Managing the Multiple Audience Problem at Work:

The Mediational Effect of Self-Presentational Success on Leader Trust

Trust in leadership reliably predicts some of the most important organizational outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment). However, researchers have placed less emphasis on the precedents of trust. In addition, explicit research on leader impression management has been scarce and confined. To remedy this, I present a model that incorporates impression management into the study of leadership. The Impression Management Model of Leadership suggests certain personality and situational factors affect a leader’s self-presentational success and this success influences various leadership outcomes (e.g., trust). These leadership outcomes then predict important organizational outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction). Stemming from the model, the current study focuses on the relationship between authentic leadership and trust and explores various mediators and moderators of this relationship. Specifically, I consider leadership within the context of the multiple audience problem to explain why and when authentic and nonauthentic leaders gain or lose trust. Ultimately, findings from this study should provide a clearer picture of authentic leadership and demonstrate the importance of training leaders to successfully manage their impressions.