

Program and Center Administration

The Leadership Instruments Library

A New, Free Resource for Student and Faculty Researchers

Samuel V. Nickels

Karen A. Ford

James Madison University

Abstract

We present information on the Leadership Instruments Library (LIL), a new, free resource for faculty and graduate students who are performing leadership research and for organizations that are looking for leadership development tools. The LIL reviews over 100 measurement tools that provide individual and organizational measures of leadership across all types of leadership (educational, private and public sectors, non-profit, military, etc.). The LIL provides the name of the instrument, number of citations, purpose, target population(s), information on validity and reliability, if it is available free or what it costs, how to access the instrument, and much more. We provide a description of the LIL, state why it is needed, outline its structural organization, provide a link to access the resource, and share the rationale for using students to help develop the resource.

Keywords: *leadership; measurement; leadership instruments or scales or tools; research resource; leader; leadership library*

Samuel V. Nickels is director, Center for Health and Human Development, and research affiliate, Department of Graduate Psychology, James Madison University. **Karen A. Ford** is unit head, School of Strategic Leadership Studies, James Madison University. Please send author correspondence to samuelnickels@yahoo.com

The purpose of the Leadership Instruments Library (LIL) is to provide a resource for leadership researchers to identify instruments that may be most appropriate for their studies, allowing them to balance advantages with costs. In a single, updated location, tools are now available for review by professionals and students alike. Such a resource may be especially helpful to junior researchers and students in justifying the tools they use to measure leadership.

Our goal has been to identify and include as many instruments as possible for all types of leadership. We have fallen far short of this goal, as the task is enormous. Thus, we encourage readers to assist in making this library continuously better by sending us new instruments, updated versions, and shorter validated instruments and by helping us to improve the quality of this library by sending corrected information or information that fills in the many gaps we have for various instruments in the LIL. The LIL provides examples of instruments that are available, as well as complete instruments that are free to access (although it is best practice to try to obtain permission of the instrument developer before using even freely accessible instruments).

The effort was undertaken at the request of faculty of the graduate School of Strategic Leadership Studies at James Madison University. They suggested such a resource for both scholars and students would fill a significant need. Subsequent research indicated that no such resource exists anywhere else.

Description

The LIL provides reviews of over 100 measurement tools that measure individual or organizational leadership. When the information is available, the LIL provides the name of the instrument, number of citations, focus or use of the instrument, target population(s), information on validity and reliability, date of the instrument and how long and to what extent it has been used, who developed the instrument, whether it is open source and available free or what it costs, how to access or find the instrument, limitations, whether the instrument is available in other languages, and so on. Scholarly and other types of sources are noted in the LIL.

Method

Target Audience for the LIL

We hope the LIL will be useful to faculty and graduate students who are studying leadership in all areas and sectors. The LIL may also be useful to leadership development programs and in university or organizational settings in which students or employees can be given a leadership instrument to begin the process of self-awareness and development of their leadership capabilities. For example, the LIL may be useful to faculty who are looking for instruments to use in the classroom with students to assess and help develop their leadership, authenticity, and related skills.

The instruments in the LIL were developed for use in all sectors (e.g., business, education, military, health, nonprofit, government, grassroots, women/gender). A number of these instruments have been used in studies of educational leadership. The user can search the LIL pdf document using the Find command. For example, in looking for instruments related to the educational sector, the user can look for keywords such as *education*, *students*, *teachers*, *school*, or *principals*.

Theory

Leadership is defined differently by theorists and the context. As such, there is no broadly accepted definition of leadership, nor should there necessarily be one definition. There are student leaders; production team leaders and company CEOs; community organizing leaders; nonprofit executives and board leaders; various ranks of military leaders; teachers and principals as leaders; administration leaders in higher education; grassroots association community leaders; religious leaders and leaders of gender-based men's and women's religious groups (monks, nuns); political leaders at various local, state, and national contexts; female and male styles; ethnic subcultural influences on leaders; international style differences; traditions within a multitude of indigenous peoples; and so on. As such, the user will not encounter a one-size-fits-all leadership instrument.

Rationale for Using Students to Help Develop the Instrument

The School of Strategic Leadership Studies at James Madison University facilitated the LIL project development, and students from the Honors College acted as research assistants for a semester to fulfill the requirements for a research practicum course. Students obtained missing information on instruments such as reliability data and instrument cost, searched and found new instruments to be included in the library, provided text editing and proofing, and were involved in the online development process, which included meeting with university librarians to ascertain the best fit between our goal to promote the instrument library, available technologies, and limitations of time and cost. The level of student interest in the project was high, and they added to their résumés the publication link, where their names appear in the acknowledgments.

Why a Leadership Instruments Library Is Needed

Scholars and students have no resource to help them look for tools for measuring leadership outcomes for possible studies. There is a need for a resource that provides a comparison of many instruments and a quick reference for what the instrument measures, why, and for whom, and what it costs. This information allows scholars and students to save time in choosing among instruments and to find ones that are the most useful, appropriate, and affordable.

We searched for articles that might provide a large listing of instruments and found no results. We searched the Internet in an attempt to find any private, university, leadership school, or other website offering a review of leadership instruments. We found none that were recent, current, extensive, or free. The current LIL provides all of these advantages.

In the nearly 2,000 pages of the *Encyclopedia of Leadership* (Goethals, Sorenson, & Burns, 2004), less than one page contains information on measuring leadership. Likewise, a search of *Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: A Reference Handbook* (Agard, 2011), issuing over 1,000 pages, had no entries for “measuring,” “instruments,” or “scales,” nor did any articles discuss measurement. It is clear that despite innumerable books and consulting companies and studies on leadership, almost no information is available (until now) to help students, researchers, and organizations scientifically identify a useful instrument for their purpose among the plethora of leadership tools.

Organization of the LIL

The LIL begins with a discussion of leadership and the measurement of leadership. This is followed by a section on how to use the LIL. Then there is a list of the instruments by name, which is followed by the alphabetical ordering of detailed descriptions of each instrument (see Figure 1 for headings used to describe each instrument). The LIL closes with sections on reviews of instruments, research designs and frameworks, and recommendations for further research on leadership instruments.

Open Access

The LIL is free and can be downloaded. See the link below.

Call for Others to Contribute

The LIL is a huge undertaking. Our work to date remains very incomplete. We hope that as people review and use the LIL, they will send us information that will help to improve this resource for others in the future. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to consider projects that contribute to the improvement of the LIL, such as adding new instruments, updated revisions, shortened versions of current instruments, instruments available in other major languages, or filling in gaps in the information that is provided in the document such as cost or validity or target population information. Other projects might include reviewing and evaluating a group of instruments, for example, instruments that might be used in the nonprofit sector, or in the health sector, or in the university student sector, or instruments that are grouped into a theoretical framework, such as servant leadership or grassroots organization leadership or nursing leadership. This kind of review could then be added to the document with an acknowledgement of the person(s) submitting the information. Any information sent to us must be well documented.

How to Access the LIL

The LIL is free and open access, and available on the JMU Scholarly Commons website of James Madison University. The user can find it via an Internet search or access it directly by using the following link: <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/lil/1/>

Contribution to the Field

The LIL provides a single location where students, faculty, researchers, and organizations can find leadership instruments and determine their usefulness and accessibility. The LIL is free. For these reasons, the LIL fills a gap for these individuals and organizations in obtaining knowledge about instruments to measure leadership.

Researchers have expressed concerns about biases in the development and use of leadership instruments (e.g., Judge & Long, 2012). Because of the importance of these instruments in achieving high quality research, we discuss these issues at some length in the LIL. Such problems include the bias inherent in most leadership research and instruments toward positive outcomes only; the bias inherent in 360-degree instruments whereby followers are asked to fill out surveys to assess the effectiveness of

Global transformational leadership scale (GTL)

Purpose/focus of the instrument

It is a short 7 item tool that, unlike the MLQ, measures only transformational leadership. The MLQ measures leadership styles across a single spectrum, from transformational to passive. Items and Time to administer: 7 items, 2-4 minutes to administer. . .

This describes the instrument, the purpose, and sometimes a great deal more information, such as structure and theory behind the instrument.

Where is instrument found? Is it available online or only through a service?

The scale does not appear on the web anywhere for sale or use. I tried to contact the lead author without success. She doesn't appear to be at the . . .

Weblink, address, etc. If we could not find the instrument, or it was available only in a seminal study article, we note this.

Is it available free? What is the cost? Does it require the permission of the author?

The instrument is included in our attached documents.

Year the instrument was developed? Have there been revisions or new editions (years)?

2000

Students especially need to know if they can afford the use of an instrument. If not, regardless of the fit, it is not accessible. Year and revisions information gives a sense of how much development the tool has undergone over time.

Who developed the instrument, where? See citation below.

Target population for which the instrument was developed?

Business sector, but likely applicable in other sectors. Review seminal article cited below.

What are the reliability and validity data on the instrument, from which authors?

This instrument has been used in a few studies and has strong reliability and validity. I found that several other studies had used this instrument with adequate indications of reliability and validity. Instrument provided in the seminal article, but no information in the article on cost/open access.

These headings help scholars and students determine how strong the instrument is, as well as what population was the target of the instrument development (business leaders, student leaders, military leaders, etc.).

How thoroughly has the instrument been tested, and with what size samples?

The study had a sample of 1,440 subordinates who assessed the leader behaviour of 695 branch managers in a large Australian financial organisation. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis showed that the GTL measured a single construct of leadership and had

Number of citations for the instrument

web citations = 267

Limitations noted by the seminal author or other commentators/researchers

Availability in other languages and whether these versions have been validated

Languages: Sam Nickels used this instrument in his dissertation and used a back-translation process to get a valid Spanish translation, which he used in study after running it through a limited cognitive review and pilot. Reliability is available in his SSLS dissertation.

Citations is the Google number associated with a search; it shows the impact an article/instrument has made. We note limitations if they appear significant. Instrument studies in other languages can provide additional validity information or alternative versions, often with fewer items. References and notes are provided for further research if desired.

References (up to 5)

Additional information/links: Citation: Carless, S. A., Wearing, A. J., & Mann, L. (2000). A short measure of transformational leadership. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 14(3), 389-405.

Further notes

Figure 1. Example of instrument listing.

leader behaviors (researchers are assuming followers need or even desire leadership, and researchers assume that leader behavior is always observed); research often placing too much emphasis on how leaders are perceived by followers and peers and not enough emphasis on how organizations perform; whether the researcher is measuring the process or the goal accomplishment (“How did the team play?” vs. “Did the team win?”); that mediators (rarely studied in leadership research) should be included in research designs (e.g., some research shows transformational and charismatic leader behaviors may mediate the links between leader traits and outcomes); and weak methodologies and instruments (key problems include small sample sizes, lack of underpinning theory, survey instruments with inadequate reliability and validity, failure to measure important control variables, cross sectional designs, reliance on self-report, and nonsystematic measurement of leadership).

References

- Agard, K. A. (2011). *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Goethals, G. R., Sorenson, G. J., & Burns, J. M. (Eds.). (2004). *Encyclopedia of leadership* (Vols. 1–4). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412952392>
- Judge, T. A., & Long, D. M. (2012). Individual differences in leadership. In D. V. Day & J. Antonakis (Eds.), *The nature of leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 179–217). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.