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Developing a measure for “connectorship” as a component of engaged leadership

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403

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a mixed methods study that explored how active community engaged and connected managers were in their local and broader communities (engaged leadership, EL). The paper specifically investigates an under researched aspect of EL – “connectorship” – with focus on developing a measure for connectorship. The authors present the conceptual framework for EL, followed by the operationalization of “connectorship” construct.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper focusses on developing a measure for connectorship using data from a qualitative study of 18 senior managers followed by a survey of 458 managers in Canada.

Findings – Content analyses of qualitative data led to the generation of 93 items measuring connectorship. Based on these items, quantitative analyses of survey data from 453 respondents yielded a final measure of connectorship, which consisted of 28 items explored under eight dimensions.

Research limitations/implications – An organization’s emphasis on connectedness and engagement of leaders will improve knowledge sharing and better mutual understanding of organizational issues among managers. It will also help attain employment stability and decrease hiring and related costs by reducing turnover. Future research, specifically longitudinal studies of leaders at various organizational levels, could incorporate connectorship as a key criterion for leadership effectiveness.

Practical implications – The focus on connectorship skills implies that in organizations the emphasis should go beyond traditional leadership skills development and included the neglected connectorship skills development. Increased connectedness and engagement among leaders will have positive performance implications.

Social implications – For effective corporate citizenship, the EL framework and a focus on connectorship would help leaders better understand the importance of social networks, be aware of their own network, and improve their skills in connecting the people within their networks.



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Originality/value – Using a variable centered approach within the framework of EL the paper contributes to leadership literature by conceptually defining connectorship developing a measure for this construct and testing its psychometric properties.

Keywords Social capital, Community, Leadership, Measurement, Networking, Scale development, Connectorship, Engaged leadership

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The world today is globally interconnected in ways that could not be imagined a decade ago. People tend to be better connected to others more than at any other time in history. This interconnection invalidates some of the past approaches to business and requires a new set of leadership skills in order to succeed (Adler, 2006; Archer and Cameron, 2009; Friedman, 2005). With this in mind, the purpose of this paper is to share the findings of a study that explores how actively engaged and connected managers from across Canada are in their local and broader communities.

Managing in the twenty-first century assumes increasing expectations that businesses need to be more socially and environmentally aware and responsible toward the broader society in which they operate (Googins *et al.*, 2007). In most cases, this requires firms to re-purpose themselves in relation to their larger role in society. A sole emphasis on profitability is no longer sufficient as a true measure of organizational success.

In this connection, the notion of corporate citizenship has been a focus of attention of researchers and has emerged in the management literature dealing with the social and ethical role of business (Matten and Crane, 2005). It refers to the extent to which businesses are socially responsible for meeting new legal, ethical, social, environmental and economic responsibilities placed on them by shareholders and other stakeholders with the goal to create higher standards of living and performance in the communities where they operate, while still maintaining profitability for the shareholders (Googins *et al.*, 2007). This may include good deeds such as sponsorship of non-profit endeavors, philanthropic contributions, corporate community relations and employee volunteerism (Altman, 1998; Burke, 1999). When corporations engage more in the common good, working to address societal issues becomes an integral part of their business. In return, these corporations enjoy benefits such as increased value creation (e.g. enhanced reputation, trust, employee and customer satisfaction), revenue generation (e.g. customer retention, market and product development) and cost reduction (e.g. better risk management, decreasing waste, employee retention) (Googins *et al.*, 2007; Marsden, 2000).

The role and mindset of the organizational leader is a crucial component of corporate citizenship behavior. Visible and active leadership is considered the number one factor in driving corporate citizenship, as leaders can act as champions and lead their corporations, and even an entire industry, a step further in exemplifying socially responsible business practices/behavior (Googins *et al.*, 2007). Effective corporate citizenship is about engaged leadership (EL), caring and being positively engaged in the community. Engaged leaders, who act as boundary spanners (Tushman, 1977) represent their organization in the community and can facilitate innovation, connections with the broader society, encourage employee commitment and engagement, and in turn develop and nurture productive relationships based on trust and reciprocity (e.g. Fleming and Waguespack, 2007). They can contribute to the performance and effectiveness of the organization, and serve to increase the overall

well-being of individuals, the organization and the larger community (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006; Brass and Krackhardt, 1999; Burt, 2000; Giovagnoli and Stover, 2004; Marsden, 2000; Rezac *et al.*, 2005).

This brings us to the concept of “social capital,” which is about social connectedness, the value of networks and the benefits that accrue both to individuals and the whole society when they become actively engaged in the community. However, despite its increasing importance, the social capital of leaders is an under researched area of study in the literature (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999). Maak (2007) points to the need for more attention to the role of the leader in building social capital, how the leader utilizes his or her network, and the competencies he or she needs to do that. Furthermore, Rezac *et al.* (2005) and Hallgren-Rezac and Rezac (2009) point to the general reluctance of managers to engage with others outside their close circle of contacts; calling this a form of social anxiety or “networking nervosus”. In order to be engaged leaders, leadership skill alone is not sufficient. The capacity to lead, narrowly defined as getting things done through others, needs to be accompanied by a good network and the capacity to connect with that network. EL requires all three dimensions; leadership, connectorship and good networks. This paper focusses on connectorship.

Despite its significance, connectorship or the capacity to connect, is an often overlooked or avoided developmental requirement for managers, limits their effectiveness as leaders, and “[...] is one of the most dreaded developmental challenges aspiring leaders must address” (Ibarra and Hunter, 2007, p. 2). In line with these, we suggest that more research was required on its conceptualization and its managerial implications as an aspect of EL (see also Rezac *et al.*, 2009).

In this paper, we present the findings from a study conducted to address the limited research in this area. Using data from Canadian managers, our work involved a mixed methods study designed to explore and develop a framework for “EL” using data from Canadian managers. The present study specifically investigated a sine qua non and under researched aspect of EL – “connectorship,” with a focus on developing a measure for the construct. This paper presents the conceptual framework of EL, followed by the operationalization and measure development of “connectorship,” with the aim to serve as a starting point for further research on this area of practice.

Background

Social capital and leaders

Social capital in general is about social connectedness, the value of networks and being engaged in the broader community. Putnam (1993) defines social capital as social organizations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits. It acts as a bridge between people and is characterized by high levels of trust, reciprocity, sociability, robust networks, shared understandings that draw individuals into a group (Cohen and Prusak, 2001; Fukuyama, 1995; Maak, 2007; Nyx and Bullen, 2000).

Many studies (e.g. Coleman, 1990; Goleman, 2006) cite the positive impact of social capital. Social capital is a powerful asset for individuals, enterprises and the communities. At the individual level it can enhance the sense of well-being, purpose, trust and life satisfaction.

At the enterprise-level benefits also flow in that it can improve reputation, brand acceptance, customer and employee satisfaction and loyalty, revenues and sustainability (Googins *et al.*, 2007). As a specific example, a study by Hall *et al.* (2007) showed

employees who are positively engaged have higher productivity and less absenteeism than those who are not.

At the community level, it can increase livability, generalized well-being, market performance and economic efficiency and development (Helliwell and Putnam, 2004; Portes, 2000; Putnam, 1993). According to Burt (2000), being connected to others (i.e. trusting and supporting others, exchanging with others) becomes an asset in its own right. Furthermore, in his book *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) discusses the consequences of a society that has lost its desire for building social capital and social connectedness and suggested that social connectedness and social capital are also associated with levels of happiness – or self-assessed well-being – in society (see also Helliwell and Putnam, 2004). Social capital also has positive consequences for the organization (Varella *et al.*, 2005).

Leaders play a vital role in building social capital. Galli and Muller-Stewens (2012) have demonstrated how leadership practices shape the development of social capital in organization. In their review of leadership development literature over the past 25 years Day *et al.* (2014) stated that in contrast “[...] to human capital, which focuses primarily on individual leader attributes (i.e. knowledge, skills and abilities), social capital considers connections and interactions among individuals within a social context” (p. 69). Leaders, through their vision, their actions and their ability to communicate, they can develop social capital and contribute to the performance of their organizations, employees and communities. Brass (2001) defines leadership as the ability to accomplish work through others, bringing the right people together at the right time in order to get the job done. Leaders are embedded within networks of relationships with others (Geletkanycz and Hambrick, 1997) and thus leadership is a relational context, which requires the management of social relationships (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006; Brass and Krackhardt, 1999). The leader’s role is not only to strengthen the network ties between people, but to also encourage other people to strengthen their own ties to others (i.e. stakeholders) in order to develop an inclusive, responsible and active business in society (Maak, 2007). Since leaders operate in a web of relationships with other individuals and groups, they need to interact with the community, rather than be isolated, and perceive the importance of networks that connect people and manage these relationships (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006; Javidan and Dastmalchian, 1993). Their success is dependent on the extent to which they make efficient use of social capital by creating and sustaining mutually satisfactory and trusting relationships with the various groups of stakeholders (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999; Burt, 2000; Javidan and Dastmalchian, 1993). This is also crucial for organizational success, since organizations need deeper and well integrated relationships in order to enable fruitful partnerships (Berman and Korsten, 2014).

Leaders need to possess both human capital and social capital as they contextually complement each other such that human capital represents the individual ability whereas social capital creates opportunity (Burt, 1997, 2000; Hitt and Ireland, 2002). Social capital is a component of having a global mindset; a mindset that leaders must possess in today’s globalized world and that emphasizes the importance of building and sustaining relationships and emotionally connecting with others (Javidan *et al.*, 2010). In a globalized society, leaders face the challenge of how to create value-based networks and engage multiple stakeholders in a trustful and sustainable web of relationships (Maak, 2007).

Social networks and leaders

A central premise of the concept of social capital is to focus on and make time to examine the current networks that one is connected to (Rezac *et al.*, 2009;

Varella *et al.*, 2005). A study by Luthans (1988) suggests that the most successful managers are engaged in considerably more networking, socializing and interacting with others (including non-work socializing, attending meetings, and community services) compared to their less successful counterparts. The findings of Luthans' (1988) study illustrate the importance of having a network and nurturing that network effectively. The social network approach assumes that actors are embedded in a complex web of interrelationships with other actors representing individuals and groups, and connections representing relationships between them (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999). Within that context, relationships are important, because they provide access to control and valuable resources. Here, the leader presents as a boundary spanner representing the organization in the community (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006).

The leader's position in a network is important both for reaching these resources and also forming business alliances and creating stable relationships with trusted partners (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006). It is proposed that leaders with extensive networks will be more effective than those with fewer network ties (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999). In addition, the centrality of the leader within a network, as well as large networks connecting the leader to others, provides access to others who have power and influence and control resources and opportunities (Burt, 2005).

Both strong and weak ties in the leader's network can be effective in increasing the leader's centrality and social capital (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999). The “strong ties strategy” allows the leader to connect more centrally with others. On the other side, “weak ties strategy” (Granovetter, 1973) states that the leader can act as a bridge between those who are not connected, referred to as filling the structural holes in the network, which is also crucial. If a leader has the ability to make strong ties between weakly connected individuals or groups, she/he acquires a competitive advantage and success due to accessing more control and information (Burt, 2000, 2005). Considering these advantages, leaders need to be aware of their role in building social capital and understand the value of building, maintaining and actively connecting through social networks (Varella *et al.*, 2005; Rezac *et al.*, 2005). They need to acquire and constantly improve the necessary capabilities to connect and engage in order to meet these new requirements for leadership in the twenty-first century.

Given the above background for our EL framework, we will introduce the conceptual model in the next section, followed by methodology and findings with respect to scale development for the connectorship component of the model.

Conceptual model for EL

The underlying framework of our conceptual model consists of a three dimensional model of leadership, whereby one dimension represents the capability to lead (C_L), a second component represents the manager's capability to connect (C_C), and the third factor represents the manager's network (N).

The first component, the capability to lead (C_L), is defined as the capability or ability to get things done through others. It includes the key elements of Javidan and Dastmalchian's (1992, 1993) senior leadership model: mobilizer, auditor, driver, ambassador, and servant leadership. This component also reflects the emphasis that the leadership literature has had on human capital (Becker, 1975), and development of what is commonly associated with leadership skills and abilities (Hitt and Ireland, 2002).

The second component is the capability to connect (C_C). This component is related to the emphasis that some have placed on “social skills” as a key component of leadership

(Hosking, 1988; Baron and Markman, 2000), and is defined as the ability to connect to others and make social connections. It is referred to as positive networking or connectorship skills by Rezac *et al.* (2005). This component is also associated with management and leadership skills identified by Luthans (1988) as “networking skills;” or Quinn’s “broker role” (Quinn, 1984). However, we suggest that this aspect of leadership has not been adequately researched and addressed in the literature.

Finally, our model makes the assumption that the capabilities to lead and connect should be matched with an active network (N) of connections if managers are to be effective engaged leaders. This third component, network (N), suggests that the extent of leadership engagement is also a function of the nature of the network (N) that one has access to. For example, a network that has sufficient depth, breadth and reach could allow for the kinds of interactions that can lead to wider, deeper and more frequent connections and interactions thus creating more opportunities for engagement. From the earlier work by Granovetter (1973) on the impact of network and networking to more recent studies on types and attributes of networks and leadership (e.g. Ibarra, 1995; Bartol and Zhang, 2007), there is evidence to suggest that types of, and ways in which, networks are utilized are important in their impact on a leader’s extent of engagement. In our model, our emphasis is on the size of the networks as well as on how actively one’s network is utilized.

The interactions among above three components (leadership, connectorship and network) lead to what we have referred to as EL. Thus, EL becomes a function of the leader’s network (network), her/his capability to lead (leadership), and her/his capability to connect (connectorship). It can be formulized as follows:

$$EL = f(N \times C_L \times C_C)$$

Developing a measure for connectorship

Connectorship, or the capability to connect, is used here to refer to positive networking, maintaining connections with others, discovering what one can do for someone else, and constantly practicing to improve this skill. Some aspects associated with connectorship are being present and having presence, being a good conversationalist, being an attentive listener, exhibiting good body language, asking good questions, regularly sharing and exchanging information, and following up on new connections (Rezac *et al.*, 2005).

Referring to our model and the importance of all three components in order to score high on EL, it can be said that the capability to lead (C_L) and size, type and activeness of one’s network (N) are not sufficient on their own. An engaged leader also needs to have the ability to connect with others (C_C). A leader may have many connections (resources), but if she/he is not able to make use of these resources or continuously explore new ones, their own pre-established connections are not adequate for success (e.g. Hitt and Ireland, 2002).

Therefore in this study we propose connectorship (C_C) as a necessary component of EL and an important skill that needs further attention from researchers and practitioners. Understanding the necessary skills of effective leaders is especially important because they represent capabilities that can be developed (Mumford *et al.*, 2007). Since the construct of connectorship has not been explored sufficiently in the literature, nor has there been any attempt to measure it, this study aims to provide such a measurement, which will serve as a milestone for further research in this area.

However, neither the construct of connectorship nor its measurement has been explored sufficiently in the literature. A study investigating connective leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 1992) has proposed that in the new era characterized by change and increasing connections among people and organizations, leaders need to adopt different skills to be effective. Accordingly, a key attribute of connective leadership is to facilitate connections among others. According to Lipman-Blumen (1992), the connective leadership model involves nine behavioral strategies called achieving styles where leaders develop the capability to utilize an integration of different achieving styles in a wide range of situations. However, while contributing to the pertinent literature through mapping the connectivity profile of individuals based on achievement styles, this model differs largely from the proposed conceptualization and measurement of connectorship construct in this study. First of all, connective leadership model (Lipman-Blumen, 1992) assumes that individuals may have differences in their dominant achieving styles and that once they develop their capability in all achieving styles, they can shift to different configurations based on the requirements of a situation. However, the connectorship construct is conceptualized as the combination of certain dimensions, which adds up to assess the extent to which a person scores high or low on capability to connect. Furthermore, Lipman-Blumen’s approach provides a person-centered approach, which allows researchers to classify individuals into relatively homogeneous subgroups that differ in their combinations and levels on a set of variables, focussing on configurations of individuals (Marsh *et al.*, 2009). On the other hand, in variable centered approach adopted by this study, variable is the unit of analysis; theory has been formulated using variables and hypothetical constructs, and the results are interpreted by examining the association of observed relations among the variables and the theoretically proposed relations between hypothetical constructs of concern. Bergman and Trost (2006) argue that these two approaches are very different theoretically and methodologically such that they accept totally different assumptions, their methodological realizations are for the most part dissimilar, and their results give views from different windows. Thus, this study, taking a variable centered approach, distinguishes itself from the configural approach adopted by Lipman-Blumen.

Consequently, considering the insufficiency of research and lack of scales in this area, this study aims to provide a measurement of connectorship, which will serve as a milestone for further research in the field. The following section will explain the methodology on measurement development.

Methodology

The long term objective of this research was to develop a framework for assessing the nature and level of EL. The present study specifically investigated a sine qua non and under researched aspect of EL – “connectorship,” with focus on developing a measure for the construct. The study was conducted in two stages.

Stage one

At the first stage, an exploratory, qualitative study was conducted that helped us to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon of connectorship (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The aim of this study was to explore the meaning and perceptions of connectorship among leaders and come up with a preliminary pool of items which could then be compared to the existing literature for further refinement. Consequently,

18 in-depth interviews with business leaders from two large urban centers in the province of British Columbia, Canada were conducted. This convenient sample consisted of people primarily known to the researchers through their high community involvement. The interviews were of a semi-structured format and lasted approximately one hour in duration. The data were transcribed and content analyzed by two independent researchers. After initial coding of the data, the researchers worked together on developing the coding scheme and broad categories. Another independent researcher was involved at this stage. A preliminary scale was generated and supported by the related literature. As a result, an initial pool of 93 items was generated, with items grouped under five broad categories: conversation skills, sociability, connectivity, presence, and rapport.

Stage two

Data collection. During the second stage, an online survey involving the initially generated 93 items was distributed to a sample of managers from a variety of organizations across Canada. The survey was distributed through Zoomerang – an online market research organization that offers services to the education and marketing sectors. Researchers in organization studies have used this service for data collection (e.g. Barclay and Kiefer, 2014; Rogers and Bazerman, 2008). The quality of online data are deemed comparable to traditional paper-and-pencil methods (Gosling *et al.*, 2004). It is also suggested that internet data collection has a number of advantages over more traditional approaches including ability to generate more diverse samples (Fraley, 2007). Zoomerang was able to generate the sample for our study from a database of their existing individual clients who were executives and managers in Canada and who agreed to participate in research. By completing the survey, respondents would receive 50 Zoomerang points for future purchases which seems to be common in studies using data collected through internet (e.g. Thau *et al.*, 2009). The survey link was sent out once to a group of selected clients that met our criteria and was active for a one-week period, which garnered a total of 458 completed surveys. Once a client responded, the link was not available to them anymore[1].

This procedure allowed us to recruit a broad range of managers from different organizations, in different sectors located in different parts of Canada. The respondents were from all ten Canadian provinces and two out of the three Canadian territories. The majority of the respondents were from Ontario (59.4 percent), British Columbia (17.2 percent) and Alberta (9.9 percent). The majority of respondents were female (65.7 percent), married (70.5 percent), between 41 and 60 years of age (61.8 percent) and had one or two dependents at home (40.3 percent). These patterns are by and large consistent with the profile of mid to high-level income Canadians as is reported by Statistics Canada (see the report by Murphy *et al.*, 2007). The only exception to this is the higher representation of female respondents in our sample – Statistics Canada data reports 53 percent female. Respondents were from a very wide range of industries and sectors (over 100) with government (12.4 percent), finance (10.5 percent), retail (10.5 percent) and health care (8.5 percent) most frequently represented. Almost one-third of the respondents were senior executives (29.3 percent) with the remaining consisting of middle/first line (37.8 percent) and lower level managers (30.9 percent) and worked at the first level of management (37.8 percent) in their organization (e.g. department manager, shift supervisor). A majority of the respondents managed less than ten employees (76 percent) and had been working for their current organization for less than ten years (58.2 percent).

Measure[2]. As referred to earlier, based on the initial qualitative study, 93 items were generated that formed the basis of a measure that could be used to assess connectorship along the five initial dimensions of the construct (i.e. conversation skills, sociability, connectivity, presence and support). From here, the respondents were asked to respond to the questions on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Data analyses and findings. The first stage of scale purification involved an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with varimax rotation in order to reduce the number of items and identify the underlying dimensions of the construct. As a result of an eight-factor solution accounting for 65.2 percent of the variance was generated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value calculated as 0.95 (recommended above 0.6) and the statistical significance for Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\text{sig} = 0.00$) supported the factorability of the correlation matrix. The factor loadings were obtained with varimax rotation in order to make sure that the items orthogonally loaded on one factor. Before achieving the final factor structure, necessary items were deleted due to complex structures, with factor loadings of 0.60 (or less) or loading highly on more than one factor. The factors to be retained in the subscales were selected by checking the eigenvalues for the components (eigenvalues < 1 were excluded) and the scree plot. All subscales had adequate reliability scores (Cronbach's α), above 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). In terms of the ratio of sample size to number of items ($n:p$), the literature suggest a range of options from Cattell (1978) who suggests a ratio of 3:1 to 6:1 as being acceptable, to Gorsuch (1983) and Hatcher (1994) who suggest a minimum ratio of 5:1 as acceptable for EFA. Our study has the ratio of 4.92:1 (458:93), which meets the above recommended ratios for EFA. As a result of the EFA, the number of items was reduced from 93 to 49. The EFA results with factor names, item loadings, cumulative variance explained, reliability scores (Cronbach's α) and KMO Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) scores are presented in the Appendix to this paper.

The factors may be explained as follows:

- Factor 1: referred to as interactivity, is associated with sociability and conversation skills in general. More specifically, this dimension is related to confidence and openness in socializing, responsiveness in engaging in conversations, and ability to interact with others.
- Factor 2: referred to as dependability, pertains to one's personal qualities such as trustworthiness, reliability and honesty.
- Factor 3: referred to as positive communication is the level of comfort with initiating conversation, making new connections, and meeting new people at events.
- Factor 4: referred to as presenting oneself is about one's ability and skills for presentation in a variety of groups (with emphasis on group size) and situations.
- Factor 5: is associated with storytelling, which involves the ability of having short and engaging stories on hand to tell at events.
- Factor 6: belief in networking is associated with belief in, and the importance attached to, networking as a beneficial personal and professional activity.
- Factor 7: tangible introduction is associated with the "tangibles" in connectorship, more specifically carrying and giving out business cards.

- Finally, Factor 8: online networking refers to the importance attached to online networking as a means to connect with others.

In order to confirm the dimensionality obtained via EFA and to assess the reliability and validity of the reduced measures, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted by AMOS 16.0 software. Each item's loading was specified according to its a priori factor and factors were allowed to correlate with the other factors. EFA and CFA are conceptually and statistically different analyses (Hair *et al.*, 2010). While with EFA, the researcher does not need to have a priori hypotheses about the number of factors that will emerge or about the items that will make up these factors; CFA requires that the researcher specifies the number of factors as well as the number of items in each factor. CFA statistics serve to verify whether our specification of factors matches the reality in the actual data. This is confirmed by model fit, which refers to how well the covariance matrix generated by the proposed model corresponds to the actual covariance matrix (Hair *et al.*, 2010). When there is a good fit, there is no significant discrepancy between the correlations proposed and the correlations observed.

After conducting the CFA, and in order to attain a model with satisfactory fit, the modification indices (a useful tool for inspecting misfit) were examined. Modification indices indicate how much the χ^2 value of a model will drop. In other words, how much the model will improve if the parameters were free instead of constrained. Based on examining the parameters, items that increase misfit were eliminated. The fit indices of the model and the rule of threshold values for each index are summarized in Table I.

The χ^2 value of the model is 641.796 with the degrees of freedom of 320. The χ^2 value/degrees of freedom should be < 2 . Although this value in the model is slightly above two with a value of 2.006, considering that other fit indices provide good fit consistently, this score is accepted as satisfactory. Furthermore, the p -value of the χ^2 is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). Although it is desired to have a non-significant p -value in order to accept the null hypothesis, for sample sizes over 200, significant p -values can be expected and this does not necessarily indicate misfit (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The goodness of fit index (GFI = 0.907), comparative fit index (CFI = 0.966), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI = 0.960), RMSEA value (0.047), SRMR value (0.046) and p close value (0.830) of the model indicate a good fit since they all comply with the suggested cut off values (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Hu and Bentler, 1999).

After deletion of the items, the final model of connectorship consisted of eight dimensions involving 28 items. The items retained in the model are presented in Table II.

| Index | Value | Threshold value |
|---------|-------|-----------------|
| CMIN/df | 2.006 | < 2 |
| GFI | 0.907 | > 0.90 |
| CFI | 0.966 | > 0.90 |
| TLI | 0.960 | > 0.90 |
| RMSEA | 0.047 | < 0.08 |
| SRMR | 0.046 | < 0.08 |
| PCLOSE | 0.830 | > 0.50 |

Table I.
Model fit indices

Note: Confirmatory factor analysis

Interactivity

1. I am confident in talking to someone of a different cultural ethnicity
2. I have good social etiquette and manners
3. I am confident in talking to someone of the opposite sex
4. I am aware of and sensitive to the feelings of others
5. I am willing to ask people questions
6. I am flexible in adjusting to new or unexpected situations
7. I have a firm handshake
8. I share my ideas with others
9. People readily open up to me
10. I am concerned with how people interact

Dependability

11. I am dependable
12. I am trustworthy
13. I am honest
14. I am truthful

Positive communication

15. At events I make a point of meeting new people
16. At events, I tend to hang out with those that I know (R)

Presenting oneself

17. Your presentation skills in large groups
18. Your general presentation skills
19. Your presentation skills in small groups

Storytelling

20. I have 2-3 stories ready to tell at all times
21. My stories are short and engaging

Belief in networking

22. Networking in an important personal activity
23. Networking is an important business activity
24. The purpose of networking is to benefit me

Tangible introduction

25. I always carry enough business cards
26. I am comfortable giving out my business cards

Online networking

27. My online network is effective in keeping me connected with people
28. Online networking is important to me

Validity and reliability

Validity is the extent to which the observed variables accurately measure what they are supposed to measure (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Construct validity is assessed through both convergent and discriminant and nomological validities of the measurement scales. Convergent validity means that the variables correlate well with each other within their parent factor and the latent factor is well explained by its observed variables. Discriminant validity ensures that the variables correlate more highly with variables in their parent factor than with the variables outside their parent factor. In other words, it represents the extent to which a construct is conceptually distinct from other constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Nomological validity refers to how well a construct is related to other theoretically relevant constructs (Churchill, 1999). In other words, a construct exhibits adequate nomological validity if it is strongly associated with a related construct in a proposed theoretical framework (Campbell, 1960; McKnight *et al.*, 2002). Finally, reliability refers to the internal consistency of items for each dimension.

The measures used for establishing validity and reliability include: composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared squared variance (MSV), and average shared squared variance (ASV).

Reliability refers to the internal consistency of the items and the literature suggests that the CR value has to be greater than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). This condition is satisfied for all constructs in the model. For convergent validity, the AVE by each construct needs to be larger than 0.50 and the CR score has to be greater than the AVE score. To ensure discriminant validity, the AVE for each construct included in the measurement model tests should be greater than its maximum squared correlations

(MSV) and average squared correlations (ASV) with other constructs. According to these criteria, both convergent and discriminant validity of the CFA model have been confirmed. The scores of CR, AVE, MSV and ASV for the CFA model are demonstrated in Table III.

After confirming convergent and discriminant validity of the connectorship construct, nomological validity has been checked to ensure a complete assessment of construct validity (Table IV). As previously mentioned, the underlying framework of this study, EL model, consists of three dimensions, where one dimension represents the capability to lead (C_L), a second one represents the manager's capability to connect (C_C), and the third dimension represents the manager's network (N). In this model, two twin capabilities of engaged leaders are proposed as the capability to lead (C_L) and the capability to connect (connectorship-CN). These two constructs of the proposed theoretical framework are anticipated to correlate highly. Therefore, in order to assess the nomological aspect of validity, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between connectorship and capability to lead (C_L). The results of the correlation analysis (Table V) confirm their strong correlation ($r = 0.699$, $p = 0.000$) in the predicted direction, and thus confirm nomological validity of the connectorship construct.

Finally, the factor correlation matrix, presented by Table V, confirms that there is no multicollinearity between the constructs in the model.

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of this paper was to report the findings of a mixed methods study that explored how active community engaged and connected managers were in their local and broader communities (EL) and also specifically investigate an under researched aspect of EL – “connectorship” – with focus on developing a measure for the construct. The paper

| Factors | CR | AVE | MSV | ASV |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Interactivity | 0.921 | 0.539 | 0.296 | 0.185 |
| Dependability | 0.939 | 0.795 | 0.296 | 0.073 |
| Positive communication | 0.903 | 0.823 | 0.269 | 0.193 |
| Presenting oneself | 0.953 | 0.872 | 0.256 | 0.129 |
| Belief in networking | 0.783 | 0.557 | 0.224 | 0.107 |
| Storytelling | 0.866 | 0.764 | 0.269 | 0.128 |
| Online networking | 0.885 | 0.795 | 0.224 | 0.131 |
| Tangible introduction | 0.852 | 0.743 | 0.202 | 0.121 |

Notes: CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted; MSV, maximum shared squared variance; ASV, average shared squared variance. ^aFor convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) by each construct should be larger than 0.50 and CR score should be greater than AVE score. For discriminant validity, average variance extracted (AVE) for each should be greater than its maximum squared correlations (MSV) and average squared correlations (ASV) with other constructs

Table III.
Validity^a and
reliability scores for
connectorship scales

Table IV.
Correlation analysis
for nomological
validity

| | Mean | SD | Connectorship | Capability to lead |
|--------------------|------|------|---------------|--------------------|
| Connectorship | 5.05 | 0.78 | 1 | |
| Capability to lead | 5.36 | 0.86 | 0.699** | 1 |

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

| | Mean | SD | Interactivity | Dependability | Positive communication | Presenting oneself | Belief in value of networking | Storytelling | Tangible introduction | Online networking |
|------------------------|------|------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Interactivity | 5.80 | 0.92 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Dependability | 6.40 | 0.87 | 0.500** | 1 | | | | | | |
| Positive communication | 4.43 | 1.55 | 0.464** | 0.131** | 1 | | | | | |
| Presenting oneself | 4.84 | 1.47 | 0.346** | 0.140** | 0.441** | 1 | | | | |
| Belief in networking | 4.10 | 1.52 | 0.386** | 0.018** | 0.460** | 0.457** | 1 | | | |
| Storytelling | 5.34 | 1.08 | 0.294** | 0.234** | 0.348** | 0.234** | 0.133** | 1 | | |
| Tangible introduction | 4.47 | 1.80 | 0.349** | 0.175** | 0.401** | 0.291** | 0.282** | 0.280** | 1 | |
| Online networking | 4.66 | 1.53 | 0.321** | 0.237** | 0.399** | 0.258** | 0.225** | 0.388** | 0.343** | 1 |

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Table V.
Factor intercorrelations

presents the conceptual framework of EL, followed by the operationalization and measure development of “connectorship.” We came up with a 28-item connectorship measure as a result of our research. The final scale included eight conceptually distinct sub-dimensions of connectorship: interactivity, dependability, positive communication, presenting oneself, storytelling, belief in networking, tangible introduction, and online networking. We propose that these eight sub-dimensions are important for leaders in developing their capability to connect. The psychometric properties of the measure were presented for reliability and validity of the measure. The scale developed constitutes a foundation for further studies to measure and assess EL. The other two dimensions of EL (leadership skills and network) already have established scales in the literature; connectorship was the missing link that had not been previously investigated or measured before. Therefore, the scale developed in this study contributes to research in this area and provides a starting point for a comprehensive assessment of EL and its relationship with other variables of interest.

Our research has several implications for the leadership literature. First is the contribution it makes in moving the discussions around the role of social capital on leadership. Following the work Hitt and Ireland (2002), Ireland and Hitt (2005), Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), McCallum and O’Connell (2009), our conceptual model on EL and the measurement development for connectorship build on and contributes to the role and significance of social capital for effective leadership. Our focus on connectorship also relates to the broader concept of “relational wealth” as the organization’s competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). That is, building stronger connectorship skills among managers and leaders in organizations (and by implications, more engaged leaders) helps achieve competitive advantage and advances organizational performance. The development of the leader’s connectorship abilities and expanding the leader’s capacity for engagement in general will advance firm’s competitive advantage as such abilities are more difficult to imitate, are likely to be more specific the organization and socially complex (e.g. Leana and Rousseau, 2000).

Along the same lines, our paper also reemphasizes the role of networks and networking for leadership development. In developing one’s connectorship abilities, and thus being a more engaged leader, one also develops trust through being open and honest. It follows that through this, one develops her/his networks – whether such network developments serve for purposes like doing something good for others (e.g. Cohen and Prusak, 2001) or career development (Forret and Dougherty, 2004). In addition, our EL model and our focus on connectorship builds on the literature on social skills of managers and leaders, and the offers a step forward in developing a measure for assessing leaders connectorship skills and abilities (Hosking, 1988; Mumford *et al.*, 2007).

Finally, in a recent review of leadership research and its future directions Avolio *et al.* (2009) concluded that “We expect to see a greater use of mixed methods design in future research [on leadership]” (p. 44). Our paper, using a mixed method approach, has responded to this expectation of future directions in leadership research.

Implications for practice

In terms of management practice, our emphasis on connectorship skills and development of social capital has multiple implications for organizations. One implication is that in leadership development programs in organizations the emphasis should not only be on human capital development and development of traditional leadership skills, but also to the often neglected connectorship skills. Broadening one’s networks outside the technical or specific organizational areas and

having the appropriate skills to do so will likely to lead to higher levels of engagement with the community and with the expanded network. From the organizational point of view, more emphasis on improving the social capital of managers and increasing the connectedness and engagement among leaders and managers has positive performance implications. As suggested by other writers (e.g. Ireland and Hitt, 2005; McCallum, O'Connell, 2009), through development of trust and openness they reduce the need for control and monitoring in organizations. Connectedness and engagement of leaders will also improve knowledge sharing and better mutual understanding of organizational issues among managers, will increase employment stability and decrease-related costs by reducing turnover and decreasing hiring and other-related costs. In addition, managing in the twenty-first century brings new ideals and expectations in terms of leadership and organizational success. The mindset of the corporate leaders must be one of EL and the skills and capabilities to connect. Connectorship can be the driver of numerous opportunities for organizations (Berman and Korsten, 2014). We suggest that in order to create value from these opportunities and apply the rules of the changing business landscape, being able to connect is a skill that needs to be realized, learned and practiced by today's leaders. According to Mirvis (2008), for a leader to be more engaged and better connected to others, the first step is to learn how to connect with one's self, meaning reflection and increased awareness of the self, followed by connecting to others and to the larger world (Goleman, 2006). This all in turn serves a much higher purpose – becoming a corporate citizen and acquiring consciousness regarding the role of ourselves as individuals and of business in society. In this context, leaders learn to understand the importance of social networks, be aware of their own network, and improve their skills in connecting their networks and the people within it.

Limitations and future research

In terms of the limitations of the study, larger samples for both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study would have been better in terms of generalizability of the measurement development as well as broadening the scale and concept development. Even though the focus of the paper was the development of a measure of leader's “connectorship,” a larger and a broader study would have enabled us to examine the impact of connectorship on leadership outcomes. Future research should incorporate connectorship as an integral part of the leaders' skills and abilities and as a key criteria for leadership effectiveness. Ideally, such incorporation would involve a longitudinal study of different leaders operating at different organizational levels and sectors and their impacts for effectiveness of leaders in a more comprehensive manner.

Notes

1. The studies using internet data, including all those referred to in this paper, do not report the total number of surveys distributed. This is due to the difficulty in accurately reporting the number in an internet based environment. However, based on the contract and the pricing formula of Zoomerang we estimate the number to have been 900.
2. It should be noted that the entire survey consisted of published and others measures of the other two dimensions (network and capability to lead). As the present paper focusses on the development of the new measure of connectorship (or capability to connect), the other two dimensions were not included.

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Appendix

| Connectorship items (no. of items: 49) | Factor 1: social interactivity $\alpha = 0.961$ | Factor 2: dependability $\alpha = 0.958$ | Factor 3: positive communication $\alpha = 0.908$ | Factor 4: ability to present oneself $\alpha = 0.927$ | Factor 5: storytelling ability $\alpha = 0.894$ | Factor 6: belief in value of networking $\alpha = 0.793$ | Factor 7: providing tangible introduction $\alpha = 0.905$ | Factor 8: belief in the importance of online networking $\alpha = 0.883$ |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| I am conscious of how people interact | 0.792 | | | | | | | |
| I engage with people that work in positions below me | 0.787 | | | | | | | |
| I am confident in talking to someone of a different cultural ethnicity | 0.776 | | | | | | | |
| I have good social etiquette and manners | 0.774 | | | | | | | |
| I am confident in talking to someone of the opposite sex | 0.758 | | | | | | | |
| I make regular and deliberate eye contact | 0.743 | | | | | | | |
| I am aware of and sensitive to the feelings of others | 0.727 | | | | | | | |
| I am willing to talk to someone higher up (in positions of seniority) | 0.703 | | | | | | | |
| I am willing to ask people questions | 0.685 | | | | | | | |

*(continued)*Developing a
measure for
“connectorship”

423

Table AI.
Exploratory factor
analysis results for
connectorship items

Table AI.

| Connectorship items (no. of items: 49) | Factor 1: social interactivity $\alpha = 0.961$ | Factor 2: dependability $\alpha = 0.958$ | Factor 3: positive communication $\alpha = 0.908$ | Factor 4: ability to present oneself $\alpha = 0.927$ | Factor 5: storytelling ability $\alpha = 0.894$ | Factor 6: belief in value of networking $\alpha = 0.793$ | Factor 7: providing tangible introduction $\alpha = 0.905$ | Factor 8: belief in the importance of online networking $\alpha = 0.883$ |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| I am flexible in adjusting to new or unexpected situations | 0.673 | | | | | | | |
| I feel relaxed in the presence of friends. | 0.671 | | | | | | | |
| People generally like me | 0.667 | | | | | | | |
| I am good at responding in conversation | 0.660 | | | | | | | |
| I have a firm handshake | 0.658 | | | | | | | |
| I am flexible in adjusting to new or unexpected situations | 0.656 | | | | | | | |
| I share my ideas with others | 0.650 | | | | | | | |
| When I converse with another, I focus on them and maintain good eye contact | 0.638 | | | | | | | |
| I listen well | 0.631 | | | | | | | |
| People readily open up to me | 0.630 | | | | | | | |
| I ask people good questions | 0.629 | | | | | | | |
| I generally like people | 0.604 | | | | | | | |

(continued)

| Connectorship items (no. of items: 49) | Factor 1: social interactivity $\alpha = 0.961$ | Factor 2: dependability $\alpha = 0.958$ | Factor 3: positive communication $\alpha = 0.908$ | Factor 4: ability to present oneself $\alpha = 0.927$ | Factor 5: storytelling ability $\alpha = 0.894$ | Factor 6: belief in value of networking $\alpha = 0.793$ | Factor 7: providing tangible introduction $\alpha = 0.905$ | Factor 8: belief in the importance of online networking $\alpha = 0.883$ |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| I am concerned with how people interact | 0.604 | | | | | | | |
| I am reliable | | 0.884 | | | | | | |
| I am dependable | | 0.877 | | | | | | |
| I am trustworthy | | 0.868 | | | | | | |
| I am honest | | 0.849 | | | | | | |
| I am truthful | | 0.831 | | | | | | |
| At events I make a point of meeting new people | | | 0.747 | | | | | |
| At events, I tend to hang out with those that I know (R) | | | 0.729 | | | | | |
| I feel relaxed in the presence of strangers | | | 0.690 | | | | | |
| I feel comfortable initiating a conversation with a stranger | | | 0.658 | | | | | |
| I have a strong ability to make new relationships | | | 0.656 | | | | | |
| How engaged you are at social events | | | 0.621 | | | | | |
| Your presentation skills in large groups | | | | 0.860 | | | | |

(continued)

Table AI.

| Connectorship items (no. of items: 49) | Factor 1: social interactivity $\alpha = 0.961$ | Factor 2: dependability $\alpha = 0.958$ | Factor 3: positive communication $\alpha = 0.908$ | Factor 4: ability to present oneself $\alpha = 0.927$ | Factor 5: storytelling ability $\alpha = 0.894$ | Factor 6: belief in value of networking $\alpha = 0.793$ | Factor 7: providing tangible introduction $\alpha = 0.905$ | Factor 8: belief in the importance of online networking $\alpha = 0.883$ |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Your general presentation skills | | | | 0.852 | | | | |
| Your presentation skills in small groups | | | | 0.846 | | | | |
| Your level of confidence in large group settings | | | | 0.604 | | | | |
| I have 2-3 stories ready to tell at all times | | | | | 0.802 | | | |
| My stories are short and engaging | | | | | 0.771 | | | |
| My storytelling ability is strong | | | | | 0.744 | | | |
| Networking in an important personal activity | | | | | | 0.771 | | |
| Networking is an important business activity | | | | | | 0.763 | | |
| The purpose of networking is to benefit me | | | | | | 0.734 | | |
| The purpose of networking is to benefit the other person | | | | | | | | 0.662 |

(continued)

| Connectorship items (no. of items: 49) | Factor 1: social interactivity $\alpha = 0.961$ | Factor 2: dependability $\alpha = 0.958$ | Factor 3: positive communication $\alpha = 0.908$ | Factor 4: ability to present oneself $\alpha = 0.927$ | Factor 5: storytelling ability $\alpha = 0.894$ | Factor 6: belief in value of networking $\alpha = 0.793$ | Factor 7: providing tangible introduction $\alpha = 0.905$ | Factor 8: belief in the importance of online networking $\alpha = 0.883$ |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| I routinely give out my business cards | | | | | | | 0.866 | |
| I always carry enough business cards | | | | | | | 0.861 | |
| I am comfortable giving out my business cards | | | | | | | 839 | |
| My online network is effective in keeping me connected with people | | | | | | | | 0.786 |
| Online networking is important to me | | | | | | | | 0.749 |
| Cumulative total variance | 35.7 | 44.6 | 49.9 | 54.2 | 57.5 | 60.5 | 62.9 | 65.2 |

Notes: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: 0.946; Bartlett's test of sphericity: χ^2 : 23963.868, df: 1891, sig: 0.000