Who's Ready?

Identifying Leaders Who are Ready to Develop

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Topics

- Background

- Developmental Readiness Construct

- Measure Development – An Evolution

- Next Steps

- Future Research

- References

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Background

- HumRRO is under contract to conduct a comprehensive, longitudinal evaluation of a 2-year senior leader development program

- Examples of program elements include:
  - Seminars in national and global security issues
  - Executive coaching
  - Attendance at a Professional Military Education (PME) school
  - Developmental activities

- The program director asked: "How can I tell who is serious about, and ready for, leader development?"

Background (Continued)

- Current thinking and research suggests that personal growth and development are integral to leader development (see Day et al., 2009)

- Given an environment of constant change, ongoing growth and development are key to leader success

- Developmental readiness is a multidimensional construct
  - Attempts to characterize one's readiness for personal growth and development
  - Defined as the ability and motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and incorporate new knowledge into one's long-term memory structures (Avolio and Hannah, 2008)

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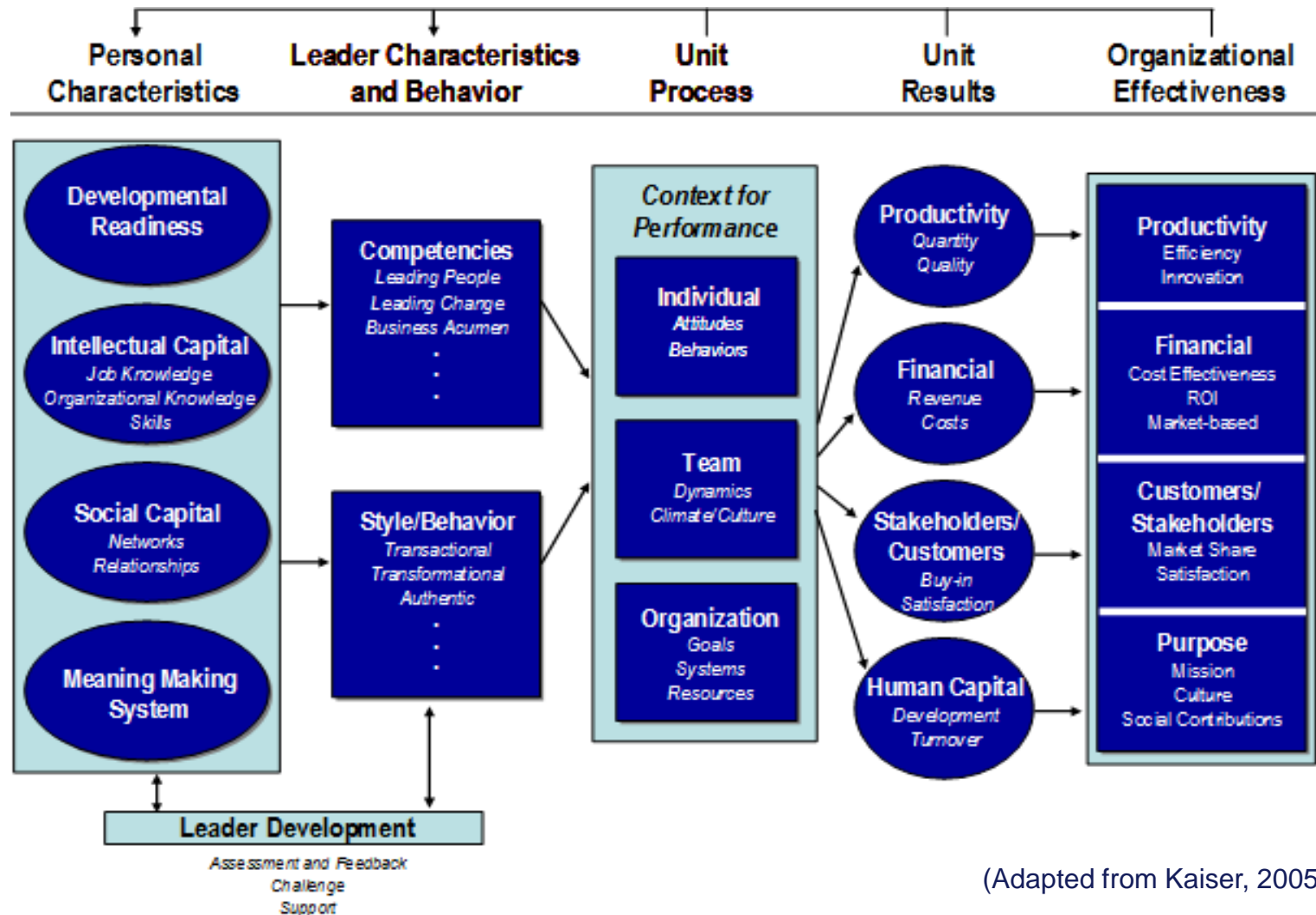
(Adapted from Kaiser, 2005)

Developmental Readiness Construct

- **Learning Goal Orientation** – welcome challenge and strive to master them; view feedback and failures as opportunities to learn and improve.

- **Developmental Self-efficacy** – pursue developmental challenges and exert increased effort in the face of challenges. Helps with both acquiring and using new competence.

- **Self-concept clarity** – beliefs about self are clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable over time. Enables realistic assessments of one's own capacity to deal with specific challenges.

- **Self-complexity** – recognition of multiple facets of the self. More complex leaders can attend to a greater variety of their experiences.

- **Metacognitive ability** – ability to observe one's own thinking. Leads to learning during challenging situations that can be utilized in the face of future challenges.

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Measure Development – An Evolution

- Self-report
  - Reviewed items from Hannah (2006)
  - Reviewed literature and publicly available scales on facets of developmental readiness (e.g., Button et al., 1996)
  - Re-conceptualized the construct for the purposes of the self-report instrument
    - Eliminated self-concept clarity and self-complexity due to item format
    - Added emotional intelligence to metacognitive ability
  - Developed new items
  - Resulted in a 32-item measure

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Measure Development – An Evolution (Cont.)

- Significant limitation to self-report measure is social desirability of the items, for example

  - I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things

  - The opportunity to learn new things is important to me

  - The opportunity to do challenging work is important to me

- We expected no variance in responses among participants in a senior leader development program

Measure Development – An Evolution (Cont.)

- ## Situational Judgment Test
  - Began developing a single-response SJT (Motowidlo, Crook, Kell, & Naemi, 2009)

  - Used critical incidents collected from program graduates to develop scenarios to measure
    - Self-awareness
    - Learning goal orientation
    - Developmental self-efficacy
    - Emotional intelligence
    - Integrative thinking
    - Motivation to lead

  - Respondent reads the scenario and rates the effectiveness of the response

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Next Steps

- Retranslate scenarios into dimensions

- Finalize response scale

- Conduct SME workshops to determine item effectiveness ratings

- Pilot test the instrument
  - Administer to program participants
  - Collect preliminary data on psychometric properties of items and scales

- Long-term plans
  - Collect data at start of program, after one year, and post-completion
  - Correlate readiness measure with measures of post-program performance

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Future Research

- Other measurement approaches to assess developmental readiness
  - Assessment centers
  - Behavioral checklists
  - Training and Experience Questionnaires
  - Other reports

- Developmental readiness as a predictor and a criterion?
  - Does developmental readiness predict leader development?
  - Do development programs, properly designed, enhance developmental readiness?

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