



# Does Working for a Better Boss Improve Ratings of Subordinate Performance?

## A Longitudinal, Quasi-Experimental Study

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# Research Questions

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1. Is there a relationship between boss performance and subordinate performance?
2. Does a change in boss lead to a change in subordinate performance?
3. Does a change in boss affect subordinate performance immediately or over time?
4. Why does change in subordinate performance occur—role modeling or learning environment?



# Hypotheses

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1. Boss' performance is positively related to subordinate performance.
2. Change in boss is followed by change in subordinate performance.
3. Change in boss has a greater relationship with change in subordinate performance over time.
4. A *Conducive Learning Environment* explains change in subordinate performance better than *Social Learning Theory*.



## How do bosses affect subordinates?

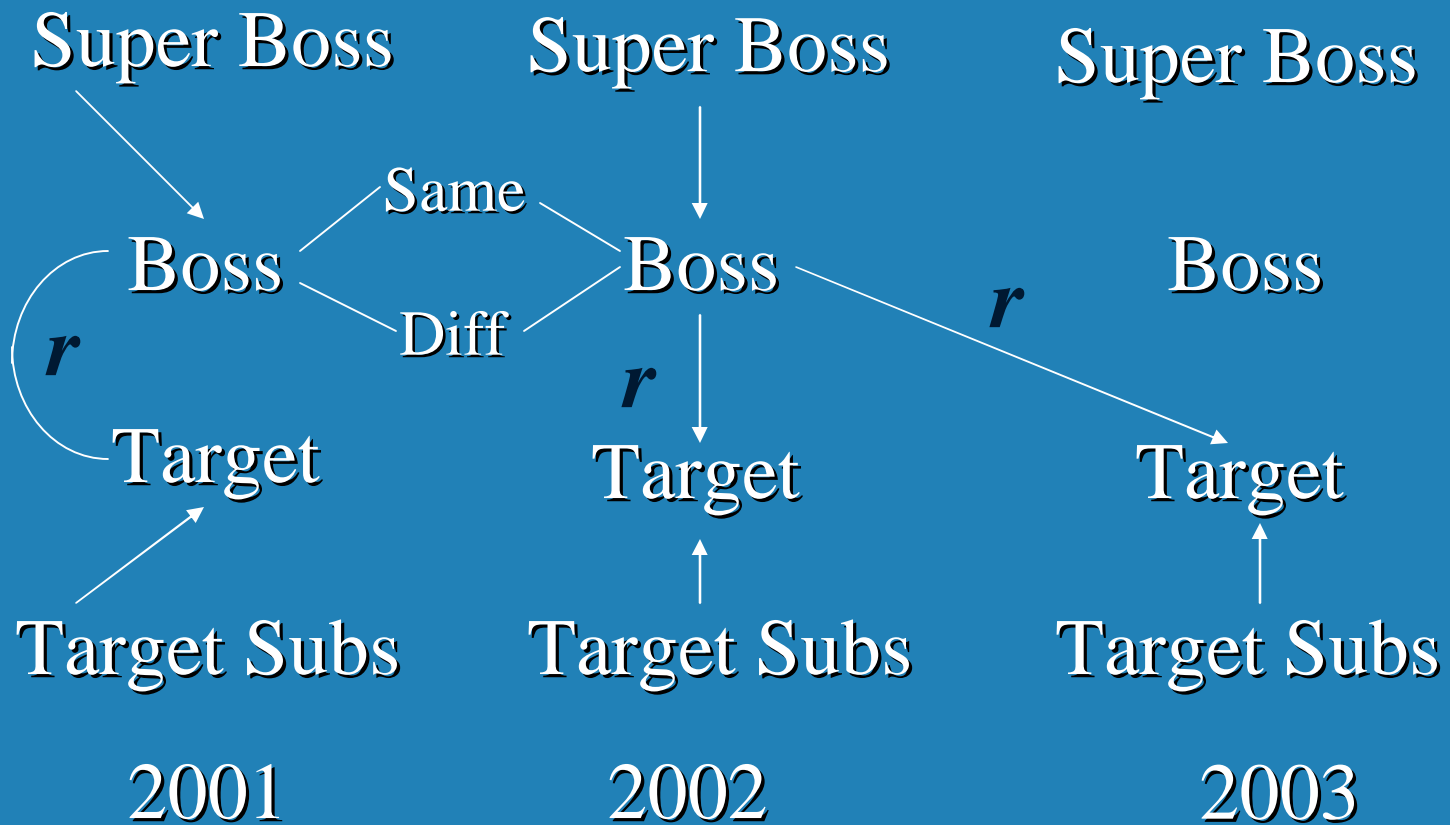
- Social Learning Theory - Bandura
- Conducive Learning Environment
  - Goal-orientation literature (Dweck)
  - “Lessons of Experience” research (CCL)
  - Mentoring research (Kram)
  - Person-oriented leadership research (Consideration, Ohio St.; Individualized consideration, Bass’ Transformational model)



# Methods

- Design
  - Longitudinal, quasi-experimental design with actual change in boss between Year 1 and Year 2
- Sample
  - Top 1506 managers within a Fortune 50 telecommunications firm
- Measures- Actual 360 ratings
  - Annual 360 ratings for all raters and ratees over a 3 year-period
  - 360 ratings used both for developmental and administrative reasons
- Variables-
  - Boss Performance- Measured by ratings received from the boss' superior (Super Boss)
  - Subordinate Performance- Measured by ratings received from direct reports (Target's subordinates)

# Research Design





# Dimensions of Performance

- 5 Dimensions

- **Envision** – *visionary, strategic thinker, challenges the status quo*
- **Energize** – *empowering, participative, coaching, develops talent, team-builder*
- **Edge** – *makes tough calls, decisive, challenges people to do their best, holds people accountable*
- **Execute** – *drives for results, productive, focused on executing the plan*
- **Ethics** – *behaves morally/ethically, honest*



# H1. Boss Performance = Subordinate Performance

- Estimate the relationship between boss and subordinate performance
  - Correlations
    - Boss Performance in 2001 with Subordinate Performance in 2001



# H1: Main effect relationship between boss and subordinate performance

## Boss Performance

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Envision Energize Edge Execute Ethics

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## Subordinate Performance

Envision	.07	.03	-.01	.03	.04
Energize	.01	.04	-.01	.00	.01
Edge	-.01	.01	-.03	.02	-.02
Execute	-.06	.01	-.05	.01	-.03
Ethics	-.01	.00	-.02	.00	.01

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$\underline{p} < .10$ . No support for Hypothesis 1.

(On diagonal  $r = .03$  and off diagonal  $r = .02$ )



## H2. Change in boss $\Rightarrow$ change in sub

### H3. Time lagged $r$ stronger

- Estimate the effect of a new boss
  - Correlations
    - Delta 2001-2002 New Boss with Delta 2001-2002 Sub
    - Delta 2001-2002 New Boss with Delta 2001-2003 Sub
    - Compare each with baseline model (same boss  $r$ s)
- Establish that there is a correlation between getting a new boss and that boss' performance being related to change in subordinate performance.
- Performance effect takes time to play out—the “boss' impact curve.”

## H2: Change in boss is followed by change in subordinate performance

### Boss Performance

Envision Energize Edge Execute Ethics

### Subordinate Performance

$\Delta$ Envision	.00	.02	.05	.02	.06
$\Delta$ Energize	.02	.01	.04	.02	.02
$\Delta$ Edge	<b>-.09</b>	-.04	-.03	-.07	-.05
$\Delta$ Execute	-.04	.05	<b>.08</b>	.03	.05
$\Delta$ Ethics	.01	.00	.07	.03	.00

$\underline{p} < .10$ . “Experimental” model: estimates the effect of a new boss. ( $r = .04$  and baseline  $r = .02$ )

H3: Change in boss has a greater relationship with change in subordinate performance *over time*.

Boss Performance

Envision Energize Edge Execute Ethics

Subordinate Performance

Δ Envision	.01	<b>.10</b>	.06	.00	.03
Δ Energize	.05	<b>.08</b>	<b>.09</b>	.06	.03
Δ Edge	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.04	-.04
Δ Execute	.03	.07	.04	-.01	-.03
Δ Ethics	<b>.12</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>.09</b>	.07	.01

$\underline{p} < .10$ .

“Experimental” model: estimate the effect of a new boss *over time*.

( $r = .05$  and baseline  $r = .02$ )

(On diagonal  $r = .01$  and off diagonal  $r = .03$ )

H3: Change in boss has a greater relationship with change in subordinate performance over time.

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	$\Delta$ Boss_Sub 2001-2002	$\Delta$ Boss_Sub 2001-2003
New Boss	.01	.04
Same Boss	.02	-.04
Effect of New Boss	-.01	.08

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Support for Hypothesis 3.

## H4. Social Learning Theory vs. A Conducive Learning Environment

- If *Social Learning Theory* is supported, the strongest relationships are between changes in boss and subordinate performance on the same dimensions. (matrices diagonal)
- If a *Conducive Learning Environment* is supported, boss' higher Energize and lower Edge/Execute is positively related to change in subordinate performance across all dimensions.

H4: A *Conducive Learning Environment* explains change in subordinate performance better than *Social Learning Theory*.

### Subordinate Performance Change in 2002

	Envision	Energize	Edge	Execute	Ethics	Avg $\beta$
<b>Boss Performance Change</b>						
$\Delta$ Envision	-.06	-.02	-.12	<b>-.19*</b>	-.07	<b>-.09</b>
$\Delta$ Energize	-.02	-.02	.01	.03	-.06	<b>-.01</b>
$\Delta$ Edge	.10	.07	.10	<b>.21*</b>	.16	<b>.13</b>
$\Delta$ Execute	-.04	.00	-.06	-.04	.01	<b>.03</b>
$\Delta$ Ethics	.07	.01	-.02	.03	-.01	<b>.02</b>

\* $p. < .10$ . Regression Beta Weight Matrices.  
 Social learning theory test. Obviously, not viable.

H4: A *Conducive Learning Environment* explains change in subordinate performance better than *Social Learning Theory*.

### Subordinate Performance Change in 2003

	Envision	Energize	Edge	Execute	Ethics	Avg $\beta$
<b>Boss Performance Change</b>						
$\Delta$ Envision	<b>-.04</b>	-.03	.05	.02	.12	<b>.02</b>
$\Delta$ Energize	.16	<b>.06</b>	.05	.15	.12	<b>.11</b>
$\Delta$ Edge	.08	.09	<b>-.06</b>	.03	-.02	<b>.02</b>
$\Delta$ Execute	-.14	-.01	-.04	<b>-.11</b>	-.04	<b>-.07</b>
$\Delta$ Ethics	.00	-.02	-.03	-.07	<b>-.07</b>	<b>-.04</b>

\*p. < .10. Regression Beta Weight Matrices.  
 Social learning theory test. Obviously, not viable.





# The upshot

- The 360 data may underestimate these effects: administrative and developmental purpose, lots of idiosyncratic bias, dubious construct validity
- Nonetheless, who you work for makes a difference; not just in your satisfaction, but also in your performance.
- There are cumulative effects of boss performance change that play out over time.
- A new boss with higher edge performance makes an impact initially, but increases in boss energizing performance impact subordinate performance over the long-term.
- A better boss is one who is more than a role model; a better boss creates a conducive learning environment. A better boss builds strategic capability and capacity for growth by developing people.

The image features a solid blue background. On the left side, there is a vertical spiral binding graphic with a gradient from light blue to green. A horizontal line, also with a gradient, runs across the middle of the page. The text "The END" is centered in the lower half of the page.

The  
END

H4: A *Conducive Learning Environment* explains change in subordinate performance better than *Social Learning Theory*.

**Boss Performance**

Envision Energize Edge Execute Ethics

**Subordinate Performance**

Δ Envision	.01	.10	.06	.00	.03
Δ Energize	.05	.08	.09	.06	.03
Δ Edge	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.04	-.04
Δ Execute	.03	.07	.04	-.01	-.03
Δ Ethics	.12	.11	.09	.07	.01

\* $p. < .10.$

Social learning theory test in Year 2. Not viable.  
 Energize  $r = .06$ ; On diagonal  $r = .01$