

New Directions in Leadership Research Conference

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Paper title:

The Power of the Pause: Individual Reflection and its Impact on Leadership Emergence

Abstract:

While managerial work is often characterized as fast-paced and action-oriented, this paper proposes that both individuals and organizations gain from increased individual reflection at work. While previous work has studied reflection at the team-level and as structured one-time or daily interventions, we conceptualize individual reflection as individuals' general tendency to consider and examine various elements of their work in the course of their day-to-day activities. In a series of pilot studies, we establish individual reflection as a construct comprising four dimensions representing the different types of issues upon which individual might reflect on – goals, methods, self, and relationships. Then, in our main study, we adopted a longitudinal survey design involving 80 MBA consulting teams over the course of eight weeks to examine the predictors and outcomes of individual reflection at work. We argue that individual reflection deserves more attention from scholars as a meaningful field of research and from practitioners as a valuable management practice.