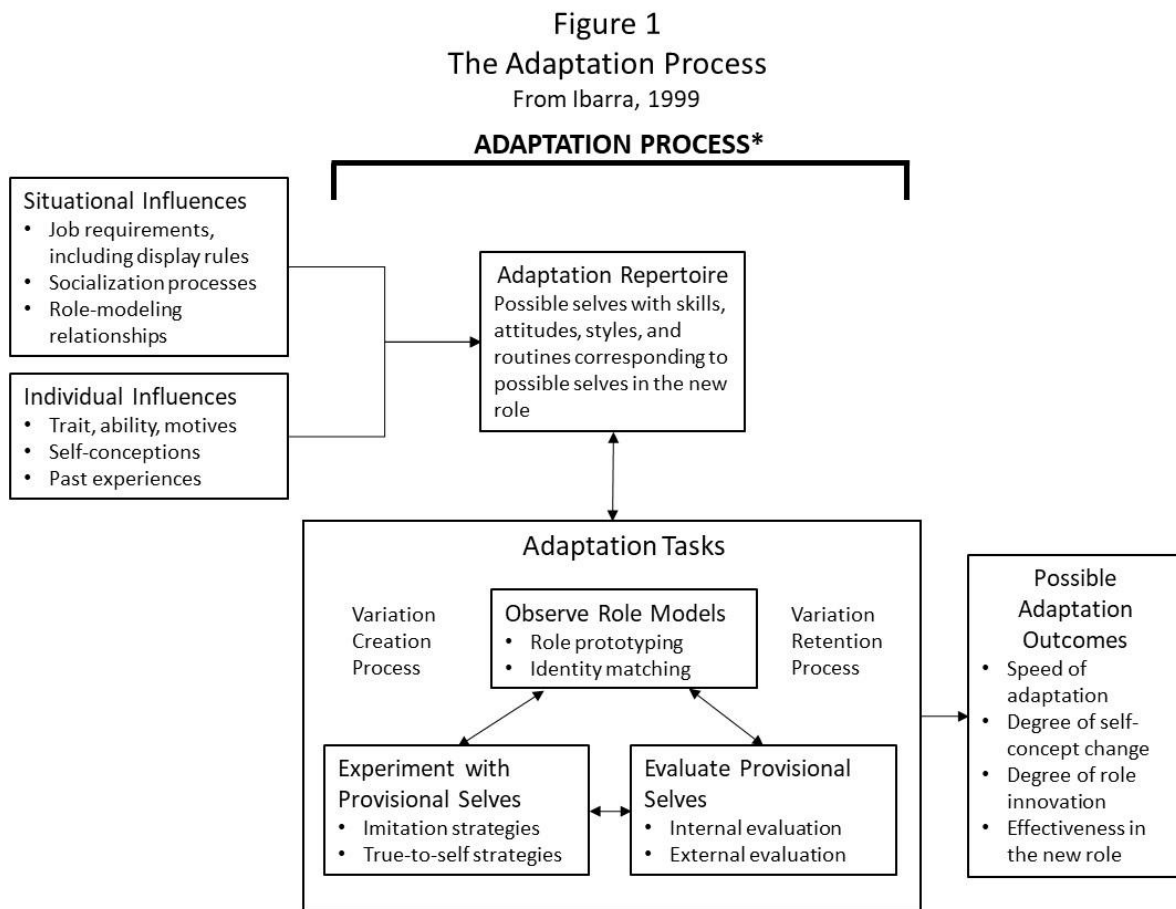
Leader Identity Development

The academy began studying leadership as a social construct around the 1990s (Steffens et al., 2014). Until that time, leader development was focused predominantly on development of individual traits and self-directed learning, consistent with a view that leader emergence and development are driven by individual traits (e.g. intellectual or emotional intelligence) and behaviors (Marchiondo, Myers, & Kopelman, 2014). Since that time, it has become increasingly recognized that for individuals to take on the role and work of a leader, it is important to develop a personal identity as a leader alongside the more cognitive aspects of leadership, allowing for integration of the two as part of a self-concept over time (Lord & Hall, 2005).

Many scholars opposed the idea that the title makes the leader and extended this thinking to include a need to explore leadership as a social construct. Researchers of this ilk posit that an emphasis on individual leader-targeted skill and competency (as is common in practice) may not appropriately address the social construction aspect of being a leader (e.g., Ashford & Sitkin, 2019; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). The role of professional identity and how self-concept plays into one's evolution as a leader includes the meaning and significance that one attaches to her- or himself and that others attach to her or him (Ibarra, Snook, & Ramo, 2008). These meanings are tied to one's social context including social roles, group memberships, and character traits and can change over time as the individual interacts with others, has different experiences, and assesses how others relate to a given leader identity. Our transition into leadership roles is linked to the evolution of our self-concept as a leader. Ibarra et al. (2008) call this *identity-based leader development*. This thinking evolved from Ibarra's (1999) earlier work on "provisional selves" in which she studied how individuals recently promoted into formal leadership roles navigated the transition. She noted that these individuals

assumed many different selves in terms of physical appearance, behavior, demeanor, judgment, and competence—many of them taken from their direct leader or other more senior leaders in their organizations in an ongoing process of seeing what seems to work, what fits, what has the desired impact on others and so forth. In this way, Ibarra says these new leaders develop a “repertoire” of provisional selves with which they play and experiment over time, arriving at evolving leader identities along the way. These provisional selves enable individuals to pull in and organize new relevant knowledge and to find situations in which that knowledge can be applied (Ibarra et al., 2008). See

Figure 1.



*The bracketed portion of this model corresponds to the empirical study reported in this paper. Categories outside the bracketed ones represent suggested directions for future research.

The idea of leader identity is central to the work of Ibarra and many others; however, their work rests on three distinct identity theories (Ibarra et al. 2014). They are identity theory, social construction

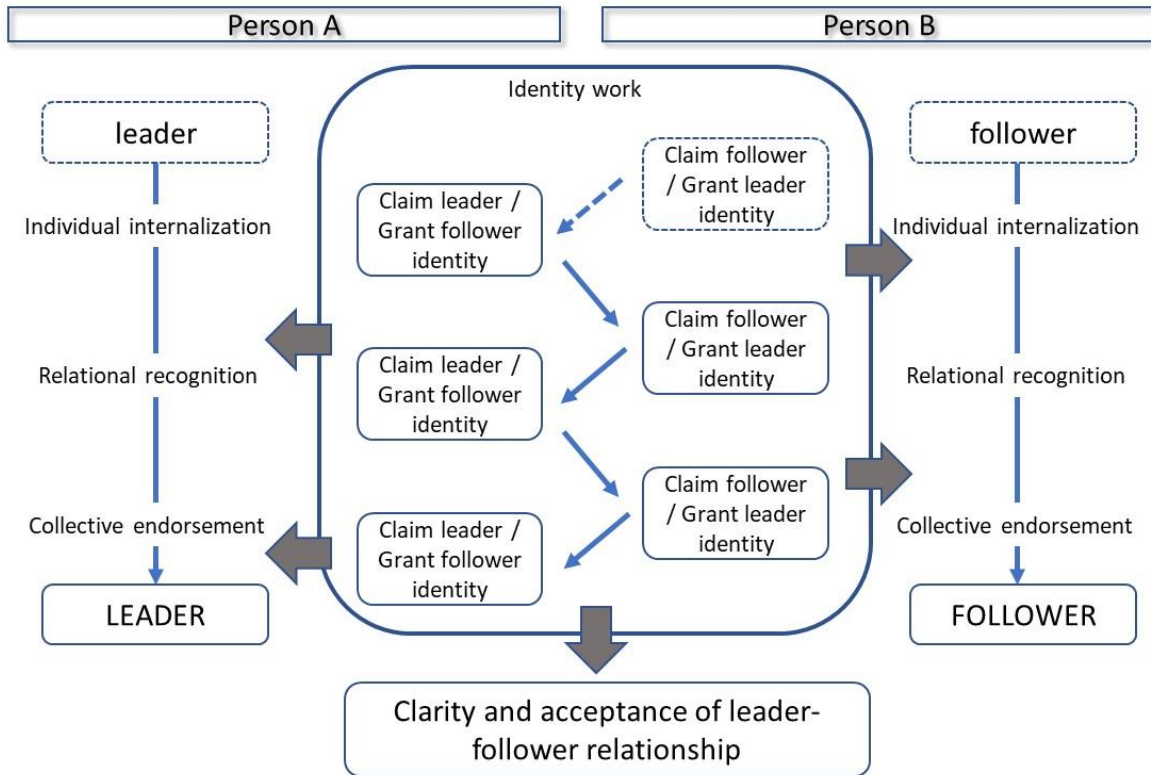
theory, and social identity theory. Ibarra leans into identity theory which holds that being a “leader is a role whose adoption and enactment is defined by societal expectations” (p. 22). The more one practices leading, the better one becomes in the role and the more the role is internalized. Social construction theory sees leader identity as a process between leader and potential followers with followers playing an important role of validating the leader. The third theory is social identity theory, which asserts that leader identity represents a category. The more that you embody what it means to be a member of a given social group, the more likely you are to be a leader of that social group. Leaders are highly prototypical or representative of the category. My professional experience of the culture of CPGC is that it is highly relational². As such, DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) social construction orientation to leader identity is particularly relevant for CPGC.

DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) theory of leadership identity construction posits that individuals must construct a leader identity in a social construct alongside their individual cognitive development as a leader. DeRue and Ashford suggest that leader identity drives “. . . thoughts, affects, motivation, and action” including a desire to assume leadership responsibilities and opportunities to become a better leader (p. 628). DeRue and Ashford argue that leader identity is “reciprocal and mutually reinforcing” and develops as individuals engage in behaviors of asserting leadership that are then either accepted or rejected by would-be followers (2010, pp. 627-8). For example, the would-be leader might assert leadership by making an important organizational decision. If others around the leader accept that assertion, her or his leader identity is strengthened. If others around the leader reject that assertion, her or his leader identity is weakened. Over time, these repeated cycles of asserting leader identity and then being accepted construct leader identity (or not if rejected). Moreover, DeRue and Ashford hold that as this cycle is repeated and leader identity is reinforced across those cycles, a broader organizational endorsement of this leader identity emerges. DeRue and Ashford’s leadership identity

² Though I have not worked for CPGC, I have familiarity with CPGC from my professional experience.

construction process is the conceptual framework for this study. The actions of claiming and granting leadership are depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2
 Leadership Identity Construction Process
 From DeRue and Ashford, 2010



DeRue and Ashford further assert that this leader identity construction involves three things – individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement. Individual internalization happens when individuals integrate leader identity into how they see themselves, and this integration happens not just in the mind of the individual but also in observable social interaction with others. Relational recognition is a dynamic in which one’s self-concept occurs in reciprocal relationship to the self-concept of someone else, for example, parent and child or wife and husband. In this case, the individual’s self-concept as a leader requires at least one other individual to have the reciprocal self-concept of follower. Collective endorsement broadens the social context beyond the two (or more)

individuals involved in relational recognition to include a relevant social group such as a work group. For example, the more individuals in the workplace who recognize or endorse the leadership of a single individual, the more that individual's role as leader will be reinforced and stabilized. This dynamic can be triggered even if the emerging leader did not necessarily see her- or himself as a potential leader but was collectively recognized as such by followers, peers, and superiors.

DeRue and Ashford posit that assertions and grants of leader identity are more likely to occur or be reciprocated when “. . . the grant of a leader identity is clear, visible, and credible” (2010, p. 635). An example might be an individual taking a leadership role (perhaps by steering a discussion or by assigning follow-up actions) in an important meeting attended by most or all members of the work group, or someone widely viewed as a subject matter expert taking the lead in driving an important organizational decision. In both cases, the leadership claim would be clearly understood, transparent within the social context, and seen as reliable. If individuals in the work group responded in kind—they followed the leader's suggested meeting agenda, followed through on their assigned action items, and affirmed the leader's expertise—their grant of the leader's claim to leadership would also be clear, visible, and credible.

DeRue and Ashford's leader identity construction framework also includes antecedents they “. . . believe will be especially important predictors of claiming and granting” (2010, p. 637) leadership. One of those antecedents involves our implicit theories of what leadership looks like; another is related to risks and rewards that motivate construction of a leader identity. An implicit theory of leadership refers to the personal ideas and beliefs that most of us have developed over time about what a leader “looks like” and how leadership emerges in groups (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). These implicit theories of leadership lead us to attribute leader roles to individuals whose behaviors and actions align to our idea of what a leader is, and we are more likely to grant an assertion of leadership to those individuals. (Interestingly, if our own behavior, actions, or other attributes do not match up with our implicit leader

theory but they do align to others' theories, we can be granted a leader role without initiating it, which could be potentially confusing for us.) In terms of risks and rewards, DeRue and Ashford (2010) posit that being seen as a leader is generally regarded as a positive thing and something that is in individuals' self-interest to attain. They identify three specific types of rewards that can be associated with attaining leadership roles. The first is *instrumental rewards*, which includes things like promotions or formal authority in the workplace. The second is *interpersonal rewards*, such as power, influence and status. The third type, *image-based*, includes things like enjoying a good reputation in one's social group. The more that individuals perceive that these rewards are associated with leadership, the higher the likelihood that they will assert themselves as a leader (DeRue & Ashford, 2010.)

A simplified narrative of DeRue and Ashford's argument about the social construction of leader identity is:

- You will know that I have constructed my own leader identity when you see that:
 - I claim being a leader as part of who I am,
 - I have a reciprocal relationship with others in which they see me as their leader and I see them as part of my team, and
 - Multiple members of the broader group around me—my department, for example—acknowledge me as a leader.
- Before I assert myself as a leader, I need to:
 - See alignment between who I am and the way I have always thought about what a leader is, does, and looks like, and
 - Perceive that being a leader is worth it in terms of instrumental awards like formal authority, interpersonal awards like power or status, and image awards like having a good reputation.

- Once that alignment and perception are in place, I am more likely to actually assert my leadership in some way—take a position in a team meeting, for example—and have that assertion affirmed by others if both actions are:
 - Clear,
 - Visible, and
 - Credible.

Since its release, DeRue and Ashford’s work on identity construction theory has been cited hundreds of times. One theoretical and empirical study, conducted by Marchiondo, Myers, and Kopelman (2015), sought to affirm and extend DeRue and Ashford’s theory. Their empirical study affirmed DeRue and Ashford’s identity construction theory by finding that leader claiming is not enough to fully explain perceptions of leadership. Others’ acceptance or rejection of the claim also influences perceptions of leadership. Marchiondo et al. also found that if observers—members of a work group, for example—perceived someone to be more leader-like following an observation of the claiming / granting dynamic, the observer is more likely to accept recommendations from the would-be leaders (and followers).

Research Focus and Questions

Owing to the aforementioned body of work on leader identity, this study will explore this overarching question: *Have CPGC's front-line leaders constructed leader identities?*

Leaning heavily on the work of DeRue and Ashford (2010), the specific research questions for this study are:

1. Have CPGC's front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement?
2. Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership?
3. Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader?
4. How clear, visible, and credible were CPGC's front-line leaders' respective assumptions of their roles as front-line leaders?
5. Do CPGC's front-line leaders claim leader identity?

Methods

One of the most basic decisions concerning the study design and methods was how to define “front-line leader” for the study. The name implies inclusion of only the first layer of leaders within the organization. However, I included both supervisors and the managers to whom they report as front-line leaders for two reasons. First, it is consistent with CPGC’s practice as described in the background for the study. Second, it includes both layers of leaders most recently affected by the increase in spans of control driven by the company’s restructuring.

I chose a mix of surveys and interviews to gather the data needed for this study. The study was intended to gather input from relevant CPGC associates and leaders that will speak directly to the first four research questions. That input was gathered in two ways—first with a survey that was derived from DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) work; second with direct discussions using the interview protocol from Ibarra’s (1999) work on provisional selves. The interviews were intended to provide front-line leaders with an opportunity to say more about their survey responses and provide a deeper look at their experience as emerging leaders at CPGC. I structured the data collection to enable analysis in the aggregate as well as by location and function so that recommendations could be targeted to specific locations and functions as appropriate, and thus be more actionable for CPGC. The fifth research question will be discussed based on the totality of the findings of the first four research questions.

Organization Scope and Sample

The organizational scope of the study focused on the five functions that CPGC believed to experience the challenge with front-line leaders most prominently. All eighteen of CPGC’s locations were in-scope. Because DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) work speaks to the social construct of leader identity development as a dynamic between the would-be leader and others in the organization, three populations were included in the study to enable analysis of claiming and granting. The first population

was the front-line leaders themselves, which consisted of supervisors and managers across the five in-scope functions. (The front-line leaders were also asked to provide peer feedback for one another.) The second population included the direct leaders of the managers (“direct leaders”, all of whom are director-level leaders within CPGC). The third population included associates who report to the supervisors (“associates”). Because of the associates’ and direct leaders’ association with the front-line leaders, the front-line leader population determined which associates and direct leaders would be in-scope. Thus, I began my sizing of the total in-scope population by looking at the number of front-line leaders.

Front-line leader population.

CPGC provided a dataset of all in-scope front-line leaders including their job (supervisor or manager), status (active or inactive), function, location, sex, race / ethnicity, hire date, organization unit, and direct leader name. The dataset included 418 individuals. I removed nine inactive front-line leaders as well as six more who had been misclassified as in-scope. This resulted in 403 in-scope front-line leaders. CPGC requested that I survey a sample of the 403 front-line leaders. I recommended a target sample size of 200. I created the sample by stratifying the total population of front-line leaders—first, by CPGC’s eighteen locations and then by the five functions—to determine the sample distribution of front-line leaders by location and function. I used that distribution to determine the target number of front-line leaders to pull from each location to include in the sample (e.g., if 10% of front-line leaders in the total population were in Location A, I targeted 10% of front-line leaders in the sample to also be from Location A). I then used the function-within-location distributions of the total population to determine the target number of front-line leaders from each function within the eighteen locations (e.g., if 50% of Location A’s front-line leaders were in a given function, I targeted 50% of the Location A-based front-line leaders in the sample to be in that function).

With some exceptions, I used the equal probability of selection method to randomly select the specific front-line leaders who would receive a survey, selecting the target number of front-line leaders for each location and function based on the sampling strategy outlined above. Those exceptions were made to ensure representation of all locations and functions including those with small numbers of front-line leaders (in some cases, only one front-line leader). I adjusted the target sample number of front-line leaders for two locations. I also adjusted the target sample number because of low representation by function in thirteen instances. This resulted in a sample of 214 front-line leaders who were surveyed—roughly half of the total population of 403 front-line leaders (see Table 1).

Table 1
Front-line Leader Total Population and Sample by Location and Function

| Location | Function | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Equipment Services | | | | Fleet | | | | Production | | | | Sales | | | | WH/Distribution | | | | TOTAL | | | |
| | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % | Total Population # | Total Population % | Sample Population # | Sample Population % |
| A | 1 | 11.1% | 1 | 20.0% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | 3 | 4.4% | 2 | 5.6% | 1 | 1.5% | 1 | 2.8% | 18 | 26.5% | 9 | 25.0% | 6 | 66.7% | 3 | 60.0% | 2 | 22.2% | 1 | 20.0% | 9 | 100.0% | 5 | 100.0% |
| C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D | 1 | 4.5% | 1 | 8.3% | | | | | | | | | 6 | 75.0% | 3 | 75.0% | 2 | 25.0% | 2 | 25.0% | 8 | 100.0% | 4 | 100.0% |
| E | 1 | 9.1% | 1 | 20.0% | | | | | | | | | 13 | 59.1% | 7 | 58.3% | 8 | 36.4% | 4 | 33.3% | 22 | 100.0% | 12 | 100.0% |
| F | | | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 45.5% | 2 | 40.0% | 5 | 45.5% | 2 | 40.0% | 11 | 100.0% | 5 | 100.0% |
| G | 4 | 7.7% | 2 | 7.1% | 1 | 1.9% | 1 | 3.6% | 13 | 25.0% | 7 | 25.0% | 6 | 75.0% | 3 | 75.0% | 2 | 25.0% | 2 | 25.0% | 8 | 100.0% | 4 | 100.0% |
| H | | | | | | | | | | | | | 17 | 32.7% | 9 | 32.1% | 17 | 32.7% | 9 | 32.1% | 52 | 100.0% | 28 | 100.0% |
| I | 1 | 5.0% | 1 | 9.1% | 1 | 5.0% | 1 | 9.1% | | | | | 9 | 52.9% | 4 | 50.0% | 7 | 41.2% | 3 | 37.5% | 17 | 100.0% | 8 | 100.0% |
| J | | | | | | | | | | | | | 14 | 70.0% | 7 | 63.6% | 4 | 20.0% | 2 | 18.2% | 20 | 100.0% | 11 | 100.0% |
| K | 4 | 5.8% | 2 | 5.9% | 1 | 1.4% | 1 | 2.9% | 13 | 18.8% | 6 | 17.6% | 8 | 100.0% | 4 | 100.0% | | | | | 8 | 100.0% | 4 | 100.0% |
| L | 2 | 10.0% | 1 | 9.1% | | | | | | | | | 24 | 34.8% | 12 | 35.3% | 27 | 39.1% | 13 | 38.2% | 69 | 100.0% | 34 | 100.0% |
| M | 1 | 7.1% | 1 | 12.5% | | | | | | | | | 13 | 65.0% | 7 | 63.6% | 5 | 25.0% | 3 | 27.3% | 20 | 100.0% | 11 | 100.0% |
| N | | | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 57.1% | 4 | 50.0% | 5 | 35.7% | 3 | 37.5% | 14 | 100.0% | 8 | 100.0% |
| O | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 100.0% | 1 | 100.0% | | | | | 1 | 100.0% | 1 | 100.0% |
| P | 1 | 10.0% | 1 | 16.7% | | | | | | | | | 6 | 85.7% | 3 | 75.0% | 1 | 14.3% | 1 | 25.0% | 7 | 100.0% | 4 | 100.0% |
| Q | 4 | 7.1% | 2 | 6.7% | 1 | 1.8% | 1 | 3.3% | 13 | 23.2% | 7 | 23.3% | 9 | 90.0% | 5 | 83.3% | 23 | 41.1% | 12 | 40.0% | 56 | 100.0% | 30 | 100.0% |
| R | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 66.7% | 2 | 66.7% | 1 | 33.3% | 1 | 33.3% | 3 | 100.0% | 3 | 100.0% |
| Grand Total | 23 | 5.7% | 15 | 7.0% | 6 | 1.5% | 6 | 2.8% | 57 | 14.1% | 29 | 13.6% | 181 | 44.9% | 94 | 43.9% | 136 | 33.7% | 70 | 32.7% | 403 | 100.0% | 214 | 100.0% |

Direct leader population.

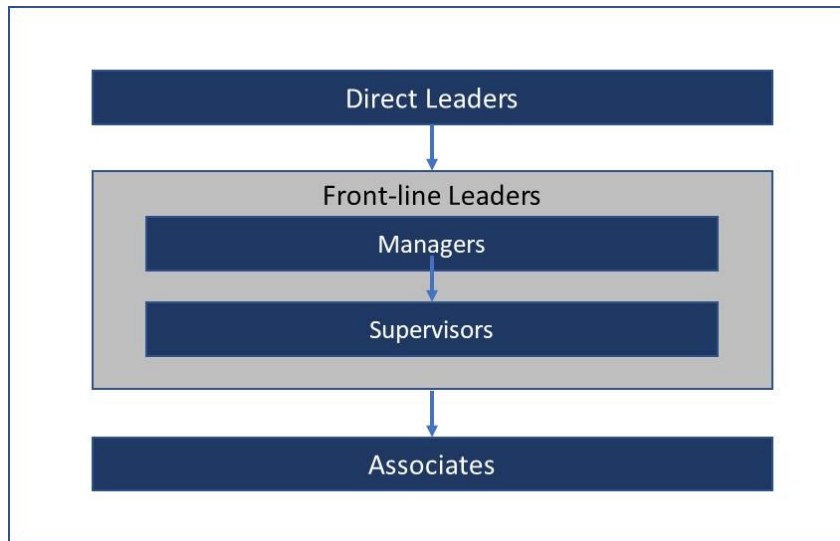
With the sample of front-line leaders determined, I returned to the original dataset to capture the direct leaders to whom the front-line leaders report. This yielded a total of 113 direct leaders who were surveyed. Those 113 direct leaders are 73% of the total population of 154 direct leaders or equivalents across CPGC. Unlike with the front-line leader population, the objective here was not to create a representative sample of direct leaders but to enable actual direct leaders of in-sample front-line leaders to provide a view of their experience of those front-line leaders. Direct leaders of the in-sample front-line leaders typically—but not always—share the function and location of the front-line leaders they oversee.

Associate population.

CPGC provided a dataset of all associates who report to the 214 front-line leaders in the sample. The dataset included 1,948 associates and was more than CPGC was comfortable surveying. CPGC agreed to a sample size of about 500 associates. Following the same procedure as I used for selecting the front-line leader sample, I constructed a sample of 503 associates or 26% of the total population of associates (See Appendix A – Associate Total Population and Sample by Location and Function).

A depiction of the three in-scope populations appears in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Three In-scope Populations



Survey Instrument

Using DeRue and Ashford's (2010) work as a foundation, I drafted a survey instrument to gather data that would inform the answers to the research questions. I reviewed the original draft with L. to ensure the language and wording of the survey questions would be familiar to CPGC employees and that the survey questions would be likely to be interpreted as intended. The final instrument included twenty-two survey questions. The first question asked survey recipients to select their position type—leader (i.e., front-line leader), direct leader, or associate. The recipients' selection determined which of the remaining questions she or he would see. The main body of the instrument included eighteen survey questions. Those eighteen survey questions were grouped into dyads or triads that aligned to a specific research question and to a specific population—front-line leaders, direct leaders, and/or associates. In these eighteen questions, respondents were asked to respond to a five-point Likert scale indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The eighteen survey questions are shown in Table 2, including their alignment to the research questions as well as which of the three populations—front-line leaders, associates, and/or direct leaders—would receive which

survey question. (See Appendix B – Survey Instrument to see the full survey as it appeared when released.)

Table 2
Survey Instrument Main Body Design
(FLL = Front-line leader. DL = Direct leader. A = Associate.)

| Research Question (RQ) and Dyad / Triad | Survey Question (SQ) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below. | Target Population | | |
|---|--|-------------------|----|---|
| | | FLL | DL | A |
| RQ1: Have CPGC’s front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement? | | | | |
| Individual internalization dyad | SQ1: My role as a CPGC leader is part of my self-identity. | x | | |
| | SQ2: My professional or “at work” self has changed since I became a CPGC leader. | x | | |
| Relational recognition dyad | SQ3: My direct reports have recognized me as their leader since I became a leader at CPGC. | x | | |
| | SQ4: Having a relationship with my direct reports in which they recognize me as the leader and themselves as part of my team is part of being a leader at CPGC. | x | | |
| | SQ5: Having a certain position or job title within CPGC is part of being a leader. | x | | |
| Collective endorsement (self) dyad | SQ6: I see myself as being leader-like. | x | | |
| | SQ7: I see myself as being part of CPGC’s leadership. | x | | |
| Collective endorsement (others) dyad | SQ14: I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | x | x | x |
| | SQ15: I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at CPGC. | x | x | x |
| RQ2: Do CPGC’s front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership? | | | | |
| Consistency triad | SQ8: The work I’m expected to do in my role aligns to what I believe a leader should do. | x | | |
| | SQ9: The way that I spend my time in my role aligns to how I believe a leader should spend her or his time. | x | | |
| | SQ10: I am usually able to function in the way that I believe a leader should. | x | | |
| RQ3: Do CPGC’s front-line leaders perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader? | | | | |
| Instrumental awards | SQ11: I associate having formal organizational authority (i.e., being recognized as someone whose position or job title entitles her or him to make organizational decisions) with being a leader at CPGC. | x | | |
| Interpersonal awards | SQ12: I associate having informal organizational influence (i.e., having influence over how things are done without regard to your position or job title) with being a leader at CPGC. | x | | |

| Research Question (RQ) and Dyad / Triad | Survey Question (SQ) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below. | Target Population | | |
|--|--|-------------------|----|---|
| | | FLL | DL | A |
| Image awards | SQ13: I believe being a leader at CPGC is looked upon favorably by others. | x | | |
| RQ4: How clear, visible, and credible were CPGC’s front-line leaders’ respective assumptions of their roles as front-line leaders? | | | | |
| Visibility triad | SQ16: The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | x | x | x |
| | SQ17: The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | x | x | x |
| | SQ18: The process by which CPGC fills supervisor and manager positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | x | x | x |

Note: Although Survey Questions 14 and 15 align to RQ1, they were presented to survey respondents immediately after SQ13 to enable SQs 14 – 18 to be visually grouped with the survey questions that were presented to all three target populations.

The survey instrument included two additional questions to obtain employment data that CPGC does not track. The first question asked how long the individual has been employed by CPGC. The second question asked how long the individual has been a front-line leader prior to joining CPGC.

The remaining question asked front-line leaders (but neither associates nor direct leaders) whether they wanted to have a direct discussion with me to share more about their experiences as leaders with CPGC. If so, they were asked to provide an email address so that I could contact them to arrange the interview.

Interview Protocol

The instrument used for the interviews was taken from Ibarra (1999) with minor language tweaks to put the questions in proper context for the CPGC audience. As needed and appropriate, I used some improvisation to keep the discussions on track and to probe and clarify front-line leaders’ responses—all while respecting CPGC’s request to limit the interviews to twenty minutes. The full protocol appears in Appendix C – Interview Protocol.

Survey Administration

To protect access to personnel data and company technology, CPGC required that they build and release the survey internally. A CPGC associate built the survey using a commercially available cloud platform that CPGC uses for surveys.

The survey was preceded by a series of emails to CPGC executives to inform them of the purpose, scope, and timing of the survey. Those communications were followed by additional emails to remaining leadership levels including front-line leaders and their direct leaders. Associates also received a similar email. The communications emphasized that participation was encouraged but completely voluntary. The communications advised that hourly employees were to complete the survey during their assigned shifts (i.e., they would be paid for the time required to complete the survey, thus removing this as a potential barrier to participating). Communications also called out that the survey could be completed on any mobile device including company-provided computer kiosks available on-site. This was particularly important because many associates do not monitor their company email regularly and do not have individually issued smart devices. We considered but chose not to print and distribute paper surveys to associates on-site. While we suspected that this option would net a higher associate response rate, we were concerned that it would expose which associates were in the sample, thus compromising confidentiality of the process. We were also concerned about the optics of not including all associates despite having communicated that sampling had been completely random.

The survey was released via email and was open for a ten-day period in the fall of 2020 (i.e., Wednesday to Friday of the following week). One reminder was sent during the second week to encourage participation. To increase participation, we extended the survey an additional five days (to the following Wednesday). K., CPGC Communications Director, released additional reminders to complete the survey.

Survey Respondents

We received a total of forty responses at the end of the extended survey period – thirty from front-line leaders, ten from direct leaders, and none from associates (see Limitations). L. exported the raw response data to Excel and used VLOOKUP to re-join the responses with demographic data for each respondent (e.g., function, facility, race / ethnicity, etc.). She shared this dataset with me. I validated all forty responses against my master sample lists for two reasons. First, I wanted to ensure that each respondent had identified her- or himself in the role that matched my list (e.g., Respondent A had self-identified as a direct leader, and this selection matched the classification in my list). This was necessary because CPGC built the survey such that it relied on respondents to correctly self-identify their role and because of the possibility of an inadvertent error on the part of the respondent when completing the survey. Second, I wanted to be sure that respondents were on my master sample list. While the survey communications and instructions directed participants not to forward or share the survey link with others, CPGC had not built the survey to restrict participants' ability to forward the link. My validation showed that four direct leaders had erroneously identified their role as front-line leader. I removed them from the front-line leader responses and added them to the ten direct leader responses, discarding their responses to survey questions intended only for front-line leaders. This resulted in twenty-six responses from front-line leaders and fourteen from direct leaders.

Front-line leader responses.

The twenty-six front-line leader responses resulted in a response rate of 12% of the 214 in-sample front-line leaders. (See Appendix D – Front-line Leader Achieved Sample by Location and Function) for location and function distribution of the achieved sample.) Nine of the eighteen in-scope locations and all five in-scope functions were represented in the achieved sample. Forty-six percent of respondents have been employed by CPGC at least four years; 42% between one and three years, and

12% for less than a year. Forty-three percent of respondents have a maximum of three years of front-line leader experience, which is consistent with data shared by L..

While lower than hoped, CPGC's survey administration team reported that this response rate is in line with typical response rates. Nevertheless, the low response rate and absence of several locations precluded function- and location-specific analyses.

Direct leader responses.

Fourteen direct leaders responded to the survey, for a response rate of 12% of the 113 in-sample direct leaders. All five in-scope functions and nine of the eighteen in-scope locations were represented in the achieved sample. Again, the low response rate and absence of several locations discourages broad generalizations of the findings of the survey.

Associate responses.

No associates responded to the survey. This was particularly concerning because of the preemptive decision to ensure that time spent completing the surveys would be considered work time (i.e., paid) and the written and oral reminders to front-line leaders to encourage associates to access the survey via on-site computer kiosks. The absence of any input from associates obviously precludes my ability to incorporate their experiences of front-line leaders—a significant limitation of the study given its focus on leadership as a social construct (see Discussion and Limitations).

Interview Administration

I monitored responses from front-line leaders daily to enable me to quickly reach out (via email) to those who had volunteered to talk with me to schedule an interview. Thirteen individuals volunteered to talk with me via the survey. Of those thirteen, two had erroneously self-classified as front-line leaders when they were in fact direct leaders. (I did offer to meet with these individuals as a courtesy to CPGC but did not include their comments in the scope of this study.) Meetings with the remaining eleven were conducted via video conference or phone (due to COVID-19 restrictions) and

lasted about twenty minutes each. The meetings were recorded (if the front-line leader consented) to enable repeated viewing to ensure accurate transcription and coding of the discussions. In most cases, the front-line leaders were “in the field” during our discussions, stopping in their company vehicles between meetings with associates or customers at various customer sites.

Analyses Preparation

Quantitative analysis preparation.

Quantitative analysis of the survey responses required two preparatory steps—numericization of the survey responses and validation of the survey questions. Both steps were completed using Excel.

Numericization of survey responses.

To enable quantitative analysis of the survey responses, I numericized all possible survey question responses. For example, a response of strongly agree became a 5, agree became a 4, and so on.

Validation of survey questions.

Because I derived the questions for my survey instrument from DeRue and Ashford’s work rather than used an existing previously validated instrument, I wanted to complete a simple validation of the survey questions by determining the internal consistency of the survey question dyads and triads that I mapped to each research question. As discussed in the Survey Instrument section, the main body of the instrument included eighteen questions. A full listing of all summarized results for all eighteen survey questions is included in Appendix E – Quantitative Data Summary by Survey Question, including breakouts for front-line leaders and direct leaders as appropriate. Using Excel, I found the inter-item correlations (using Pearson’s correlation coefficient) for the survey question dyads or the mean inter-item correlations for the triads associated with each research question (see Appendix F – Survey Question Validation). Most of the correlation coefficients are sufficiently strong to indicate that the dyads and triads are internally consistent, which lends credence to the validity of the survey questions.

This supports quantitative summarization of survey question responses by averaging the means of survey responses within each validated dyad or triad (i.e., construct). In cases where the internal consistency of the dyads and triads is weak, the underlying survey questions may be asking about discrete constructs that should not be summarized (i.e., averaged); therefore, they will be considered separately. A full listing of all summarized results by each validated construct is included in Appendix G – Quantitative Data Summary by Construct.

Qualitative analysis / interview coding.

Nearly all interviews were recorded. I reviewed these recordings to ensure the accuracy of my written transcripts. As needed, I cleaned up and completed those transcripts. I reread them to look for patterns and commonalities in what front-line leaders shared in their interviews with me. My coding began by itemizing the specific constructs from the research questions. I captured front-line leaders' comments and sorted them across those constructs. I looked for supporting as well as dissenting ideas when compared with the quantitative data. I also loaded the transcripts into a commercially available coding tool. Using the tool, I was able to sort remaining comments into three additional buckets: how front-line leaders are learning to lead, what front-line leaders are learning about leading, and the passion that front-line leaders have for the CPGC brand.

Findings

Quantitative and qualitative findings for each research question will be presented. Quantitative data summaries (i.e., means) are on a five-point scale. Additional findings from the interviews that do not fall directly under a research question but are still relevant to an overall understanding of how front-line leaders experienced leader identity construction will also be presented.

Research Question 1: Have CPGC's front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement?

Individual internalization.

The two survey questions aligned to individual internalization were not found to be internally consistent; therefore, their results cannot be collapsed into a single finding.

Generally, front-line leaders do see their role as a CPGC leader as part of their self-identities. Survey data support this finding ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 1.06$) as well as qualitative input from the follow-up interviews. Despite wide variation, there were more front-line leaders who saw being a CPGC leader as part of their self-identity than those who did not internalize this identity. When reflecting back to his initial promotion into a front-line leader role, one long-tenured individual saw his emergence as a leader as almost inevitable, saying in his follow-up interview, "It was meant to be. Like auto-pilot." Many front-line leaders described deep personal connection with CPGC and/or the CPGC brand. One declared, "I'm a [CPCG brand] guy." Another said, "I think if you make it to this point, you see yourself as a [CPGC brand] leader. You're managing other people" (though not all front-line leaders believed that being a CPGC leader required having direct reports).

Interestingly, internalization of being a CPGC leader had a strong positive association with several other constructs included in the study. The more that front-line leaders internalized their role as a CPGC leader, the more they:

- Saw consistency between their actual work and the work they believe a leader should do, $r(24) = .54, p = .004,$
- Reported spending their time in a way they believe leaders should, $r(24) = .51, p = .007,$
- Perceived clarity and transparency in the qualifications required to be a front-line leader, $r(24) = .71, p < .001,$ and
- Perceived the front-line leader hiring process to be credible, $r(24) = .71, p < .001.$

The survey responses indicated moderate agreement that front-line leaders' professional selves have changed since they became a CPGC leader ($M = 3.8, SD = .98$). There was little or no interview feedback to support the idea that any front-line leaders' professional selves shifted after becoming a CPGC leader.

Seeing one's role as a CPGC leader as part of one's self-identity and experiencing change in one's professional self since becoming a CPGC leader are negatively though weakly correlated, $r(24) = -.27, p = .18$. In fact, front-line leaders who experienced high levels of change (i.e., a rating of 4 or 5) reported a lower average internalization of being a CPGC leader than those who experienced low levels of change (i.e., a rating of 1 or 2; means of 3.9 and 5.0 respectively). This could indicate that those leaders whose professional identity did not change since becoming a CPGC leader thought of themselves as leaders prior to becoming a CPGC leader. In their interviews, some leaders talked about having leader roles beginning in their late teens or honing their leader skills with other employers prior to joining CPGC. It could also imply that front-line leaders perceived that the "self" they brought to the CPGC leader role did not require substantial change to be a CPGC leader.

There was no significant difference between the mean ratings on *My role as a CPGC leader is part of my self-identity* and *My professional or "at work" self has changed since I became a CPGC leader*, as shown with a paired samples t-test, $t(25) = 0.60, p = 0.55, d = .12$. In this regard, CPGC could prioritize either construct as part of an action plan for helping front-line leaders achieve individual internalization.

Relational recognition.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that front-line leaders have generally achieved relational recognition ($M = 4.2, SD = .7$). Front-line leaders reported that their direct reports recognize them as a leader ($M = 4.7, SD = .55$) and that this recognition is part of being a CPGC leader ($M = 4.6, SD = .57$). In fact, these two factors were strongly positively correlated ($r(24) = .88, p < .001$), possibly indicating that front-line leaders have prioritized the connection that they have with their direct reports. Some front-line leaders described their work team as family, including one who said, “This is my work family.” Another likened stepping into a leader role of an existing team similar to becoming a stepparent to a new spouse’s children.

Survey data indicated neutral agreement that having a certain job title is part of being a leader ($M = 3.3, SD = 1.26$). Interview comments align to the quantitative data. In his interview, one front-line leader said, “You don’t have to have that title to be a leader at CPGC brand, but if you do have that title, you do need to be a leader.” Another recalled that, even before being promoted to a formal leader role, his co-workers often came to him with questions before going to their supervisor, describing this experience as being a “peer leader”. These findings are aligned with DeRue and Ashford’s (2010) view that leadership is more about the social connection between leaders and followers than about holding a particular job title.

Collective endorsement.

There are three related ideas here: how front-line leaders see themselves, how front-line leaders see one another, and how direct leaders see front-line leaders. (Because no associates participated in the survey, I have no data on the fourth relevant idea, which is how associates see front-line leaders.)

Essentially all front-line leaders reported seeing themselves as being leaders ($M = 4.6, SD = .4$). They saw themselves as being leader-like ($M = 4.7, SD = .5$) and as being part of CPGC’s leadership ($M =$

4.5, $SD = .6$). Front-line leaders also saw one another as being leaders ($M = 4.1$, $SD = .7$). They saw one another as being leader-like ($M = 4.1$, $SD = .7$) and as being part of CPGC's leadership ($M = 4.2$, $SD = .7$). Relevant qualitative input is mixed. One front-line leader described the informal direction he often gives to teams outside his function, implying that his broad exercise of leadership is accepted by others. Conversely, a small number of front-line leaders commented that their predecessors had not led their teams effectively, thus implying a perception that those individuals were less than leader-like. Finally, direct leaders saw front-line leaders as being leaders ($M = 4.2$, $SD = .4$). They saw front-line leaders as being leader-like ($M = 4.2$, $SD = .4$) and as being part of CPGC's leadership ($M = 4.1$, $SD = .5$). As an example, one front-line leader shared that her direct leaders had encouraged her to apply for a front-line leader role long before she believed she was ready to do so. Taken together, the findings across these three ideas indicate that front-line leaders have achieved collective endorsement.

Interestingly, the difference between front-line leaders' ratings on *I see myself as being leader-like* and *I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like*, was significant $t(25) < 0.01$, $p < 0.01$, $d = .82$. There was also a significant difference between front-line leaders' ratings on *I see myself as being part of CPGC's leadership* and *I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at CPGC*, $t(25) = 1.895$, $p = 0.03$, $d = .37$. This means that front-line leaders' self-ratings of how leader-like they are exceeded their peer ratings of one another.

I conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to determine any differences across ratings for five constructs that are nested within Research Question 1: 1) whether front-line leaders see their role as part of their self-identity, 2) whether front-line leaders' professional selves have changed since becoming a CPGC leader, 3) relational recognition, 4) collective endorsement for self, and 5) collective endorsement for others. The results showed statistically significant differences between the mean ratings ($F(4,100) = 3.43$, $p = 0.01$). The second construct, change in professional self since becoming a

CPGC leader, received the lowest absolute mean rating ($M = 3.8$) and is likely the best opportunity for impacting front-line leaders' social development of a leader identity.

Taken together, the findings from the three components of constructing a leader identity—individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement—show that front-line leaders have achieved all three components though there is variability in the extent to which individual front-line leaders have done so.

Research Question 2: Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership?

In their survey responses, front-line leaders generally reported consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership ($M = 3.9, SD = .8$) with some exceptions. This perceived consistency is based on three nested constructs with wide variability seen in responses for the first two. First, aggregate results indicated that front-line leaders agreed that their work aligns to what they believe leaders should do ($M = 3.8, SD = .8$); however, 27% do not agree. Second, aggregate results showed that they spend their time as they believe leaders should ($M = 3.8, SD = 1.0$), but 35% do not agree that they do. Third, front-line leaders reported usually being able to function in the way they believe a leader should ($M = 4.1, SD = .8$). Interview discussions highlighted several examples of where expectations and reality diverged (See Table 3). Given DeRue and Ashford's (2010) assertion that consistency between one's implicit theories of what leadership looks like and the actual job is an antecedent to claiming leadership, CPGC might want to see somewhat higher ratings here. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the extent to which the 26 front-line leaders experience these three constructs. Results showed no statistically significant differences across the extent to which the three items are experienced ($F(2,50) = 2.87, p = 0.07$).

Table 3
Comparison of Implicit Ideas about Leadership to Actual Experience as a Leader
(Taken from Interviews with Front-line Leaders)

| Implicit ideas of what leadership is | Actual experience |
|--|--|
| Consistent | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regular interaction with senior leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with senior leadership is a routine part of the job. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having full support of the organization to lead effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive onboarding process |
| Inconsistent | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having full support of the organization to lead effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-driven onboarding process • Enabling processes do not always work well (e.g., HR policies, hiring) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being knowledgeable about the job and company operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you progress, the importance of your deep functional knowledge decreases. You rely less on your own functional knowledge and more on that of your people. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater control of your time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always “on.” You need to be available to your team and customers at all times. • There is more behind the scenes work than was visible as a non-leader. You have to balance managing your people with other priorities. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the mechanical elements like a certain title, making more money and being in charge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a passion for the people on your team • Being able to coach and develop others |

Of note were stories that front-line leaders shared about how they navigated around the unmet implicit idea that leaders would be provided with a well-planned onboarding process to becoming a leader. Several described a sense of being on their own to learn what they needed to know. In many cases, they had resorted to finding peers who could coach them on different aspects of the job such as which apps to use for what processes, where to find forms, and so forth. One said,

“I’ve had to find these people out on my own and take and take and take from them what I need to develop myself. I don’t know that anybody is interested in my own personal development other than me. Otherwise, they would have provided that stuff, I

think, in some shape or form. But I'm interested in it, so I seek it out. This guy's really good at forms. This one's good at company policy. And I take from them. I leverage their knowledge and what I need."

Front-line leaders also had a lot to say about HR policies and processes. One shared, "They should do more to support the core business." Another described that the time to fill a new position on his team takes too long and that he and his team are left to cover for the open position in the meantime. (CPGC does not track actual time-to-fill data. Current year-to-date turnover stood at 45.6%, which amplifies the need for shorter hiring cycles.)

Research Question 3: Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader?

The triad of questions aligned to Research Question 3 were not found to be internally consistent; therefore, results for their underlying constructs—instrumental awards, interpersonal awards, and image awards—cannot be collapsed into a single finding.

Instrumental awards.

Quantitative data suggested that front-line leaders generally associate instrumental awards (like formal organizational authority) with being a leader at CPGC at moderately high levels ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .9$). While most front-line leaders reported a ranking of 4 or higher, 25% reported a ranking of 3 or 1. Examples of where instrumental awards were viewed highly included achievement of personal career and financial goals, having the authority to make hiring and promotion decisions, and being able to influence policy. One front-line leader commented, "You have greater impact on how we do the business. . . how we make improvements to be the best [company] we can be." At the same time, other front-line leaders indicated that there are also instrumental disincentives of being a leader. For example, several front-line leaders called out the additional responsibilities and expectations of leading such as approving payroll and being available outside normal business hours. One said, "I didn't know

there was so much behind the scenes.” Other front-line leaders saw little difference in the instruments of being a leader compared with those of not being a leader, saying, “Other than payroll or time sheets, we all have the same access. Nothing at CPGC is a government secret.” Another spoke specifically about pay, saying, “. . . the paycheck isn’t necessarily one of the draws. Especially from the older group who’s been here a while would say don’t do it [meaning seek a leader role] because you can make more money where you are.”

Perhaps not surprisingly, associating formal authority with being a leader at CPGC is moderately positively correlated with perceiving that having a certain position or job title within CPGC is part of being a leader, $r(24) = .40, p = .04$. Associating formal authority with being a leader at CPGC is also moderately positively correlated with how many years an individual has been a front-line leader in CPGC (or related businesses), $r(24) = .36, p = .07$. So the more a front-line leader associates instrumental awards with being a CPGC leader, the more she or he believes that leadership comes from a title, and the longer she or he has worked as a front-line leader for CPGC.

Interpersonal awards.

Generally, front-line leaders associated interpersonal awards (like informal organizational influence) with being a leader at CPGC at moderate levels ($M = 3.7, SD = .7$). Sixty-five percent of front-line leaders reported a ranking of 4 or higher, but the remaining 35% reported a rating of 3 or less. One front-line leader described leveraging her organizational influence to convince another hiring manager to interview someone she knew for a job with CPGC. Another talked about how “cool” it was to be able to sit across the table from T. and other executive leaders, saying, “It’s fulfilling to know that our SVPs know who I am.” No qualitative data from the interviews illustrated the view that interpersonal awards are not part of being a CPGC leader.

Image awards.

There was consistency between quantitative and qualitative data that, generally, front-line leaders reported being a leader at CPGC as being looked upon favorably by others ($M = 4.1, SD = .7$). Eighty-five percent of front-line leaders reported a rating of 4 or higher. One front-line leader said, “People think of you differently, in a positive way.” Another commented, “I find that if you have been a leader [here], especially a successful leader, I don't think you will have a problem getting a job anywhere else if you decided to leave.” This comment is also an example of the number of times I observed that front-line leaders' remarks seemed to drift to the ubiquity of the iconic CPGC brand as a benefit of being a CPGC brand leader (although this would seem to be a benefit for leaders and non-leaders alike).

Given DeRue and Ashford's (2010) premise that the more that individuals perceive these rewards to be associated with leadership, the higher the likelihood that individuals will assert themselves as leaders, CPGC might want to see somewhat higher ratings here (particularly for instrumental and interpersonal awards). A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the extent to which the 26 front-line leaders experience these three constructs. Results showed no statistically significant differences across the extent to which the three items are experienced ($F(2,50) = 2.21, p = 0.12$).

Research Question 4: How clear, visible, and credible were CPGC's front-line leaders' respective assumptions of their roles as front-line leaders?

Because of the social construction of leader identity, the scope of this research question requires input from front-line leaders as well as other individuals who work with those front-line leaders. Because no associates responded to the survey, only front-line leader and direct leader findings will be shared here.

Front-line leaders reported that assumption of front-line leader positions was somewhat clear, visible, and credible ($M = 3.8, SD = .7$) though there was a wide range of variability in responses. This

finding is based on clarity, visibility, and credibility of 1) the announcements of front-line positions, 2) the qualifications, experience, and education required for those positions, and 3) the process by which the positions are filled. Position announcements were moderately clear and visible ($M = 3.5, SD = 1.1$) There were roughly equal numbers of individuals who rated this a 2, a 3, and 4, and a 5—indicating a wide range of perceptions of position announcements. This variability was also seen in front-line leader interviews. One said, “You check on-line for open positions. Don’t know how you could miss it. When I interviewed, the manager and our director were really transparent about what the role would involve.” Others described being asked or encouraged to apply for their leader positions by their then-direct leaders. Still others shared frustration with the posting process, saying they had limited time to monitor open positions. There was a moderate positive correlation between agreeing that front-line leader positions are announced clearly and transparently and agreeing that being a CPGC leader is part of the front-line leader’s self-identity, $r(24) = .44, p = .02$. The qualifications, experience, and education required for front-line leader positions were generally clear and visible ($M = 3.9, SD = .7$) though 23% of front-line leaders rated it a 3 or below. The process for filling open front-line leader positions was seen as credible by most ($M = 3.9, SD = .7$) though 23% rated it a 3 or below. Seeing the process for filling open positions as credible was strongly, positively correlated with seeing one’s role as a CPGC leader as part of one’s self-identity, $r(24) = .72, p < .001$. I conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to examine the extent to which the front-line leaders experienced the three items. Results showed statistically significant differences across perceptions of the three items, ($F(2,50) = 4.79, p = 0.01$) so CPGC may want to begin with mitigation actions by focusing on position announcements given its relatively low absolute mean.

Direct leaders reported that their perceptions of front-line leaders’ assumptions of front-line leader positions are clear, visible, and credible ($M = 3.9, SD = .6$). This finding is based on the same three factors that front-line leaders were asked to consider. Position announcements were moderately clear

and visible. ($M = 3.5, SD = 1.2$). Similar to the responses from front-line leaders, direct leaders reported a wide range of variability in their ratings with 57% rating this construct a 3 or lower. The qualifications, experience, and education required for front-line leader positions were generally clear and visible ($M = 3.9, SD = .8$) though just over a third of direct leaders rated it a 3 or lower. Direct leaders saw the process for filling open front-line leader positions as credible ($M = 4.2, SD = .6$). Ninety-three percent of them rated it a 4 or higher – a sharp contrast to the 77% of front-line leaders who reported the same ratings. I conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to examine the extent to which the direct leaders perceive the three factors. Results showed statistically significant differences across perceptions of the three factors, ($F(2,26) = 3.37, p = .049$), indicating that beginning any improvement actions with position announcements (given its relatively low absolute mean) might make sense.

Comparisons Across Constructs

I conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in the means or averaged means of the constructs that were validated by the inter-item validation process. Results showed a statistically significant difference, ($F(9,225) = 3.31, p < .001$) across them. The three constructs with the lowest means—and therefore perhaps high on CPGC's action plan to impact front-line leader development of leader identities—were interpersonal rewards of being a CPGC leader ($M = 3.7$), experiencing a change in one's professional self since becoming a CPGC front-line leader ($M = 3.8$), and the clarity, visibility, and credibility of becoming a front-line leader ($M = 3.8$).

Additional Qualitative Findings

The interviews revealed three noteworthy themes outside of the direct scope of the research questions that CPGC might find particularly relevant to their understanding of front-line leaders and how those front-line leaders are coming to their understanding of what it means to lead at CPGC: 1) **how**

front-line leaders are learning to lead, 2) **what** front-line leaders are learning from more experienced CPGC leaders, 3) deep affiliation and pride that front-line leaders feel for the CPGC brand.

How front-line leaders learned to lead.

Nearly all front-line leaders who discussed their perceptions of how they learned to lead talked about the importance of learning from other leaders. They could point to specific individuals who had coached and mentored them along the way. Illustrative comments are listed below.

Front-line Leader Comments: How I learned to lead

“I got mentored by really strong plant managers. And a director. I had a lot of help.”

“Once I made it out into the trade, there were three or four days with my DSM. Working with him directly. He showed me his expectations. He inspects what he expects. They paired me up with a peer leader. He’ll probably be my boss one day. He taught me. He’s very efficient. Shadowing him and how he tracks his time and keeps up with what needs to be done. His work routine. I shadowed with him for two weeks. Then running the show on my own with my manager keeping close to make sure things were going smooth. It was a positive transition. Can’t complain about anything. My personal experience about moving into the role was very positive.”

“As far as the training, I trained myself on most things. There wasn’t a training process for new supervisors. I did some ride-alongs with some supervisors. But there was no paper that tells you what to do. I would pair myself up with different supervisors and see what they do, and see what I can take from them.”

What front-line leaders learned from other CPGC leaders.

Perhaps as important as how front-line leaders are learning to lead is understanding specifically what they are learning. What front-line leaders shared about what they learned from others is listed below (specific names have been removed).

Front-line Leader Comments: What I learned about leading

“[Leader A] taught me when to be stern and when not to be. [Leader B] was more collaborative. Always looking for a solution. Anybody that reports up through [Leader C] – a lot of us lead the same way. We’re always looking to help each other.”

“[Leader] has his own style. Intelligent. Always pushing. Looking for an edge to improve. Expects follow-up. If you commit to doing something, you better get it done. Not a gotcha. He’ll

warn you. I think that's important. He's not going to let you fail but also not going to let you not do it. So those are some things I learned from each of [leaders]."

"Sometimes, I'm way too quick to do the next thing. If there's a problem with another plant, I pick up the phone and call them. [He] taught me sometimes, it's better to sit back and look where the cards are going to fall before making a decision."

"I believe in [leader] wholeheartedly. He lets us lead. If we make a mistake, we regroup, and he collaborates with us. [There's n]o *you're going to lose your job* for a mistake. Frees me to be a good leader and make good decisions for the factory. I would rather learn from a mistake and feel supported if I screw up than be threatened with my job because things didn't go perfectly. That's different here than other places. Ok to be human. Be transparent."

"Never met a leader who is as strategic, as understanding. . . gets the business, knows how to do my job. I feel like he's approachable. He comes to the factory. He gets it. He talks to the frontline team. Asks what they need. Tries to get some stuff for them. Uses his conversations with the team for his decisions. We need more leaders like him so everyone feels like they're part of the team."

"[Leader A] and [Leader B] have been like a breath of fresh air. They truly will sit down and have conversation with you. They want to know what you think, your thoughts. It's been such a breath of fresh air. The leadership we have at CPGC –it's got that old family-run business feeling. Your thoughts and opinions and the support they give you."

"Good listeners and actually helped me see the big picture. Not so much why what we were doing at that time was so important but what that meant and what it led to in the overall scheme of things. I think that was one of the most impressive things is the people that could articulate and help you see the big picture for yourself."

"One thing I learned from him. He always has a back-up plan. Thinks ahead. Knows his team."

Passion for CPGC and the CPGC Brand.

Front-line leaders' passion for the CPGC brand in particular and CPGC by extension were evident in their comments as shown below.

Front-line Leader Comments: Passion for the brand

"You work for the greatest product in the world. You want to work for number one."

"I pulled out my business card, and they saw the . . . logo. It's the icon. It's recognized around the world. You're part of something that's known around the world."

"I'm passionate about our company, and I want to see it succeed."

Discussion

This study started with CPGC's concerns about whether its front-line leaders were embracing their role as leaders for the organization and the extent to which they had made the mental shift from an individual contributor to a leader. They had garnered the title of leader—many of them relatively recently—but had they claimed leader identity? This is the fifth and final research question. Findings for the first four research questions of this study will inform a discussion of this question. Following my simplified narrative of DeRue and Ashford's theory about leader identity construction, findings from the first four research questions indicate:

- Strong levels of self-identification as a leader,
- Moderate levels of the antecedents required for front-line leaders to assert themselves as leaders, and
- Moderate levels of the conditions that make it more likely that front-line leaders will actually assert their leadership.

Most front-line leaders claimed leader identity. Most achieved the three components of claiming a leader identity – individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement. They either brought that sense of self with them to their roles or developed it after assuming the role, many with the help and support of their peers and direct leaders. They felt strongly about the relationships they have with their teams, many calling their team their second family. Front-line leaders saw one another as leaders as did their direct leaders, in some cases, even before the front-line leader recognized her- or himself as a leader. That said, while it appears that front-line leaders did indeed claim leadership as part of their identity, the conditions that would propel them to assert that leadership fully are not as strong as they could be for many front-line leaders. In many cases (e.g., consistency between implicit beliefs about leading, instrumental rewards, and interpersonal rewards)

there were large minorities who reported low levels of the presence of these constructs. The experience of these large minorities seems to be consistent with L.'s early observations about front-line leaders not fully owning their leadership.

Participation levels in this study were lower than hoped and one should be very cautious about broad generalizations of the findings. That said, the data we do have is consistent with DeRue and Ashford's (2010) theory of how leader-identity is constructed and the underlying reasons for what L. is observing. DeRue and Ashford's work does not discount the cognitive aspects of leading but recognizes the importance of social connection as being equally necessary. We see this with CPGC's front-line leaders as they described not only the cognitive requirements of the job (e.g., learning processes and policies) but also the deep and important connections they have with their teams, peers, and direct leaders as keys to their effectiveness as leaders. Another aspect of DeRue and Ashford's theory we see here is the idea that the social construction of leader identity starts with self, moves to pairs and small groups, and eventually reaches organizational endorsement with repeated cycles of asserting and granting leadership. Front-line leaders' narratives followed this pattern—I proved myself with my team first, others started coming to me for direction, I moved into a supervisory role, I gained more visibility with other leaders, more senior leaders trusted my judgement, and I gained influence with my part of the organization.

It must be noted that the glaring absence of participation from associates likely says something about whether front-line leaders are asserting leadership and whether that leadership is being recognized by associates, at least in the context of the survey. This phenomenon begs several relevant questions: Did front-line leaders read and follow through on the communications they received in which they were asked to encourage their teams to complete the survey? If so, how is it that not a single associate participated as requested? If not, why? Is it possible that front-line leaders chose not to

ask their teams to complete the survey? Could fear of negative responses have affected this decision? What does this say about front-line leaders and their relationships with their associates?

According to DeRue and Ashford's theory, CPGC's front-line leaders face at least three important headwinds.

Clarity of what the CPGC front-line leader role looks like.

The more that front-line leaders claimed the CPGC leader role as a part of who they are, the less their professional selves changed. This could be an indication that there is no easily discernable definition or profile of a CPGC front-line leader and therefore no clear standard to attempt to follow. The absence of a codified onboarding process for new front-line leaders and their resulting realization that their mastery of leading well will be self-driven and peer-dependent could exacerbate this effect. In absence of a clear development plan, many front-line leaders are teaching themselves or doing their best to learn from one another, which makes the outcomes of this process only as good as their ability to assess what is worth learning and finding the right person from whom to learn. On the upside, no front-line leaders indicated that they had not been able to find the knowledge and resources that they needed. Most front-line leaders seemed to enjoy a sense of camaraderie and community and had a level of confidence that, with some work (maybe a lot of work), they can find what they need to be successful. To be sure, there are some front-line leaders who have been happy with their onboarding experience. CPGC's opportunity is to be sure that **all** front-line leaders enjoy an effective onboarding experience.

Rewards of being a front-line leader.

Front-line leaders described their work as demanding—long hours, constant problem-solving, finding and sometimes providing coverage for unfilled positions, and managing the needs of their teams. At least some of that work isn't what front-line leaders would have expected. Add to that a perception that the rewards for that hard work aren't perceived to be as strong as they could be and a sentiment

that company policies and procedures could do more to enable them to do their jobs well, and it could be that front-line leaders do not see fully asserting their leadership as being worth the effort.

Clarity, visibility, and credibility of becoming a front-line leader.

The process by which one becomes a front-line leader wasn't as clear, visible, and credible as it could be. In particular, while the on-line posting process is **available** to all, it is not routinely **accessed** by all, nor is it necessarily the primary way that all interested candidates learned about opportunities. In some work groups (e.g., functions, facilities, locations, etc.), openings are announced and cascaded down the organization. In others, it is up to the individual to monitor postings on her or his own. In other cases, individuals are approached by their direct leaders and encouraged to apply for leader roles (which may replace self-monitoring of on-line postings altogether as a means of becoming aware of open positions). One can see how this variability could erode the credibility of the process by which these assertions of leadership are made and responded to, if they happen at all. According to DeRue and Ashford, this would limit the extent to which front-line leaders assert their leadership. It is ultimately the repeated assertions (and granting) of leadership that accumulate over time that add up to seeing oneself as and being seen as a leader. If the way in which those assertions (and granting) happen is unclear or inconsistent across the organization (in the context of asserting interest in being a front-line leader), we would expect a negative impact on repeated assertions of leadership. The moderately strong and positive correlations of the clarity, visibility, and credibility of becoming a front-line leader with claiming being a CPGC leader as part of one's identity seem to support this idea.

Though the research questions were specifically grounded in DeRue and Ashford's work, we can also see evidence of Ibarra's (1999) provisional selves theory. Many front-line leaders described learning from and modeling behaviors, best practices, and lessons learned from their direct leaders and other mentors and coaches along the way.

Recommendations

DeRue and Ashford (2010) posit that the underlying dynamics of leader identity construction are not static and can change over time, meaning CPGC has an opportunity to address the issues that may be negatively affecting front-line leaders' assertion of leadership and construction of a leader identity. CPGC should consider the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Continue the study.

It is important to hear from as many voices as possible to bolster the reliability and generalizability of the findings of the study (Babbie, 2017). To achieve this, CPGC should include all front-line leaders, direct leaders, and associates in the survey rather than a sample of each population. It is particularly concerning that no associates participated in the survey. CPGC should seek to understand why (see Limitations). There were technical challenges with the administration of the survey (see Limitations). CPGC should shift to a more reliable survey tool and ensure confidentiality of individual survey responses. It will be necessary to assure the in-scope population that the appropriate steps have been taken to protect the confidentiality of all responses.

Recommendation 2: Pilot front-line leader communities of practice.

One of the lowest rated constructs of the study was whether front-line leaders see their professional selves differently since becoming a CPGC front-line leader. Simultaneously, the current onboarding process for new front-line leaders varied greatly. There seemed to be no codified onboarding process for new front-line leaders; rather, many are onboarding themselves with help from their peer networks. The process was not what many front-line leaders seem to expect and left their learning paths somewhat unscripted and left to chance. That said, this organic learning process is not necessarily bad. In fact, it appears to be consistent with a school of thought about how many of us learn, which is through participation in communities of practice (CoP; Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Communities of practice are made up of practitioners who, over time, develop collectively understood expectations and norms of behavior, performance, and knowledge. Newer participants learn from the older participants by watching what they do, practicing, getting feedback, and adding increasingly challenging activities of the job to their repertoires over time. Many of CPGC's front-line leaders have, on their own, pieced together a loosely structured CoP. CPGC should pilot a program to more intentionally support this CoP while taking care not to overengineer its creation as much of the effectiveness of CoPs seems to be to invite participation, not require it (Wenger, 2002). A set of "principles for cultivating communities of practice" created by Wenger appears in Appendix H – Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice. Depending on the success of the front-line leader CoP pilot, CPGC should then expand CoPs as a recognized way of onboarding new front-line leaders and developing existing ones. Communities of practice for learning how to lead can be combined with centrally delivered onboarding for education on the tools to lead and manage (such as how to approve a timesheet).

Depending on their function and location, front-line leaders may have limited predictable facetime with one another and with their teams. Given the social aspect of socially constructed leader-identity, having a space or forum in which to interact—not just in one-off pairs, but in larger work teams and groups—is important. The activity of CoPs should be clear, visible, and credible—all of which DeRue and Ashford see as leader assertion multipliers. Simultaneously, the space itself provides the social connections needed for leader self-identity construction work to occur. Participation need not be in-person so long as it is transparent to all attendees. Whatever their form, CoP connections should include two things – personalization and contextualization (Ibarra et al., 2014). Personalization allows participants to step back and examine their journey of learning to lead, which helps them incorporate their personal identities with their leader identity. Contextualization allows participants to step back

and examine the context around them and its specific narrative of what leading is. The CoPs could also have these additional benefits:

- Signaling to new (and perhaps existing) front-line leaders that taking on this role may require or result in a shift in how they see themselves,
- Increasing organization-wide transparency on what the front-line leader role looks like in context, and
- Enabling more realistic discernment of consistency between front-line leaders' implicit beliefs about leading and the explicit reality of the role.

Communities of practice have proven effective for other organizations in transition. Paasivaara and Lassenius (2014) state that CoPs have been valuable “. . . when an organization changes from a functional structure to one based on product lines or projects” (p. 1557). In these cases, CoPs have been shown to reconnect employees who worked together closely prior to reorganizations, thus enabling them to continue to share and build relevant knowledge. This benefit would seem to be particularly relevant for CPGC given its go-to-market transition.

Recommendation 3: Affirm assertions of leadership when it happens.

According to DeRue and Ashford, claiming leader identity is not enough. That leadership must be asserted and granted repeatedly over time. This creation of positive spirals of affirmation motivates leaders to seek out opportunities to become even more effective leaders. As such, direct leaders should intentionally affirm and recognize front-line leaders' assertions of leadership – suggesting how to solve an issue, taking the lead on working with a customer, driving a change in process – when they occur. Likewise, front-line leaders should affirm one another's leader assertions—offering a good idea or bringing teams together to solve an issue.

Recommendation 4: Understand how front-line leaders perceive the rewards of being a leader.

The data indicate that front-line leaders may not perceive the rewards of being a leader strongly or positively enough to spur them to assert their leadership. In fact, perceptions of interpersonal rewards was the construct with the lowest mean rating across the study. CPGC should seek to understand more about this as this study did not provide sufficient data to fully explain the front-line leaders' perceptions of whether those awards are sufficient. Their interviews hinted that pay and challenging HR processes may be detracting from the attractiveness of the front-line leader role. To be sure, connection to the CPGC brand is highly valued by front-line leaders; however, CPGC should take care not to over-rely on association with the brand as a sufficient reward for leaders to assert leadership.

Recommendation 5: Revisit the existing posting and selection process for filling open front-line leader positions.

CPGC should look for ways to make the posting process more transparent and accessible, and more consistently so in both regards. This construct was the lowest rated across the clear / visible / credible triad. In terms of the selection process, there are steps that CPGC can take. CPGC should:

- Seek to discern candidates' assumptions and ideas about leading throughout the hiring process and about their perceptions of the awards of being a leader.
- Incorporate probing questions into interviews.
- Ask the candidate's current direct leader (if she or he is an internal candidate) her or his impressions about the candidate's assumptions and ideas about leading and their past behavior in terms of asserting leadership and how it was received by others.

Limitations

A number of limitations must be acknowledged as a caution against drawing definitive conclusions from this study.

Effects of COVID-19

The study was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic, the response to which was obviously CPGC's first priority. Release of the survey was delayed multiple times as CPGC worked through the business effects of the pandemic. Travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders prevented me from being on-site at any CPGC facility to conduct face-to-face interviews, observe front-line leaders in person, and see their operations in action. This made it necessary to rely more heavily on front-line leaders' self-assessments of their leadership, assertions of leadership, etc. rather than making my own direct observations. CPGC began using surveys to monitor the health of their workforce (e.g., self-reporting of temperature and symptoms) which may have led to survey fatigue. The pandemic may have had some impact on the response rate though it is hard to imagine it as the reason that no associates participated in the survey.

Technical Issues with Survey Administration

Near the end of the original survey close date, the CPGC survey administrator advised me that a few direct leaders had alerted him that they could not access the survey. In addition, it was discovered that the survey link that had been emailed to direct leaders inadvertently linked direct leaders to the survey responses rather than to the survey questions, which enabled direct leaders to see others' responses. While the survey administrator corrected the issue immediately, this breach in the confidentiality of survey responses may have become known widely enough to discourage participation.

Associate Access to the Survey

While some of CPGC's associates have company-provided smart devices, many do not. In addition, many associates' jobs responsibilities do not require them to access email on a regular basis. Both of these conditions might have hampered awareness of the opportunity to participate in the survey. CPGC's decision to survey a sample of employees rather than the total population might have exacerbated the situation because it discouraged use of the most obvious alternative for electronic distribution of the surveys – distribution of paper-based surveys. Had CPGC chosen to survey all employees, surveys could have been handed out and collected at existing routine meetings for those without smart devices. While K. did eventually release the survey via text message to those individuals with company-provided mobile devices, those without devices would not have benefited from this action.

Low Response Rate

Whatever the cause, the low survey response rate from front-line leaders and direct leaders and complete lack of participation from associates is a strong caution against broad generalizations of the findings of the study. The low response rate also made it inadvisable to slice the findings by location or function (which CPGC had requested) and by sex or race. As it became apparent that we were not hearing from associates, I began asking front-line leaders who volunteered to sit for interviews with me about their thoughts on why associates may not have participated. One wondered if perhaps associates did not believe their input would be valued or if there was apprehension about participating. Another said that he had made his team aware of the survey and was disappointed that they had not participated. Of course, it is possible that front-line leaders might have been concerned about what associates had to share and might have chosen not to encourage their associates to participate.

Conclusion

This study provides an opportunity to make meaningful progress in understanding how to support and enable existing front-line leaders as they continue to build their leader identities and step into the responsibilities of running the operations of such a dynamic business. Most of CPGC's front-line leaders have developed a leader identity – a noteworthy and important achievement. However, many front-line leaders have not yet taken the additional step of leaning into and asserting that identity. Interestingly, the study's findings are consistent with L.'s original observations about the importance of developing a leader mindset. CPGC's decision to partner on this study is a clear illustration of its commitment to investing in front-line leaders. It is this commitment that will propel CPGC on its journey of developing the next generation of leaders for the business.

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Appendix A – Associate Total Population and Sample by Location and Function

| Location | Equipment Services | | | Fleet | | | Production | | | Sales | | | WH/Distribution | | | TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------|---------------|----|--------|---|------|
| | Total | | Sample | Total | | Sample | Total | | Sample | Total | | Sample | Total | | Sample | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | 2 | 7.1% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | | | | | 25 | 89.3% | 6 | 3.0% | 1 | 3.6% | 1 | 0.5% | 28 | 100.0% | 8 | 1.6% |
| B | 21 | 6.1% | 5 | 11.4% | 9 | 2.6% | 2 | 12.5% | 46 | 13.5% | 12 | 21.1% | 111 | 32.5% | 29 | 14.4% | 155 | 45.3% | 40 | 21.6% | 342 | 100.0% | 88 | 17.5% | | | | |
| C | 7 | 19.4% | 2 | 4.5% | 1 | 2.8% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 27 | 75.0% | 7 | 3.5% | 1 | 2.8% | 1 | 0.5% | 36 | 100.0% | 11 | 2.2% | | | | |
| D | 25 | 18.9% | 6 | 13.6% | 2 | 1.5% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 62 | 47.0% | 16 | 8.0% | 43 | 32.6% | 11 | 5.9% | 132 | 100.0% | 34 | 6.8% | | | | |
| E | 9 | 24.3% | 2 | 4.5% | | | | | | | | | 6 | 16.2% | 2 | 1.0% | 22 | 59.5% | 6 | 3.2% | 37 | 100.0% | 10 | 2.0% | | | | |
| F | | | | | | | | | | | | | 32 | 57.1% | 8 | 4.0% | 24 | 42.9% | 6 | 3.2% | 56 | 100.0% | 14 | 2.8% | | | | |
| G | 8 | 3.3% | 2 | 4.5% | 5 | 2.1% | 1 | 6.3% | 50 | 20.8% | 13 | 22.8% | 76 | 31.7% | 20 | 10.0% | 101 | 42.1% | 26 | 14.1% | 240 | 100.0% | 62 | 12.3% | | | | |
| H | | | | | 2 | 2.9% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 38 | 55.9% | 10 | 5.0% | 28 | 41.2% | 7 | 3.8% | 68 | 100.0% | 18 | 3.6% | | | | |
| I | 10 | 11.4% | 3 | 6.8% | 3 | 3.4% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 57 | 64.8% | 14 | 7.0% | 18 | 20.5% | 5 | 2.7% | 88 | 100.0% | 23 | 4.6% | | | | |
| J | | | | | | | | | | | | | 24 | 100.0% | 6 | 3.0% | | | | | 24 | 100.0% | 6 | 1.2% | | | | |
| K | 34 | 10.9% | 9 | 20.5% | 10 | 3.2% | 3 | 18.8% | 60 | 19.2% | 15 | 26.3% | 98 | 31.4% | 25 | 12.4% | 110 | 35.3% | 28 | 15.1% | 312 | 100.0% | 80 | 15.9% | | | | |
| L | 15 | 14.6% | 4 | 9.1% | 2 | 1.9% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 59 | 57.3% | 15 | 7.5% | 27 | 26.2% | 7 | 3.8% | 103 | 100.0% | 27 | 5.4% | | | | |
| M | 7 | 8.9% | 2 | 4.5% | 2 | 2.5% | 1 | 6.3% | | | | | 30 | 38.0% | 8 | 4.0% | 40 | 50.6% | 10 | 5.4% | 79 | 100.0% | 21 | 4.2% | | | | |
| N | | | | | | | | | | | | | 12 | 100.0% | 3 | 1.5% | | | | | 12 | 100.0% | 3 | 0.6% | | | | |
| O | | | | | | | | | | | | | 16 | 43.2% | 4 | 2.0% | 21 | 56.8% | 5 | 2.7% | 37 | 100.0% | 9 | 1.8% | | | | |
| P | | | | | | | | | | | | | 43 | 100.0% | 11 | 5.5% | | | | | 43 | 100.0% | 11 | 2.2% | | | | |
| Q | 30 | 10.8% | 8 | 18.2% | 11 | 3.9% | 3 | 18.8% | 66 | 23.7% | 17 | 29.8% | 50 | 17.9% | 13 | 6.5% | 122 | 43.7% | 31 | 16.8% | 279 | 100.0% | 72 | 14.3% | | | | |
| R | 4 | 15.4% | 1 | 2.3% | | | | | | | | | 17 | 65.4% | 4 | 2.0% | 5 | 19.2% | 1 | 0.5% | 26 | 100.0% | 6 | 1.2% | | | | |
| Grand Total | 170 | 8.8% | 44 | 8.7% | 49 | 2.5% | 16 | 3.2% | 222 | 11.4% | 57 | 11.3% | 783 | 40.3% | 201 | 40.0% | 718 | 37.0% | 185 | 36.8% | 1942 | 100.0% | 503 | 100.0% | | | | |

Appendix B – Survey Instrument

Leadership Survey In Partnership with Vanderbilt University

You are invited to voluntarily participate in a survey about leadership at CPGC. Your input is highly valued and will help us understand how individuals develop as leaders. Rest assured that your responses will remain confidential and will be aggregated with summarized. Survey findings will have absolutely no impact on your performance assessment, compensation, or position with CPGC.

In order to maintain the integrity of the data, please do not forward or share this survey. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and if you have questions about the survey, please send an email to the study coordinator.

Leader = I am a supervisor, manager, or equivalent.

Direct Leader = I am the direct leader of at least one manager or equivalent.

Associates = I report directly to a supervisor, and I have no direct reports.

Position Type – Please select:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Leader | <input type="radio"/> |
| Direct Leader | <input type="radio"/> |
| Associates | <input type="radio"/> |

Thank you for participating!

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

| Question | Responses | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | I Don't Know |
| 1. My role as a CPGC leader is part of my self-identity. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 2. My professional or “at work” self has changed since I became a CPGC leader. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 3. My direct reports have recognized me as their leader since I became a leader at CPGC. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 4. Having a relationship with my direct reports in which they recognize me as the leader and themselves as part of my team is part of being a leader at CPGC. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 5. Having a certain position or job title within CPGC is part of being a leader. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 6. I see myself as being leader-like. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |

| Question | Responses | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | I Don't Know |
| 7. I see myself as being part of CPGC's leadership. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 8. The work I'm expected to do in my role aligns to what I believe a leader should do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 9. The way that I spend my time in my role aligns to how I believe a leader should spend her or his time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 10. I am usually able to function in the way that I believe a leader should. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 11. I associate having formal organizational authority (i.e., being recognized as someone whose position or job title entitles her or him to make organizational decisions) with being a leader at CPGC. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 12. I associate having informal organizational influence (i.e., having influence over how things are done without regard to your position or job title) with being a leader at CPGC. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 13. I believe being a leader at CPGC is looked upon favorably by others. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 14. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 15. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at CPGC. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| 16. The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. The process by which CPGC fills supervisor and manger positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Invitation to Participate in Live Discussions

Would you like to participate in a brief one-on-one discussion to share more about your development as a leader? If so, please provide your email address. The discussion will be facilitated by the external researcher that is coordinating this survey. _____

Demographic Questions

Please tell us a little about yourself.

1. How long have you been employed by CPGC?
 - Less than 1 year
 - Between 1 and 3 years
 - Between 4 and 6 years
 - Prefer not to say
2. How long have you been in a supervisory or managerial role [prior to joining CPGC]?
 - Less than 1 year
 - Between 1 and 3 years
 - Between 4 and 6 years
 - 7 or more years
 - Prefer not to say

Appendix C – Interview Protocol

Appendix C
Interview Protocol
Adapted from Ibarra (1999)

1. Tell me about your educational background and when you joined CPGC.
2. Tell me about your job.
3. What does it take to be successful and effective in your current job? How is your performance on the job evaluated?
4. What new responsibilities did moving into a supervisor / manager role entail?
5. Tell me a bit about your career to date. What are the key events of your years at CPGC?
6. Tell me what you see as your strengths and weaknesses. In what ways would your boss say you need to develop? What are you doing to work on the weaknesses?
7. Which people have played a significant role in your professional development? Who has been most helpful to you in learning the ropes?
8. What are your goals as you move forward?

Appendix D – Front-line Leader Achieved Sample by Location and Function

| Front-line Leader Achieved Sample by Location and Function | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Location | Function | | | | | TOTAL |
| | Equipment Services | Fleet | Production | Sales | WH/ Distribution | |
| A | | | | | | |
| B | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | 5 |
| C | | | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| D | | | | | | |
| E | | | | | | |
| F | | | | | | |
| G | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| H | | | | | | |
| I | | | | | | |
| J | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| K | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| L | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| M | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| N | | | | | | |
| O | | | | | | |
| P | | | | 2 | | 2 |
| Q | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| R | | | | | | |
| Grand Total | 3 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 3 | 26 |

Appendix E – Quantitative Data Summary by Survey Question

| Research Questions and Survey Questions | Mean | Standard Deviation | Population |
|--|------|--------------------|------------|
| RQ1: Have Coke Florida's front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement? | | | |
| 1. My role as a Coke Florida leader is part of my self-identity. | 4.0 | 1.06 | FLL |
| 2. My professional or "at work" self has changed since I became a Coke Florida leader. | 3.8 | 0.98 | FLL |
| 3. My direct reports have recognized me as their leader since I became a leader at Coke Florida. | 4.7 | 0.55 | FLL |
| 4. Having a relationship with my direct reports in which they recognize me as the leader and themselves as part of my team is part of being a leader at Coke Florida. | 4.6 | 0.57 | FLL |
| 5. Having a certain position or job title within Coke Florida is part of being a leader. | 3.3 | 1.26 | FLL |
| 6. I see myself as being leader-like. | 4.7 | 0.5 | FLL |
| 7. I see myself as being part of Coke Florida's leadership. | 4.5 | 0.6 | FLL |
| 14. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | 4.1 | 0.7 | FLL |
| 15. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at Coke Florida. | 4.2 | 0.7 | FLL |
| 14. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | 4.2 | 0.4 | DL |
| 15. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at Coke Florida. | 4.1 | 0.5 | DL |
| RQ2: Do Coke Florida's front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership? | | | |
| 8. The work I'm expected to do in my role aligns to what I believe a leader should do. | 3.8 | 0.8 | FLL |
| 9. The way that I spend my time in my role aligns to how I believe a leader should spend her or his time. | 3.8 | 1.0 | FLL |
| 10. I am usually able to function in the way that I believe a leader should. | 4.1 | 0.8 | FLL |
| RQ3: Do Coke Florida's FLLs perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader? | | | |
| 11. I associate having formal organizational authority (i.e., being recognized as someone whose position or job title entitles her or him to make organizational decisions) with being a leader at Coke Florida. | 3.9 | 0.9 | FLL |
| 12. I associate having informal organizational influence (i.e., having influence over how things are done without regard to your position or job title) with being a leader at Coke Florida. | 3.7 | 0.7 | FLL |
| 13. I believe being a leader at Coke Florida is looked upon favorably by others. | 4.1 | 0.7 | FLL |
| RQ4: How clear, visible, and credible were Coke Florida's FLLs' respective assumptions of their roles as FLLs? | | | |
| 16. The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | 3.5 | 1.1 | FLL |
| 17. The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | 3.9 | 0.7 | FLL |
| 18. The process by which Coke Florida fills supervisor and manger positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | 3.9 | 0.7 | FLL |
| 16. The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | 3.5 | 1.2 | DL |
| 17. The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | 3.9 | 0.8 | DL |
| 18. The process by which Coke Florida fills supervisor and manger positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | 4.2 | 0.6 | DL |

Appendix F – Survey Question Validation

Inter-Item Consistency Using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient Analyses

| Correlation Analyses for Inter-Item Consistency | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Research Question and Associated Survey Questions | Correlation Coefficient (<i>r</i>) | Outcome |
| RQ1: Have CPGC's front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement? | | |
| Individual Internalization | | |
| SQ1 & SQ2 | -0.27 | Weak, negative |
| Relational Recognition (Average) | 0.63 | Strong, positive |
| SQ3 & SQ4 | 0.88 | |
| SQ4 & SQ5 | 0.51 | |
| SQ3 & SQ5 | 0.49 | |
| Collective Endorsement - Self | | |
| SQ6 & SQ7 | 0.31 | Strong, positive* |
| Collective Endorsement - Others | | |
| SQ14 & SQ15 - FLLs | 0.90 | Strong, positive |
| SQ14 & SQ15 - DLs | 0.53 | Strong, positive** |
| RQ2: Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership? | | |
| Average | 0.62 | Strong, positive |
| SQ8 & SQ9 | 0.75 | |
| SQ9 & SQ10 | 0.64 | |
| SQ8 & SQ10 | 0.47 | |
| RQ3: Do CPGC's front-line leaders perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards with being a leader? | | |
| Average | 0.22 | Weak, positive |
| SQ11 & SQ12 | 0.46 | |
| SQ12 & SQ13 | 0.24 | |
| SQ11 & SQ13 | -0.05 | |
| RQ4: How clear, visible, and credible were CPGC's front-line leaders' respective assumptions of their roles as front-line leaders? | | |
| Average - FLLs | 0.63 | Strong, positive |
| SQ16 & SQ17 | 0.63 | |
| SQ17 & SQ18 | 0.78 | |
| SQ16 & SQ18 | 0.49 | |
| Average - DLs | 0.26 | Weak, positive |
| SQ16 & SQ17 | 0.60 | |
| SQ17 & SQ18 | -0.10 | |
| SQ16 & SQ18 | 0.29 | |

*Despite the moderate correlation coefficient, $r = 0.31$, for SQ6 and SQ7, responses to the two survey questions are internally consistent. All survey responses to both survey questions were either Strongly Agree (numericized to a value of 5) or Agree (numericized value of 4) with one exception of Neutral (numericized value of 3). Therefore, there was insufficient variability in the responses for the correlation to be detected.

**Similarly, the correlation of SQ14 and SQ15 for direct leaders are likely higher than the correlation coefficient, $r = .53$, would indicate given the low level of variability in survey question responses.

Appendix G – Quantitative Data Summary by Construct

| Constructs | | Construct Mean | Construct Standard Deviation | Population |
|---|--|----------------|------------------------------|------------|
| RQ1: Have Coke Florida's front-line leaders achieved individual internalization, relational recognition, and collective endorsement? | | | | |
| Self-identity | 1. My role as a Coke Florida leader is part of my self-identity. | 4.0 | 1.1 | FLL |
| Change in self-identity | 2. My professional or "at work" self has changed since I became a Coke Florida leader. | 3.8 | 1.0 | FLL |
| Relational Recognition | 3. My direct reports have recognized me as their leader since I became a leader at Coke Florida. | 4.2 | 0.7 | FLL |
| | 4. Having a relationship with my direct reports in which they recognize me as the leader and themselves as part of my team is part of being a leader at Coke Florida. | | | FLL |
| | 5. Having a certain position or job title within Coke Florida is part of being a leader. | | | FLL |
| Collective Endorsement (Self) | 6. I see myself as being leader-like. | 4.6 | 0.4 | FLL |
| | 7. I see myself as being part of Coke Florida's leadership. | | | FLL |
| Collective Endorsement (Others) | 14. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | 4.1 | 0.7 | FLL |
| | 15. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at Coke Florida. | | | FLL |
| | 14. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leader-like. | 4.2 | 0.4 | DL |
| | 15. I see the supervisors and managers with whom I work most closely as being leaders at Coke Florida. | | | DL |
| RQ2: Do Coke Florida's front-line leaders perceive consistency between themselves and their implicit beliefs about leadership? | | | | |
| Consistency | 8. The work I'm expected to do in my role aligns to what I believe a leader should do. | 3.9 | 0.8 | FLL |
| | 9. The way that I spend my time in my role aligns to how I believe a leader should spend her or his time. | | | FLL |
| | 10. I am usually able to function in the way that I believe a leader should. | | | FLL |
| RQ3: Do Coke Florida's FLLs perceive that instrumental, interpersonal, and image awards are associated with being a leader? | | | | |
| Instrumental Awards | 11. I associate having formal organizational authority (i.e., being recognized as someone whose position or job title entitles her or him to make organizational decisions) with being a leader at Coke Florida. | 3.9 | 0.9 | FLL |
| Interpersonal Awards | 12. I associate having informal organizational influence (i.e., having influence over how things are done without regard to your position or job title) with being a leader at Coke Florida. | 3.7 | 0.7 | FLL |
| Image Awards | 13. I believe being a leader at Coke Florida is looked upon favorably by others. | 4.1 | 0.7 | FLL |
| RQ4: How clear, visible, and credible were Coke Florida's FLLs' respective assumptions of their roles as FLLs? | | | | |
| Visibility - Self | 16. The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | 3.8 | 0.7 | FLL |
| | 17. The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | | | FLL |
| | 18. The process by which Coke Florida fills supervisor and manager positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | | | FLL |
| Visibility - Others | 16. The announcement of the availability of supervisor and manager positions is usually clear and transparent. | 3.9 | 0.6 | DL |
| | 17. The qualifications, experience, and education required for supervisor and manager positions are usually clear and transparent. | | | DL |
| | 18. The process by which Coke Florida fills supervisor and manager positions is credible (i.e., based on merit, transparent, fair, and aligned to company policy). | | | DL |

Appendix H – Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice From Wenger, 2002

| CoP Cultivation Principle | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Design for evolution. | Expect the community to grow and evolve on its own. |
| Open a dialog between inside and outside perspectives | Help the community members understand what the community could achieve |
| Invite different levels of participation | Allow for different activity levels and motivations of participant, e.g. coordinators, core, active and peripheral members, as well as external interest groups |
| Develop both public and private community spaces | Both “formal” meetings, as well as one-on-one networking is needed |
| Focus on value | Encourage members to be explicit about the value of the community; let value emerge, do not try to design it by force |
| Combine familiarity and excitement | Have a “routine” program, but also include novel experiences, e.g. invited speakers |
| Create a rhythm for the community | Find a suitable rhythm for the regular meetings |