

TITLE: Perceived Leadership Practices and Organizational Commitment in the North American Automobile Industry

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of perceived leadership practices on employee organizational commitment in the product engineering segment of the North American automobile industry.

METHODOLOGY: Surveys were distributed to 170 employees in various engineering departments of a major North American automobile manufacturer, of which 127 were usable (75%). In addition to the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer form about their supervisor, participants supplied demographic information and completed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979). The majority of respondents were regular salaried employees (90%) in a staff or central support role (79%). Seventy-two percent of the respondents were men, the majority between 40 and 59 years of age (63%), and nearly 80% had a college or graduate degree.

KEY FINDINGS: There was a statistically significant relationship between organizational commitment and each of the five leadership practices. However, gender was a moderating variable in this relationship; with significant correlations for males but not for females found. There was a significant correlation between all five leadership practices and the commitment of respondents who are in a support role but not for those with direct product responsibility.

These findings, suggest the researcher, “continued development, by industry leaders, of the five dimensions of leadership practice will result in improved employee commitment to the organization with potential benefits in performance and turnover” (pp. 70-71). Although the researcher goes on to argue that these leadership practices “do not appear sufficient to assure high levels of employee commitment to the organization” (p. 72).