5-2023

A Focus on Followers: Examining Relationships between Elements of the Leader-Follower Relationship from the Follower's Perspective

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A Focus on Followers: Examining Relationships between Elements of the Leader-Follower Relationship from the Follower's Perspective

By

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A dissertation
submitted to the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business at
Florida Institute of Technology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Melbourne, Florida
May, 2023

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Abstract

Title: A Focus on Followers: Examining Relationships between Elements of the Leader-Follower Relationship from the Follower's Perspective

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This dissertation examines followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX-quality from the follower's perspective. This research used Kelley's followership framework, the full range leadership model, and the LMX-6 instrument to analyze each dimension of the leader-follower relationship. Using a sample of 89 followers from various backgrounds, the study collected data regarding each of the followers' unique relationships with their leader. These data provided insights into the followers' current followership style (i.e., their current levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement), their leaders 'behaviors, and the quality of their individual leader-follower relationship.

The researcher used the statistical program JASP to measure the existence and strength of relationships between these dimensions separately and together. The data presented weak, statistically significant relationships between transactional leadership behaviors and both followership dimensions when controlling for LMX-quality. The data also presented a weak statistically significant relationship between the active engagement dimension of followership style and LMX-quality

when controlling for leadership behaviors. Data analysis then proceeded with no control variables. The analysis identified a weak, statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and independent critical thinking and a strong, statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and active engagement. There was also a strong statistically significant relationship between LMX-quality and active engagement.

These findings provide a theoretical linkage between the three elements of the leader-follower relationship and help clarify the role of each within the relationship. The findings help explain the role of all leadership behaviors across the full range leadership model to influence followership style. LMX-quality did not appear to have a relationship with the independent critical thinking dimension of followership style but consistently had a positive relationship with active engagement. When examining the data together, the study identified a compounding, positive relationship between transformational leadership, LMX-quality, and followership dimensions.

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List of Keywords

Followership Style

Independent Critical Thinking

Active Engagement

Full Range Leadership Model

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Transactional Leadership

Transformational Leadership

Leader-Member Exchange

Perceived Contribution

Affect

Loyalty

Kelley's Followership Questionnaire

MLQ5X-Short

LMX-6

Correlation Research

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Acknowledgment

What a journey! This academic journey took place over the course of three years, three jobs, and one global pandemic. I could not have possibly hoped to persevere without the support of so many around me. First and foremost, I want to thank my wife, Krystle, for her unwavering support and only slightly wavering patience. I could not have done this without you. To my mom, Judy, thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me. To my dad, Mike, thank you for showing me the value of hard work and problem-solving. Thanks to you both for all that you sacrificed to give Dan and me the best possible start to life. To my brother, Dan, I win. To my good friends Kyle, Phil, and Eric, thank you for your encouragement and distractions.

I also could not have completed this journey without the support of my dissertation committee, College of Business professors, and staff. Thank you to you all for everything you do for your students. Thank you for the time you took from your personal lives to invest in me. Thank you for setting a great example of what it means to support the next generation of academics. To my chair, Dr. Delgado, thank you for keeping me focused and grounded and for all of your encouragement. To my committee members, Drs. Glassman, Jones, and Siegfeldt thank you for all you did to support and challenge me to present the best possible product.

A study of leadership and followership would not be possible without leaders and followers. To some of the great leaders I have had the pleasure to work

with, thank you. To some of these leaders, Jim Jacobson, Georges Gonzalez, Alexa Pelletier, and Heather Knable, thank you for the lessons you have taught me over the years to make me a better leader and follower. And to everyone trying to be a better leader or follower, I hope this work encourages you on that journey.

Dedication

For Frodo.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Overview

Studies of leadership or followership often follow a familiar pattern. They often consider one construct while leaving the other as a given or not considered at all. This bifurcation of the leader-follower dyad presents an incomplete picture of the relationship and its intricacies. The goal of this research is to explore the leader-follower relationship more holistically by examining the relationship between followership style, leadership behaviors, and leader-member exchange (LMX) from the follower's perspective. The study's results may aid business leaders in developing an enhanced understanding of the importance of considering followership in concert with leadership to achieve desired organizational outcomes.

This research used Kelley's (1992) framework to classify followership style based on followers' independent critical thinking and active engagement levels. The study considers leadership through the lens of the full range leadership model put forward by Avolio & Bass (1991). LMX theory serves as a measure of the quality of the relationship between leader and follower (Dansereau et al., 1975). Validated instruments measured followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality to enable data analysis. The researcher structured this explorative study with the research focus on followers working in vertical dyadic relationships who must solve organizational problems as part of their regular job duties.

The following paragraphs provide initial descriptions of each of the primary frameworks in the study. Subsequent sections detail the purpose of the research, the primary research questions, definitions of key terms, and the study's significance. The chapter concludes with a note on the organization of the balance of the dissertation.

Kelley's Followership Style Framework

Robert Kelley developed his followership model in 1988. His original work introduced elements of followership, how to develop effective followers, and the leader's role (Kelley, 1988). He notes that even though followership is a much more common part of business life, it is discussed and considered much less frequently than leadership. Followers find motivation in different ways, and leaders must meet followers' needs to serve them better. Kelley embraces the notion of seeing followers and leaders as different but equals within the organization. This view is contrary to many leadership studies that treat the leader-follower relationship as merely hierarchical rather than a collective exchange between the two parties (Souza & Wood, 2022).

Kelley (1988) encouraged leaders to understand that the need followers and their buy-in to execute their vision. He lays out five followership styles determined by the follower's level of independent critical thinking and their level of active or passive engagement in the organization. Kelley's original model identified these styles as Effective Followers, Alienated Followers, Yes People, Sheep, and Survivors (Kelley, 1988). He renamed several of these followership styles in his

1992 work, but their general qualities and categorization logic remained the same. He noted that effective followers are self-managed, committed to the organization, competent, and courageous (Kelley, 1988).

Kelley expanded his followership theory by exploring the nature of followership and followers' contributions to organizational success. He defines the "so what" of his research by stating that while 20% of organizational success is attributable to leaders, the remaining 80% is attributable to followers (Kelley, 1992). He clarifies that a follower is not simply someone who must be told what to do but rather someone who likely already knows what to do and needs to be empowered to do it more effectively.

Kelley's model is inherently transitory and subject to the follower's levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement at a given time and situation. Kelley (1992) devoted significant space in his book to discussing how leaders and followers can elevate followership styles. He continuously reiterated the importance of followers and their role in organizational success and provided recommendations to leaders on engaging their followers best. Further, he noted the value of each followership style and encouraged leaders to be creative in transforming followers' situations to drive organizational value (Kelley, 1992).

Kelley (1992) maps followership style on two axes: the follower's level of independent critical thinking and their level of active versus passive engagement with the organization. The independent critical thinking element is not necessarily a measure of mental acuity but rather the extent to which followers think for

themselves rather than deferring to the leader's judgment (Kelley, 2008). Followers may express this quality through actions like challenging the status quo while performing a process or challenging the leader to think about a problem differently. Kelley's (1992) followership questionnaire focuses on behaviors like constructively questioning the leader's decision-making process, acting according to the follower's ethical standards, and expanding the follower's scope of responsibility beyond the task at hand.

The second axis deals with followers' level of active versus passive engagement. Followers with high levels of active engagement look for ways to improve themselves and their contributions inside and outside of their roles. Followers with low levels of active engagement (or passive engagement) often fail to contribute outside of their roles and contribute less extra value outside of their core job functions (Kelley, 2008). Kelley's followership questionnaire focuses on behaviors like enthusiasm, alignment with the leader, and agreement between the follower's and the organization's goals (Kelley, 1992).

Based on the responses to the questions within his followership questionnaire, followers demonstrate one of the five followership styles: 1) exemplary, 2) alienated, 3) conformist, 4) passive, or 5) pragmatic (Kelley, 1992). These followership styles align with Kelley's original followership styles from his 1988 work which he renamed in his subsequent work. The following paragraphs introduce the measures of Kelley's followership framework and each of the five followership styles in turn.

Exemplary followers rank high in independent critical thinking and active engagement (Kelley, 1988). These followers think for themselves, operate with minimal oversight, and constructively challenge the leader and their decisions. Their commitment to the firm and the leader and their cognitive abilities make them valuable team members (Kelley, 1992). Alienated followers share similarities with exemplary followers in their ability to think critically, but they lack an active commitment to the organization (Kelley, 1988). These followers often possess the skills to be exemplary followers, but their engagement with the organization and cynicism limits their expression of those tendencies (Kelley, 1992). Further, their challenges to leaders are often less constructive than their exemplary colleagues and do not always serve to advance the conversation (Kelley, 2008).

Conformist followers are the organization's yes-people (Kelley, 1988). Followers who exhibit this style rank high in active engagement with the organization and low in independent critical thinking. They often defer to the leader and are more comfortable carrying out the leader's vision than questioning it (Kelley, 1992). Passive followers rank low in independent critical thinking and active engagement with the organization. Passive followers express their followership style by accomplishing tasks according to the leader's direction and giving no extra effort beyond what is required (Kelley, 1988). Pragmatic followers complete Kelley's (1988, 1992) model. These followers adapt their followership style to survive within the organization and under their current leader. Their actions and motivation often preserve the status quo (Kelley, 2008).

The Kelley followership framework measures followers based on a point-in-time assessment of independent critical thinking and active engagement. Accordingly, Kelley's model implies the ability of a follower's style to change based on the firm and leader. An alienated follower could move to an exemplary follower if something changed in the organization that increased their commitment. Similarly, an exemplary follower could fall into a conformist style if their leader failed to value the follower's perspectives and challenges. Understanding the role of leadership behaviors within this dynamic is the key aim of this study.

The Full Range Leadership Framework

Burns (1978) pioneered the idea of transformational leadership. His research integrated psychological elements from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs framework (Maslow, 1943) and prevailing leadership theory to describe a leader who could elevate employees' perceptions of work and commitment by fulfilling higher-order needs. In turn, these motivated employees contribute exceptional efforts to the organization and achieve more favorable outcomes (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) built on this work by formalizing the transformational-transactional leadership model using the first iteration of the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) to identify transformational leadership qualities and behaviors.

Based on the data from his study, Bass (1985) noted that leader behaviors exist on a spectrum with transformational at one end and transactional and laissez-faire styles at the other. Transformational leaders find ways to elevate their teams' perception of work and achieve greater organizational outcomes than their

transactional counterparts (Avolio et al., 1999). Transactional leaders tend to motivate their teams by offering rewards for performance and penalties for failure (Avolio et al., 1999). Laissez-faire leadership represents an abdication of responsibility and an absence of basic leadership behaviors (Bass, 2008).

Bass (1985) developed a framework around the "Four I's" of transformational leadership: Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration, and Inspirational Motivation. He characterized idealized influence as a leader's ability to inspire followers to identify with the leader (Bass, 1999). Intellectual stimulation involves the leader's ability to foster an environment where their followers challenge traditional methods and encourage their teams to think creatively (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders demonstrate individual consideration by considering their followers' specific needs and personalities (Bass, 2008). Inspirational motivation is a transformational leader's ability to develop an inspiring vision for the future, effectively communicate that vision to their followers, and inspire them to work toward its achievement (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Recent studies have shown many positive organizational outcomes associated with leaders who express transformational leadership behaviors. Stankov et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership behaviors can reduce the prevalence of workplace bullying when paired with ethical leadership and a strong organizational culture. Erschens et al. (2022) examined the influence of leadership behaviors on workplace well-being. They found a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and well-

being, while the absence of leadership showed a negative relationship to well-being. Similarly, Skopak & Hadzaihmetovic (2022) found a relationship between all four transformational leadership dimensions and job satisfaction among followers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Transactional leadership focuses on the leader's ambition to achieve organizational goals by providing followers with rewards for performance or consequences for failing to perform (Avolio et al., 1999). Transactional leaders base their relationship between leader and follower on fulfilling lower-order needs and not necessarily elevating followers' perceptions of work (Bass, 1999). This leadership style operates well within existing organizational paradigms and does not usually seek to transform the organizational culture (Bass & Avolio, 1993b). Instead, a transactional leader uses their authority to fulfill their and their subordinates' self-interests through task accomplishment. These behaviors can still yield positive organizational outcomes. Recent studies have shown positive relationships between transactional leadership behaviors and workplace safety (Lyubykh et al., 2022), implementation of total quality management initiatives (Yadeta et al., 2022), and resilient supply chain development (Taseer & Ahmed, 2022).

Laissez-faire leaders demonstrate few of the traditionally expected leadership behaviors. They tend to be absent leaders who provide minimal direction, leave followers to chart their own courses of action, and answer questions only when asked (Bass, 2008). These leaders may adopt this leadership style based

on their personality (Hogan & Hogan, 2002) or due to circumstances like an impending job transfer or layoff (Bass, 2008). Not surprisingly, this leadership style does little to motivate and elevate followers' perceptions of work and has been linked to negative behaviors such as lack of care and self-centeredness (Almeida et al., 2022). Laissez-faire leadership is often considered the least appealing style and often correlates with higher attrition levels than other leadership styles (Bass, 2008).

Bass (1985) put forward a set of six factors to measure leaders' tendencies toward transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire styles of leadership, and Bass & Avolio (1990) synthesized these factors into the first iteration of the MLQ. Bass and Avolio (1997) developed another iteration of the MLQ (the MLQ5X and the MLQ5X-Short) that addressed some of the limitations in the original survey. This instrument is the most current iteration at the time of this writing. Bass and Avolio designed the MLQ5X-Short instrument to be completed by subordinates and rank their supervisors' behaviors regarding transformational, transactional, and avoidant leadership.

Following the publication of the MLQ5X, the authors responded to criticisms and feedback about the model's validity. Avolio et al. analyzed responses from over 3,700 respondents from 14 distinct US-based and international organizations and found support for six lower-order factors and three higher-order factors (1999). The three higher-order factors refer to transformational, transactional, and passive leadership styles, with the lower-order factors referring to leaders' expression of certain characteristics and behaviors (Avolio et al., 1999).

These results support the authors' assertions that the MLQ5X is an appropriate tool for identifying leadership style in the full range leadership model.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on the quality of interactions between leaders and followers within their vertical dyadic relationship. In LMX theory, leaders and followers develop higher-quality relationships over time and, in turn, develop richer exchanges. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) noted that, as leaders and followers developed their relationships, the exchange quality related to their roles and influence became more partner-oriented. Further, as their relationships evolved, leaders and followers developed higher-quality exchanges that transitioned from self-interests to group interests (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Leaders and followers develop a unique relationship that changes over time. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1991) noted that the relationship progresses through three stages, 1) stranger, 2) acquaintance, and 3) mature partnership. The stranger stage takes place in the early days of the leader-follower relationship while both parties develop mutual trust and understanding. Leaders and followers tend to work more closely and communicate more effectively in the acquaintance phase (Northouse, 2010). A leader-follower relationship in the mature partnership phase displays mutual trust, effective communication, and shared goals that benefit the partnership and the organization (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991, 1995).

Another measure of LMX quality is the In-Group and Out-Group. Dansereau et al. (1975) identified these groups, which they referred to as cadre and hired hands, based on the quality of the leader-follower relationship and the level of effort that each group put forward. Followers in the In-Group have a close relationship and tight alignment with their leader and enjoy a high degree of trust, interaction, and support from the leader (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Followers in the In-Group are generally in the latter stages of the acquaintance stage or the mature partnership stage of the relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

On the other side of the spectrum, followers in the Out-Group tend to have less trust, support, and rewards than their In-Group counterparts (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Followers in the Out-Group tend to be in the stranger or early stages of the acquaintance stage of the leader-follower relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leaders can take steps to move followers from the Out-Group to the In-Group. Flauto (1999) advocated for effective communication as a tool to improve LMX quality, while Khan et al. (2022) encouraged leaders to set high expectations for their followers to drive progression toward the In-Group.

Recent scholarly research provides incentives for organizations to focus on driving high-quality LMX. Collins (2007) found that high-quality LMX had a direct, linear relationship with job satisfaction, while Barker (2022) identified a positive relationship between LMX and organizational commitment. Klieman et al.'s (2000) research found a correlation between high-quality LMX and followers with an expanded view of their role within the organization. These and other

studies highlighted throughout the dissertation illustrate the impact that high-quality LMX can have on the leader-follower relationship and the organization.

Synthesis

The above paragraphs describe the leader-follower dyad from three points of view. However, understanding the nature of each construct does not go far enough to drive organizational outcomes. For example, Kelley (1988) describes exemplary followers as those that expand their role, search for ways to enhance the organization, and drive innovations in their roles, and Bass (1985) describes transformational leadership as a way of motivating followers to achieve exceptional results. In between, the quality of LMX within the leader-follower relationship can influence the levels of trust, commitment, exchange, and rewards that the leader and follower share (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

The question that remains is, how does followership style respond to these transformational interventions within the context of LMX quality? Conversely, how does a follower's followership style react to laissez-faire behaviors and varying levels of LMX quality? This study seeks to explore these types of questions to obtain a deeper understanding of the leader-follower relationship.

Background and Rationale of the Study

The leader-follower relationship is ubiquitous in the business world. Leaders and followers work together to deliver results, drive innovation, and move the organization forward. The organization tasks leaders with the responsibility to

build up their followers, and leaders determine their individual approaches to accomplishing this mission. Leaders may choose to take a hands-off approach, motivate their teams via rewards, or seek to elevate their team's sense of how they perceive their work (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985). At the other end of the relationship, followers experience leader behaviors through the lens of their experiences and personalities. The leader's style may motivate them to think about problems more creatively or demotivate them to lessen their connection to the organization (Kelley, 1988, 1992).

The central tenet of Bass's original work on transformational leadership was its potential to drive exceptional results (Bass, 1985). Contemporary scholars expanded the framework through qualitative and quantitative studies and have shown its applicability in a variety of measures across multiple cultures. For example, Behery (2016) found support for a positive relationship between the Four I's framework and organizational commitment in the UAE, while Busari et al. (2020) identified a positive relationship between transformational leadership and favorable attitudes around organizational change with their study in Pakistan.

Scholars have also elaborated on transformational leadership's potential to yield positive organizational outcomes. One study found a positive relationship between team performance and transformational leadership (Soane et al., 2015), while another explored how transformational leaders inspire their teams to commit to and drive creative transformation (Kuepers, 2011). A study conducted in a military context expanded the scope of transformational leadership applicability.

The authors provided transformational leadership training to a group of leaders and observed that those leaders' teams performed better than the control group (Dvir et al., 2002).

Scholars tend to focus on transformational leadership, but transactional leadership can also be an effective leadership style. Judge & Piccolo (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of 87 studies to assess the validity of each element of the full range leadership model and examine potential relationships between these leadership styles to a slate of leadership criteria. Their study demonstrated high validity levels for transformational and transactional leadership and a strong negative relationship for laissez-faire leadership styles (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Interestingly, transactional leadership showed a higher correlation with followers' job satisfaction than transformational leadership and only a slightly lower correlation with followers' motivation levels (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

A prevalent theme in the followership literature is the idea that there are no leaders without followers (Goffee & Jones, 2001). After all, leadership is only as effective as the followers who carry out the leader's vision. Effective followership manifests itself in how followers feel about the organization and how they evolve their roles within the organization. Blanchard et al. (2009) found that exemplary followers with high levels of active engagement and independent critical thinking tended to have higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than their counterparts (Kelley, 1992). Further, exemplary followers may enhance the

expression of transformational leadership (Harris-Wilson, 2018; S. N. Khan et al., 2020).

Foundational and contemporary research regarding LMX highlights the positive organizational outcomes that can stem from high-quality LMX in many business settings. An early study by Graen & Scandura (1987) examining LMX quality focused on the role dyadic relationships play in completing unstructured tasks. They found that dyads with higher-quality LMX were more successful in executing these unstructured tasks. Contemporary research has continued to support the utility of LMX in driving positive organizational outcomes in a variety of settings. Some examples highlighting the benefits of high-quality LMX include higher levels of follower commitment to the organization in food service associates (Barker, 2022), enhanced readiness for new dentists to open their own practices (Danesh & Huber, 2022), and higher degrees of organizational commitment in followers in Pakistan (N. A. Khan et al., 2022).

The literature also presents evidence that effective followership may improve organizational outcomes. Gross (2020) examined followership within the context of organizational strategic flexibility. Based on the literature, they advanced a slate of propositions indicating that exemplary followers may enable the organization's strategic flexibility and strengthen its competitive position (Gross, 2020). In their dissertation, Fobbs (2010) examined the relationship between followership style and the expression of courageous follower behaviors. Their study found a strong relationship between exemplary followers and behaviors like

assuming responsibility, constructively challenging leaders, and facilitating change (Fobbs, 2010).

Through the leader-follower relationship, the two parties co-produce leadership (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Co-producing leadership requires followers who actively contribute ideas, challenge the leader, and champion change, along with leaders who enable these behaviors and act on them when appropriate (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Riggio, 2014). Traits of effective leaders and followers exist throughout the leadership and followership literature. However, understanding how to develop relationships that focus on cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect is critical in enhancing the leader-follower relationship.

Statement of the Problem

According to Kelley's (1988, 1992) model, followership style is a transitory measure based on the two dimensions of employees' feelings and attitudes regarding their employer and their level of independent critical thinking. The literature supports the position that exemplary followers tend to contribute more to organizational outcomes than other followers (e.g., Fobbs, 2010; Kelley, 1992; Lundin & Lancaster, 1990; Morton et al., 2011). Passive, alienated, and conformist followers may not contribute their full potential to the organization as exemplary followers do.

On the other side of the dyad, leadership plays a role in shaping followership style. Effective leaders elevate the way their teams perceive work, motivate them to

think about problems more critically, and work collaboratively to drive results (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). The full range leadership model identifies three leadership styles and maps leaders on the continuum based on their behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 2000). The literature contains many examples of transformational and transactional leaders driving results from an organizational outcome perspective, but not enough is known about how their individual behaviors shape followership style.

LMX assesses the alignment between the leader's and follower's goals, the leader's confidence in the follower, and the level of support between the leader and follower (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). Depending on the quality of these interactions between leader and follower, followers may find themselves in the In-Group or Out-Group (Dansereau et al., 1975). Followers in the In-Group enjoy access to the leader and higher degrees of trust than their counterparts in the Out-Group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). As detailed in the following chapter, scholars have built theoretical bridges between followership style and LMX quality. However, not enough is known about the relationships between LMX quality, followership style, and leadership behaviors from the follower's perspective.

Purpose of the Study

This quantitative study examined the relationship between followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality within a varied population of followers. The target population of followers has a dyadic relationship with a leader and is required to solve organizational problems as part of their role in their

firm. The study built a well-supported theoretical foundation that examines the leader-follower relationship in a holistic way. Rather than focusing only on the leader's influence on followers, this research examined followers' perceptions of themselves, their leader, and the ways in which they interact with their leader.

The study examined the leader-follower dyad and explored how leadership behaviors and LMX quality influence followership style. Specifically, this study examined the relationship between followership style dimensions, leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model, and the quality of LMX experienced between the leader-follower dyad (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Dansereau et al., 1975; Kelley, 1992). The study placed the transitory nature of followership style at the forefront and explored the interpersonal factors within the leader-follower dyad that may lead to changes in followership style.

This study's results provide insights into the relationship between followership style dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. The study also examined if leadership behaviors across the full range leadership model and LMX quality influence followers' dimensions of followership style (i.e., independent critical thinking and active engagement). Examining the influence of leadership behaviors across the full range of leadership styles is important because, even if a leader is predominantly transformational or transactional, they tend to express behaviors across the full leadership spectrum (Arenas et al., 2018).

Additionally, these results may help firms to better understand the intricacies of followership style, the role of LMX within the leader-follower

relationship, and the impact of leadership behaviors within that relationship. This enhanced knowledge may aid business leaders in identifying factors that impact followership style positively or negatively, recruiting and developing leaders, and monitoring the nature of the exchange between leader and follower.

Questions that Guide the Research

Creswell (2014) describes research questions as the vehicle by which researchers explore their study's phenomena. Tactically, Terrell (2016) views research questions as a way for researchers to focus their studies on the central themes they wish to explore. Creswell (2014) recommends that researchers limit their studies to one or two primary research questions and develop a small number of sub-questions for each primary question. Based on the aforementioned researchers' perspectives, the study advanced three primary (e.g., "**RQ1"**) and secondary (e.g., "**RQ1-a**) research questions. Each research question focuses on the independent variables' relationship to followership style, with the associated secondary research questions examining each dimension of followership style (i.e., independent critical thinking and active engagement).

RQ1: What is the relationship between followership style and leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model?

RQ1-a: How does leadership style (i.e., transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?

RQ1-b: How does leadership style (i.e., transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?

RQ2: What is the relationship between followership style and LMX quality?

RQ2-a: How does LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?

RQ2-b: How does LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?

RQ3: What relationship exists between the combination of leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model and LMX quality on followership style?

RQ3-a: How does the combination of leadership behaviors and LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?

RQ3-b: How does the combination of leadership behaviors and LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?

Definition of Terms

The leadership and followership literature has a suite of terms that are particular to the field of study and may not be widely understood outside that space. The following definitions of key terms will aid the reader in understanding the remainder of the material.

Active Engagement: The degree to which followers identify with and support the organization and its leaders (Kelley, 1988).

Alienated Followers: A followership style characterized by individuals with high levels of independent critical thinking and low levels of active engagement. These followers are competent in their roles but often disengaged from the organization (Kelley, 1992).

Conformist Followers: A followership style characterized by individuals with low levels of independent critical thinking and high levels of active engagement. These followers are often deferential to the leader's judgment and actively support them, even if their views do not align (Kelley, 1992).

Independent Critical Thinking: The degree to which followers exercise creativity and independence in enhancing and expanding their role and solving problems (Kelley, 1988).

Exemplary Followers: A followership style characterized by individuals with high levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement. These followers constructively challenge their leaders, seek to expand their

responsibilities, and work to improve the organization while supporting their leader (Kelley, 1992).

Followership Style: A archetypical representation of how a person thinks about their work and their level of active engagement with their leader and the organization (Kelley, 1992).

Full Range Leadership Model: A framework of leadership styles advanced by Avolio & Bass (1991), including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. These particular styles are each defined in this section.

In-Group: A group of followers who experience high-quality LMX and enjoy a high level of trust, interaction, support, and rewards from their leader (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Laissez-Faire Leadership: A leadership style on the full range leadership model continuum whereby the leader makes no effort to take responsibility, motivate followers, or engage in decision-making (Northouse, 2010).

Leader-Member Exchange: A theory that focuses on the vertical dyadic relationship between leader and follower and the nature, quality, and interactions that take place within the relationship (Northouse, 2010).

LMX-6: A six-question survey instrument designed to measure the contribution, loyalty, and affect sub-dimensions of LMX to determine LMX quality

and followers' placement within the In-Group or Out-Group (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: A survey instrument designed to measure leadership style within the full range leadership spectrum (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Out-Group: A group of followers who experience low-quality LMX and experience a lower level of trust, interaction, support, and rewards from their leader as compared to the In-Group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Pragmatist Followers: A followership style characterized by individuals with moderate levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement. Originally described as survivors (Kelley, 1988), these followers are often competent in their roles but skeptical of the organization and its politics (Kelley, 1992).

Transactional Leadership: A style of leadership originally developed by Burns (1979) describes leaders who motivate their teams by offering rewards for performance or corrective measures for performance deficiencies.

Transformational Leadership: A style of leadership originally developed by Burns (1978) describes leaders who engage with followers to raise their motivation levels. Later expanded on by Bass (1985), transformational leaders transform the way followers perceive their roles and move them toward a state of self-actualization.

Significance of the Study

Leaders rely on followers to carry out their vision and, in doing so, form an interdependent relationship with them to co-create the desired results (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Lord, 2008). For their part, followers interpret their leaders' behaviors through the lens of their lived experiences, personalities, and situational contexts (Kelley, 1992). The leader-follower relationship is ubiquitous in the working world, but each relationship is unique based on its participants. Though the leader acts in a position of authority, "followership implies commitment, but never without conditions" (Goffee & Jones, 2001, p. 148).

From an academic perspective, this research takes the big ideas of leadership and followership styles and examines them within a population of problem-solving followers to understand the relationship from the follower's point of view. The lessons learned and insights gleaned from the study will be valuable in understanding the leader-follower relationship more deeply and furthering the academic discussion about followership. The integration of followership theory into leadership theory is in its early stages within the academic conversation, and this work helps advance and highlight that burgeoning line of inquiry.

From the practitioner's and follower's perspective, this study helps explain some of the intricacies inherent in the relationship. Followership and leadership do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, followers and leaders interpret the relationship through the lens of their unique experiences. This research helps explain that relationship and, in doing so, clarifies how the leader-follower relationship works in

practice. Followers and leaders who understand these dynamics better have a greater likelihood of finding common ground and building a more effective working relationship.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of the dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter two examines the salient themes in the literature pertaining to followership, the full range leadership model, LMX, and their interactions. The chapter includes insights from foundational and contemporary authors to present a rich backdrop for the balance of the dissertation. Chapter three details the methods used to conduct the research. The methods section includes theoretical support for the study and the instruments used in its completion. Chapter four presents the results of data analysis and the results from hypothesis testing. Chapter five includes conclusions, recommendations for practitioners, and proposed avenues for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Overview

This chapter's purpose is to review foundational and contemporary literature to provide a basis for understanding and context for the study. A significant volume of research exists regarding Kelley's followership model, the full range leadership model, and LMX theory. This section's intent is to review and synthesize the current state of the literature and develop a foundational understanding of each construct to provide context for the study (Winchester & Salji, 2016).

Cooper (2010) details different approaches literature reviews may use, including strategies such as integrating different scholars' voices, criticizing existing work, developing theoretical linkages between constructs, and identifying key themes within a discipline. This literature review seeks to build a theoretical bridge between leader behaviors within the full range leadership model, Kelley's (1992) followership style framework, and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

The remainder of the chapter details the literature review search criteria, summarizes pertinent studies concerning followership, leadership, and LMX, and culminates with an integration of these constructs. The study pays special attention to the dynamic nature of followership styles, the influence that leader behaviors may have on followership style, and how leaders and followers interact via LMX theory. The chapter concludes with a brief recap and highlights the gap in the literature this study seeks to fill.

Literature Search Strategy

This study used the following databases to identify and consolidate research for review: ProQuest (which includes literature from databases such as ABI/INFORM Collection, Business Markets Research Collection, and APA PsycArticles), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, and Google Scholar. The study used the following keywords related to followership style: *Kelley, critical thinking, active engagement, exemplary follower, alienated follower, passive follower, conformist follower, and pragmatic follower.* Keywords related to the full range leadership model included: *transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, contingent reward, management by exception, absent leadership, leadership behaviors, leadership theory, Bass.* Finally, keywords related to LMX included: *leader-member exchange, LMX-6, In-Group, Out-Group*. This study considers relevant scholarly journal articles, relevant meta-analyses, and foundational works without considering publication dates.

Kelley's Followership Style

This study uses Kelley's (1988) framework to examine followership dimensions. Followership theory was in its early development stages when Kelley wrote his foundational work, with most literature focusing on controlling followers. Developing a basic knowledge of the state of the literature when Kelley developed

his framework is beneficial in understanding the novelty of his framework and its utility in this research.

Early Followership Theory

Research around followership outside of leadership studies focuses on classifying followers according to their personal, cognitive, or interpersonal characteristics. Contrary to one of the main thrusts of leadership scholarship, much of the followership research focuses on how followers execute their roles rather than how they define them. Scholars have approached followership style from several angles, each reflective of prevailing social norms.

Pigors (1934) wrote one of the earlier works on followership. They saw leadership as a mutual undertaking that "controls human energy in the pursuit of a common cause" (Pigors, 1934, p. 378). Their work considers followers as agents who carry out the leader's vision and may modify it to fit their shared ambitions. Pigor's model considered the follower's grasp of the leader's and organization's aims and how their efforts contributed to accomplishing those ambitions. In this context, they put forward four followership types.

- **Constructive** – These followers are well attuned to the shared ambition and work diligently in its achievement. They challenge the leader's vision and think through solutions to potential challenges.

- **Routine –** These followers are remarkably average and can handle an average workload. They perform the work in front of them but may not frequently seek out additional tasks to move the project forward.
- **Impulsive –** These followers are emotionally driven and unreliable. They are prone to follow their own interests and do not commit to the organization's ambitions.
- **Subversive –** Like impulsive followers, subversive followers consider their self-interests above the organization's interests. Their lack of organizational affiliation makes them difficult to manage, and their lack of loyalty can make them difficult to inspire.

Zaleznik (1965) developed a framework of followership styles from a different perspective than most contemporary followership research. They developed their framework based on helping leaders understand conflicts with their followers. The degree to which the follower sought situational dominance and their level of active participation in the conflict determined their classification in one of four subordinacy patterns.

- **Impulsive –** These followers have a high need for dominance and actively participate in conflict. They seek to undermine the leader actively and subvert their authority.
- **Compulsive –** These followers have a high need for dominance and take a passive role in conflict. They seek to control authority through subtle acts of noncompliance and passive-aggressive behavior.

- **Masochistic –** These followers have a tendency toward submission and take an active role in conflict. This follower may engage in self-destructive activities to rebel indirectly against the organization.
- **Withdrawn -** These followers tend to be submissive and take a passive role in conflict. Withdrawn followers are typically apathetic and deliver only the bare minimum work required to stay employed.

Chaleff (2009) sought to expand the followership construct and highlight the follower's role in accomplishing organizational goals. They focused on followers' responsibilities to themselves, the organization, and their leaders to act as courageous followers. Chaleff presented a courageous followership framework based on the follower's supportiveness of the leader and their willingness to challenge the leader when their actions or decisions do not align with accepted values. This followership style framework is inherently transitory based on the follower's perceptions of the leader and the organization. Based on these criteria, Chaleff describes four followership styles.

- **Partner –** These followers present high support for the leader and a high willingness to challenge them. Partners help the leader accomplish their vision and provide constructive feedback to fine-tune its final form.
- **Implementer -** These followers present high support for the leader and a low willingness to challenge them. Implementers support the leader's vision and work hard to execute it according to the leader's design.

- **Individualist –** These followers present low support for the leader and a high willingness to challenge them. Individualists have the cognitive ability to challenge the leader effectively but often lack the organizational commitment to partner in the change efforts.
- **Resource –** These followers present low support for the leader and a low willingness to challenge them. Resources help move the leader's plan forward but do not often make extraordinary contributions to refining or implementing the vision.

Kellerman (2007, 2008) presented a followership model based on the follower's level of engagement with the organization and the leader. They positioned their framework as a tool for leaders to assess the level of buy-in from their followers. Kellerman elected to measure followership style based on engagement because of the overarching effect the follower's feelings about the organization and leader have on the leader-follower relationship. Their followership matrix consisted of five types based on this measure.

- **Diehard** – These followers fully commit to the organization and are willing to sacrifice in its defense personally. They are willing to take down leaders they feel are damaging to the organization, even at the expense of their own employment.
- **Activist –** These followers deeply engage with the organization and take its success personally. They partner with leaders to support ideas they

believe in and actively work against them if they feel their leader's actions are damaging to the organization.

- **Participant** – These followers invest their time and effort into the organization and genuinely work to make a difference. They support their leaders when their ambitions align and may subvert them when they are not aligned.
- **Bystander** – These followers understand the leader and the organization but do not engage with them more than is required to preserve their self-interests. They support the status quo by not engaging with the organization or working toward its improvement.
- **Isolate** – These followers are the least engaged follower type. They generally do not attract much of the leader's attention and do little to change the organization.

Kelley's (1988, 1992) framework integrates many of the attributes laid out by other scholars. Like Chaleff and Kellerman, Kelley's followership framework assesses followership at a point in time and embraces the notion of followership style changing according to the situation. Kelley's model assesses the follower's independent critical thinking and active engagement levels to determine their current followership style. This model's openness to leader-follower exchange being able to influence style makes it an appropriate fit for the study.

Followership Style Dimensions

Independent Critical Thinking

Kelley (1992) described followers with high levels of independent critical thinking as being self-starters, independent, and creative. As a counter-example, Kelley (1992) notes that followers with low levels of independent critical thinking rely on their leaders heavily for mundane guidance and have difficulty executing beyond their direct assignments. Independent critical thinking allows followers to contribute to the organization by enabling them to discern solutions to complex problems, understand how their contributions fit within the broader organization, and think through possible outcomes in decision-making (Manning & Robertson, 2016). This attribute allows followers to synthesize their past experiences to develop a view of future outcomes and identify the optimal solution (Shipp et al., 2009).

Followers express high levels of independent critical thinking in how they think about their role and how they transform it to make it their own. They challenge their leader's direction if it does not make sense to them based on their experience and offer solutions that better address the problem (Kelley, 1992; Solovy, 2005). The overarching theme in followers with high levels of independent critical thinking is a desire not to outsource their thinking to the leader (Kelley, 1992, 2008; Manning & Robertson, 2016). This type of thinking is not always something followers inherently possess. Followers can learn and refine independent critical thinking skills as they gain experience within their discipline

(Elder & Paul, 2010). In applying independent critical thinking, followers analyze information, conceptualize the problem, and develop a strategy to solve the problem by restructuring interdisciplinary knowledge as a solution (Elder & Paul, 2010).

Active Engagement

Kelley (1988, 1992) described active engagement as a follower's desire to participate actively in the organization's mission. Kelley (1992) notes that engaged followers take ownership of their roles, exceed expectations, and do not wait for the leader to provide explicit direction. Followers with high levels of active engagement buy into the organization's mission and have the desire to participate fully to see it come to fruition. Active engagement prompts followers to internalize the organization's vision (Travis, 2015) and give extra effort to see it succeed (Kelley & Caplan, 1993). Active engagement inspires followers to supplement the leader's efforts by providing their own kind of leadership to their peers in concert with the leader (Solovy, 2005).

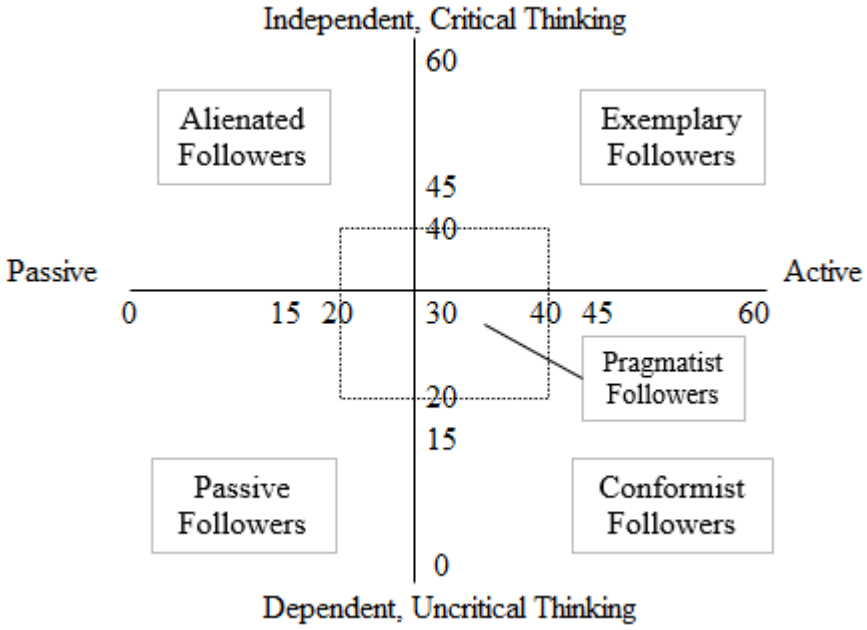
Followers express active engagement primarily through their demonstrated commitment to the organization. They enable leaders to succeed by anticipating their needs and being self-motivated to find solutions (Kelley, 1992). Actively engaged followers also seek ownership within the organization. Followers demonstrate ownership by actively participating in designing and implementing organizational initiatives and taking responsibility for their operations and results (Carsten & Bligh, 2008). Actively engaged followers commit to the organization

(A. Blanchard et al., 2009) and work independently and within their team to deliver their best results (Jiang et al., 2021; Solovy, 2005).

Followership Styles

Kelley's (1988, 1992) model assigns a followership style based on the follower's independent critical thinking and active engagement levels. Followers determine their current followership style by completing Kelley's Followership Questionnaire, which is a 20-question assessment that measures each dimension. Each question pertains to either independent critical thinking or active engagement, and participants rank their agreement with each question on a scale of 0-6, with 0 being rarely and 6 being almost always. The assessor sums the total value for each dimension and plots the results according to the chart in Figure 1. If followers' responses for both dimensions fall outside the middle tertile, they fit into either exemplary, alienated, conformist, or passive followership styles. If their answers fall within the middle tertile, they fall into the pragmatist followership style. The following sections describe followers' characteristics in each of these followership styles and how they can move toward becoming an exemplary follower.

Figure 1. Kelley's Followership Styles



Note: *From* Kelley, R. (1992). *The power of followership* (1st ed.). Doubleday.

Exemplary Followers

These followers rank highly in independent critical thinking and active engagement. They are enthusiastic supporters of the organization and work to champion its ambitions (Kelley, 1992). Exemplary followers support the leader's vision, but only so long as it passes their independent assessment of its merits (Kelley, 2008). The exemplary followership style is similar to Chaleff's (2009) partner and Kellerman's (2008) activist followership style. In these models, these followers leverage their relationships with their leaders and other followers to move the organization forward and increase their own organizational value (Kelley, 1992).

Exemplary followers are valuable resources in that they genuinely seek to add value to the organization and act as an extension of the leader to advance their vision. Their qualities as self-starters enable leaders to focus their attention on strategic priorities rather than day-to-day operations (Kelley, 1988). Their high levels of independent critical thinking enable them to work through challenges and develop creative solutions and strategies. Gross' (2019) research supported Kelley's positions about exemplary followers. They found that exemplary followers demonstrated entrepreneurial leadership, vision, problem-solving, and risk-taking behaviors. Additionally, their high levels of active engagement motivate them to work hard to achieve the organization's goals and give the extra effort needed for success (Kelley, 1992).

Alienated Followers

These followers rank highly in independent critical thinking and low in active engagement. Alienated followers have similar levels of creativity as exemplary followers, but the low level of active engagement significantly discounts the value they add to the organization (Kelley, 2008). Whereas exemplary followers support the leader's vision, alienated followers may deliberately work against it to further their own self-interests (Kelley, 1992). Alienated followers have the capacity to develop unique solutions, but they generally lack the motivation to apply their creativity and perform to their potential (Bennis, 2008; Kelley & Caplan, 1993).

Alienated followers have the potential to be valuable resources within the organization. However, they require an investment of the leader's time and energy to yield these results. Kelley (1992) identified potential causes for followers to become alienated, such as being overburdened, underappreciated, or lacking trust in the leader and the organization. Leaders can help move followers from alienated to exemplary by addressing the root causes of the follower's discontent. If the organization makes a good-faith effort to remedy the situation, followers may move into the exemplary category and utilize their full potential (Kelley, 1992).

Conformist Followers

These followers rank low in independent critical thinking and high in active engagement. Originally referred to as "yes-people," conformist followers have a strong attachment to the organization but are unlikely to challenge it (Kelley, 1988, 1992). This followership style resembles Chaleff's (2009) implementer style and Kellerman's (2008) participant style. These researchers describe conformist followers as individuals willing to support their leader but require a significant investment of time and direction to perform. Conformist followers show high levels of commitment to the organization but struggle to develop their own views and solutions (Manning & Robertson, 2016).

Conformist followers can move toward exemplary followers by improving their confidence and problem-solving abilities (Kelley, 1992). As conformist followers become better practiced at evaluating information, thinking through potential solutions, and visualizing alternative paths, they build their confidence to

apply this thinking organically. Kelley (1992) also encourages conformist followers to constructively challenge their peers and the leader to develop confidence and internalize others' ideas. Leaders can support this development within their followers by providing a safe environment to experiment with ideas and framing failure as an opportunity to learn.

Passive Followers

These followers rank low in independent critical thinking and active engagement. Kelley (1988) originally referred to passive followers as sheep and described them as the followers who rely on leaders to do their thinking for them and lack the engagement to be self-starters. Passive followers lack the desirable traits of being dynamic and creative (Manning & Robertson, 2016) and resemble Chaleff's (2009) resource followership style. Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (2009) described these followers as those who are willing to do what their leaders ask of them but require direction and motivation to accomplish their tasks. Leaders, however, may find that the effort required to direct passive followers outweighs the benefits of their willingness to work.

Kelley (1992) notes that passive followers are often the result of followers who have not developed the skills to operate in a team environment or the result of a leader who treats them like sheep. In this regard, leaders have a dual responsibility to develop their followers' team skills and develop an environment that promotes critical thinking and engagement. Exemplary followers may also play a role in developing passive followers. They may serve as role models for

passive followers to aspire toward, help establish team culture, and act as mentors (Bennis, 2008; Jiang et al., 2021).

Pragmatic Followers

These followers do not rank especially highly in either independent critical thinking or active engagement. Their unremarkable levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement make them generally capable and knowledgeable, but they do not have the same passion or mindset as their exemplary counterparts (Kelley, 1992). These followers tend to avoid taking a firm position and generally abide by the status quo (Kelley, 2008). Though these followers generally do not cause organizational disruptions, they also do not build a strong reputation as contributors or emerge as informal leaders (Jiang et al., 2021; Kelley, 1992). This is not to say that pragmatic followers do not add value to the organization. Gross (2019) found that pragmatic followers demonstrated strategic decision-making abilities and were valuable in executing strategic initiatives.

Kelley (1992) noted that pragmatic followers could move toward exemplary by deciding if their role in the organization is sufficient for their needs. Pragmatic followers may be able to move toward exemplary by changing their circumstances to something that brings them more personal satisfaction and challenge. Leaders can support this through transformational leadership behaviors like individual consideration and intellectual stimulation to provide new challenges according to the follower's needs (Bass, 1985). Kelley (1992) encourages leaders to view

pragmatic followers as underutilized resources in search of their proper fit within the organization.

The Full Range Leadership Model

Like most theoretical frameworks, the full range leadership model amalgamates several researchers' theories. Burns' (1978) work provided part of the theoretical foundation for the model. His work focused on the interactions and exchanges between leaders and followers and studied the differences in motivation and outcomes between different types of exchanges. He noted that some leaders appealed to their followers by offering rewards for performance. In contrast, others appealed to their followers by elevating their perception of their role and sought to increase motivation and commitment (Burns, 1978). In a later work, Burns (2008) carried this sentiment forward by noting that leadership is about connecting with followers to build relationships and shared success.

Near the time of Burns' work, House was developing a theory of charismatic leadership. House (1976) synthesized the literature around charisma and developed a theoretical model of the charismatic leader. He noted that the literature frequently referred to leaders with high levels of self-confidence, dominance, and conviction as being charismatic (House, 1976). From this foundation, he developed a set of behaviors that charismatic leaders typically express. These behaviors include acting as a role model, developing an authentic, positive image of themselves for their followers, setting a vision for the future, setting high expectations while demonstrating confidence, and finding ways to motivate their teams (House, 1976).

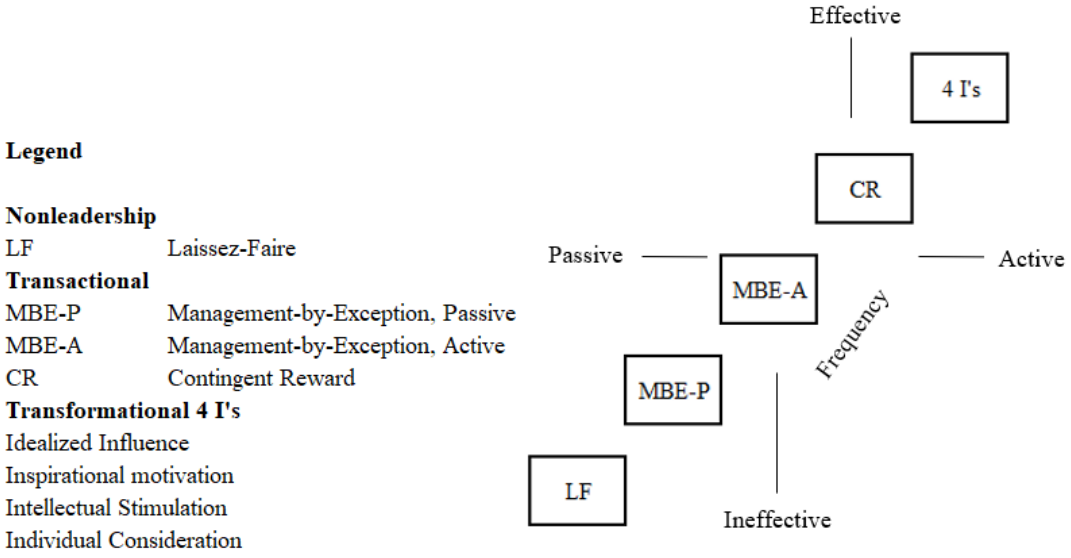
Taken together, House's theory provides an archetypical representation of a leader who leverages their innate characteristics to drive organizational outcomes.

Bass (1985) built upon these frameworks to develop the beginnings of the full range leadership model. He built upon Burns' (1978) framework by further exploring the leader-follower relationship and how it transcends short-term organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2010). Bass's (1985) work placed leadership styles on a continuum, with transformational at one end and laissez-faire at the other. This model addressed the complexity of the leader-follower relationship and how a leader may need to express behaviors across the continuum to drive desired results. Bass's (1985) work expanded House's (1976) work by operationalizing a leader's charisma and expanding on how they use charisma to influence, motivate, and inspire their teams.

Several years after his initial work, Bass and Avolio (1994) went on to define and build out the full range leadership model. They built upon Bass's (1985) original continuum and identified eight factors to describe each leadership dimension. Figure 2 plots the full range leadership model on the axes of leadership efficacy and the leader's involvement level. They note that transformational leadership tends to be more effective and requires the leader to take a more active role in their duties (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Avolio (1999) went on to emphasize the notion that leaders have a suite of styles available to them to use based on the situation, and they should use the full range of leadership styles to drive organizational outcomes. While transformational leadership often drives superior

results, he notes that transactional leadership is an effective tool in many situations (Avolio, 1999).

Figure 2. The Full Range Leadership Model



Note: *From* Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage. As cited in Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Transformational Leadership Dimensions

Leaders express transformational leadership via a set of four behaviors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Each behavior addresses followers' needs in different ways and serves to enhance their perception of their role and contributions (Northouse, 2010).

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is a personality-centric dimension of transformational leadership that describes how followers view the leader. This dimension is akin to charisma and deals with how leaders' personalities and actions inspire their followers to aspire to an elevated performance level (Bass, 1985; Northouse, 2010). Leaders who embody idealized influence typically have a strong moral code, operate according to a well-known set of ethics, and have followers and peers who trust them (Arenas et al., 2018; Northouse, 2010). These leaders are often well-known in the organization, and followers imagine them when asked to think of a moral leader (Arenas et al., 2018).

The MLQ5X-Short bifurcates the idealized influence factor by leaders' behaviors and attributes (Bass & Avolio, 2000). This distinction is notable in that these types of leaders can influence their followers with their actions and their personal, perceived characteristics. Leaders express idealized influence by portraying an authentic image of an honest and accomplished leader that followers want to emulate (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hargis et al., 2011). Leaders' behaviors may include the judicious use of power and recognition of followers' achievements and embody attributes of competence and resilience (Kirkbride, 2006). These behaviors and attributes provide followers with an archetype from whom they draw inspiration.

Individual Consideration

Individual consideration is how leaders consider their followers' specific needs and personalities and personalize their interactions to maximize their impact (Bass, 2008). Understanding followers and being able to flex their leadership style requires the leader to spend time and attention learning and synthesizing their followers' idiosyncrasies. Transformational leaders express concern for their followers (Bass, 1999), take time to understand their needs, and help them grow within their roles (Bass & Avolio, 1993b). Avolio et al. (1999) identified themes like building on individual strengths, teaching, and respecting their followers' individuality in their interactions. Individual consideration requires leaders to adopt a flexible approach to leadership by interacting with their followers according to their individual leader-follower relationship.

Transformational leaders tailor their leadership style to fit the needs of their followers rather than taking a generic approach. Leaders express individual consideration by being attuned to their followers' unique needs and working to mentor them and develop their potential (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders who express individual consideration understand the mutual exchange in the leader-follower relationship and seek to build up followers according to their needs (Bass, 1999). Transformational leaders delegate assignments, provide structure, and customize their interaction style based on the followers' needs with the intent of elevating the follower's performance and fulfillment (Antonakis et al., 2003;

Northouse, 2010). Individual consideration yields a dual benefit to the leader and follower by aligning the organization's interests with its members (Bass, 1999).

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation is a transformational leader's ability to develop an inspiring vision for the future, effectively communicate that vision to their followers, and inspire them to work toward its achievement (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Bass (2008) stressed the importance of transformational leaders communicating a challenging and realistic vision so that followers can see themselves achieving the vision. Transformational leaders supplement this motivating vision of the future with encouragement, communicating high standards, and being optimistic about the team and its ability to succeed (Bass, 1997). Combining a clear sense of purpose, encouragement to achieve the vision, and using their actions as role model behaviors enable transformational leaders and their followers to achieve organizational success (Avolio et al., 1999).

A transformational leader may express inspirational motivation by challenging their followers to consider an ambitious future state and encouraging them to envision how they can achieve it (Antonakis et al., 2003). Transformational leaders help their followers see their role in achieving the vision and motivate them to play their part in its achievement (Northouse, 2010). Transformational leaders can express inspirational motivation to encourage their followers to embrace challenges and work through failure. Inspirational motivation can help followers

look past a temporary setback, learn from failure, and see their potential in achieving organizational goals (Arenas et al., 2018).

Intellectual Stimulation

Bass (1985) described intellectual stimulation as a leader's ability to foster an environment where their followers challenge traditional methods and encourage their teams to think creatively. Transformational leaders seek new solutions to problems and motivate their teams to develop new approaches to solving them through intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1997). Avolio et al. (1999) reinforced the idea that transformational leaders and their teams challenge the status quo by considering a diverse suite of solutions to problems rather than what others tried in the past. These leaders tend to empower their teams to develop novel solutions to problems by providing them with resources and support. A recent study illustrated a counter-example where leaders who prevented their teams from solving problems creatively had teams with lower performance and more risk avoidance (Pearsall et al., 2022).

Transformational leaders may express intellectual stimulation by giving their followers autonomy to solve problems. The transformational leader empowers their followers to seek out solutions that may run counter to organizational norms or even the leader's preferences (Northouse, 2010). Followers experience intellectual stimulation when their leaders give them the latitude to think of creative solutions to problems and support them in bringing those ideas to fruition (Arenas et al., 2018). Transformational leaders may pair intellectual stimulation behaviors with individual

consideration behaviors to leverage their followers' idiosyncratic attributes to solve organizational problems (Antonakis et al., 2003).

Transactional Leadership Dimensions

Like transformational leadership, leaders express transactional leadership according to a framework of behaviors. These include contingent reward, active and passive management by exception, and laissez-faire behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These behaviors focus less on elevating perceptions of work and more on goal accomplishment and performance management.

Contingent Reward

Contingent reward involves the leader exchanging incentives for follower performance (Bass, 1985). For contingent reward behaviors to work, leaders must set distinct, measurable performance targets and consistently assess followers against those standards (Arenas et al., 2018; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). From the follower's perspective, the contingent reward approach removes ambiguity around expectations and outcomes related to performance (Arenas et al., 2018). Researchers see contingent reward as a positive interaction within the leader-follower relationship where leaders fulfill their obligations to followers through a contractual exchange of rewards for performance (Arenas et al., 2018; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Northouse, 2010).

Leaders express contingent reward behaviors by developing reward systems that codify and incentivize performance targets. Reward systems are sometimes

monetary but may also include non-monetary incentives such as recognition, time away from work, or opportunities to participate in projects (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Leaders and followers can work collaboratively to develop reward systems that act in both parties' interests, which can lead to enhanced job satisfaction levels (Skopak & Hadzaihmetovic, 2022). Once established, leaders support the contingent reward system by clarifying expectations, providing feedback on follower performance, and fulfilling their obligations within the system (Antonakis et al., 2003; Howell & Avolio, 1993). Contingent reward systems can also enhance organizational dynamic capabilities by improving sensing and seizing capabilities (F. Xu & Wang, 2019). These systems inherently rely on a relationship between the leader and follower characterized by trust and goodwill for both parties to meet expectations.

Active Management by Exception

Active management by exception is an interaction system characterized by leaders promptly correcting deviations from expected performance (Bass, 1985). This transactional leadership dimension is inherently negative in that it focuses on the leader's role in taking corrective action against performance that fails to meet expectations (Arenas et al., 2018; Northouse, 2010). The distinguishing characteristic of active management by exception is the time-based nature of taking corrective action (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Northouse, 2010). The active management by exception style focuses on leaders' proclivity to correct deviations

from expected behaviors quickly, with the intent of ensuring followers meet prescribed performance standards (Antonakis et al., 2003).

Leaders express active management by exception behaviors by setting performance expectations with followers and actively monitoring performance to identify performance deficiencies (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Leaders may also take corrective action with followers if they identify even minor deviations in performance in order to avoid escalating negative consequences (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Followers may perceive leaders with a tendency to express active management by exception behaviors as micromanagers who closely monitor performance and provide frequent feedback on performance. Leaders often express these behaviors to correct minor problems early with the hope of avoiding more serious problems in the future (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Passive Management by Exception

Passive management by exception shares many similarities with active management by exception, but the key differentiator concerns the timing of when leaders deliver feedback and corrective actions to followers (Bass, 1985; Howell & Avolio, 1993). Leaders employ a passive management by exception leadership style when they do not wish to address deficiencies timely unless the situation calls for immediate correction (Arenas et al., 2018). This leadership style aligns with active management by exception, but the corrective actions occur after the task's completion (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Passive management by exception addresses

performance issues only after followers have failed to meet the leader's standards, thus losing out on coaching opportunities along the way (Antonakis et al., 2003).

Leaders may express a passive management by exception style by withholding feedback until the end of a project or only offering feedback when a follower fails. Leaders who use this style often focus on maintaining the status quo, and when circumstances force them to act, they often regress into passivity after addressing the issue (Kirkbride, 2006). Followers may perceive leaders with a passive style as disconnected and lacking transparency since feedback from them is rare and often delivered well after it could improve a task (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Northouse, 2010). Similar to active management by exception, followers experience passive management by exception negatively since the bulk of their interactions with their leaders focuses on correcting deficiencies (Arenas et al., 2018; Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is a form of non-leadership which ranks as the most passive and ineffective form of leadership style according to the full range leadership model (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The laissez-faire leadership style avoids interactions with followers and a general abdication of the leader's responsibility to take charge of their responsibilities (Hargis et al., 2011). This leadership style is disconnected from followers and takes no concerted interest in their development, motivation, or self-actualization (Hargis et al., 2011). Kirkbride (2006) notes that a leader's use of the laissez-faire style may result in

follower conflict since there is no authoritative presence to clarify roles and responsibilities, potentially leading to a loss of operating effectiveness within the team. A recent study even identified a relationship between laissez-faire leadership and construction accidents in India (Sankar et al., 2022).

Leaders tend to express laissez-faire behaviors via a lack of action. These leaders may occupy a role that involves authority, but they do little to engage with their teams and substantively lead (Northouse, 2010). Laissez-faire leaders avoid responsibility by not making decisions, ignoring their obligations, and not engaging with their followers (Arenas et al., 2018). Followers experience laissez-faire leadership by having to fend for themselves to discern performance expectations and lacking clarity on how their role fits within the broader organization (Antonakis et al., 2003). Further, followers fail to experience the developmental elements of transformational and transactional leadership due to the leader's unwillingness to engage (Hargis et al., 2011).

Alternative Leadership Frameworks

This study used the full range leadership model to study the leader-follower relationship. The researcher also considered alternatives to the full range leadership model but selected it because of the framework's versatility in capturing a wide range of behaviors. The following section briefly introduces three alternative leadership frameworks and explains why the study did not include them.

- **Situational Leadership** – Blanchard et al. (1985) developed a framework of leadership behaviors that depend on followers' development levels. They advocated for leaders to flex their expression of supportive and directive behavior based on the follower's experience. The model classifies leadership behaviors as either directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating and instructs leaders to express these behaviors according to the follower's needs.

  The researcher elected not to study this leadership style because it is primarily directive in nature. The model instructs leaders to behave according to the follower's development level, whereas the full range leadership model describes leadership behaviors according to how effectively and actively they behave. Since the study examined the influence that leadership behaviors have on followers, the full range leadership model's wider net is more appropriate.

- **Servant Leadership** – Greenleaf (1970, 1998) developed servant leadership as a leadership style that seeks to serve followers and develop authority rather than power. Servant leadership focuses on taking care of followers, putting them first, and ensuring the leader takes care of the follower's needs. The framework highlights the leader's role in caring for their followers and developing them.

  Like situational leadership, servant leadership is also a directive leadership framework. Caring for followers and investing in their development is a

worthwhile endeavor, but the framework does not fit as a framework for this research. This work sought to understand how leaders interact with followers in a variety of circumstances, including those where the leader expresses behaviors across the full spectrum in response to the situation.

Leader-Member Exchange

After discussing followership style and leadership style, it is important to explore the relationships between them via leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX considers the unique relationship shared by followers and leaders, the relationship's quality, and the relationship's influence on organizational outcomes (e.g., employee commitment, job performance) (Northouse, 2010). LMX explores the leader-follower relationship by examining the subdimensions of contribution, loyalty, and affect (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) and followers' placement in either the leader's in-group or out-group (Dansereau et al., 1975).

LMX Theory Development

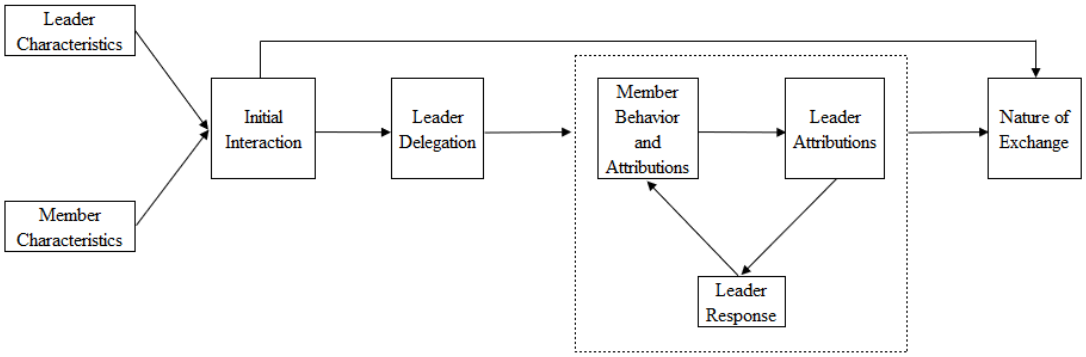
Dansereau et al.'s (1975) work laid the theoretical foundation for LMX. Their research focus shifted away from the traditional approach of studying leaders' behaviors and instead considered how leaders and followers interact within their vertical dyadic relationships (Dansereau et al., 1975). This work codified an oft-observed phenomenon in the workplace where some team members have more access to the leader, and others appear more marginalized. They described these two groups as the "cadre" and "hired hands," where the former tend to receive more

information and give extra effort, and the latter tend to receive less of the leader's attention and feedback (Dansereau et al., 1975).

Dienesch & Liden (1986) continued the theory's development by developing a three-dimensional framework of LMX, including loyalty, leader-follower affect, and leader-follower contributions to the exchange. They noted that, as followers develop their particular roles, the relationship between leader and follower changes and results in varied exchanges (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). They also refined the two groups previously defined by Dansereau et al. (1975), describing them as the In-Group and Out-Group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). The In-Group tended to have a higher degree of trust in the leader, better quality interactions, higher support, and more rewards than their counterparts in the Out-Group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Dienesch & Liden (1986) also introduced a linear model of how relationships develop within the leader-follower dyad (Figure 3). Their model considers the leader's and follower's characteristics and their interaction to form a unique exchange style. The elements noted within the model correspond to the authors' dimensions of loyalty, leader-follower affection, and leader-follower contributions. Leaders' and followers' contributions and interactions serve to enhance or diminish LMX quality throughout the relationship's lifecycle.

Figure 3. Model of the Leader-Member Exchange developmental process



Note: From Dienesch, R. M., & Liden, R. C. (1986). Leader-Member Exchange model of leadership: A critique and further development. *Academy of Management Review*, *11*(3), 618–634. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1986.4306242

Graen & Scandura (1987) explored the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers to accomplish unstructured tasks via grounded theory development. They defined unstructured tasks as those requiring more than simple instructions and a partnership between the leader and follower. They found that leaders and followers worked together to develop solutions to these tasks through role-making and role routinization (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Graen & Scandura (1987) noted that LMX could be high or low quality depending on the specific relationship but that higher quality interactions had a positive relationship with task accomplishment.

LMX Theory Expansion and Application

LMX opened an alternative way of thinking about the leader-follower relationship by focusing attention on vertical dyadic interactions rather than the

leader's attributes (Northouse, 2010). This novel approach to the leader-follower relationship invited researchers from a wide variety of disciplines to develop further and apply LMX theory.

A reasonable next step in the development of LMX theory is determining a way to assess the quality of the vertical dyadic relationship. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1991) explored this approach by studying how the leader-follower relationship evolves over time, moving from contractual to one characterized by mutual influence. They noted that relationships tended to evolve as the dyad worked together, progressing in stages they referred to as stranger, acquaintance, to mature partnership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). The stranger stage takes place early in the relationship before the leader and follower have an opportunity to develop mutual trust. During this stage of low-quality LMX, organizational rules and norms tend to govern the relationship, with both parties tending to act in their own interests (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Northouse, 2010).

LMX quality is higher in the acquaintance phase. During this phase, the leader and follower form a closer relationship and improve the quality of dialogue and assignments between the parties (Northouse, 2010). Interactions tend to become more organic and productive as the leader and follower develop trust in their relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Higher degrees of trust and LMX quality characterize the mature partnership phase. During this phase, the leader and follower tend to interact closely and work collaboratively to accomplish organizational goals (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991, 1995). Leaders and followers in the

mature partnership phase tend to act in each other's and the organization's interests to enhance their partnership (Northouse, 2010).

The passage of time does not guarantee the leader-follower dyad's progression through the stranger-acquaintance-mature partnership stages. Followers may not be interested in developing a deeper relationship with the leader and vice-versa. "The vertical exchange that takes place between the superior and the subordinate is the key that defines the relationship and the leadership behavior" (Flauto, 1999, p. 89). Indeed, well-tenured followers may still experience low-quality LMX with their leader and remain a part of the Out-Group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Recent scholarly work has continued to support the importance of improving LMX quality and moving followers toward the In-Group, and supporting followers as they progress through their careers (Li et al., 2020).

Flauto (1999) focused on communication competence as an antecedent to high-quality LMX. They posited that a leader's ability to communicate effectively was necessary for developing high-quality LMX. The study's data supported their hypothesis and found that high-quality LMX was an effective predictor of communication competence and an effective tool for developing the In-Group (Flauto, 1999). Klieman et al. (2000) studied LMX within the context of role-making. They defined job breadth as the follower's perception of their role's boundaries. They then examined how LMX quality factored into how followers defined job breadth. They found a relationship between high-quality LMX and followers in the In-Group and enhanced job breadth (Klieman et al., 2000).

Several authors also explored a research avenue connecting LMX to followers' organizational perceptions. Collins' (2007) work studied LMX in the context of food service employees. They examined whether there was a connection between the quality of LMX and followers' perceptions of job satisfaction. They found support for a direct, linear relationship between LMX quality and followers' perceptions of job satisfaction. Barker (2022) researched the relationship between LMX and organizational support on remote workers' sense of organizational commitment. They found a significant, linear relationship between LMX quality and organizational commitment.

Researchers expanded the scholarly discussion of LMX outside of the US and the traditional business context. Khan et al. (2022), for example, studied LMX's role in organizational commitment within the context of bank managers in Pakistan. They found results similar to studies in western countries, with high-quality LMX related to higher levels of organizational commitment. Turkmenoglu et al.'s (2022) research found that LMX quality helped mitigate the risk of workplace alienation and team members' alignment toward shared goals. Similarly, Du et al.'s (2023) study found that LMX quality helped mediate the relationship between leader and follower alignment and engagement.

Danesh & Huber (2022) examined the role of LMX quality on the leader-follower dyads that exist in dentistry. These dyads typically consist of recent graduates and experienced practitioners operating a practice. They integrated Graen & Uhl-Bien's (1995) stranger to mature partnership framework with typical roles

found in dentistry. They recommended that dentists in a mentorship role should focus on LMX quality to help develop new dentists' skills in practicing medicine and operating their own practice (Danesh & Huber, 2022).

Literature Integration

The preceding sections described the foundations of Kelley's followership model, the full range leadership model, and LMX theory. These constructs connect by way of the leader-follower relationship and the exchange that takes place between the two parties. It is well documented in the literature that there can be no leaders without followers, and leaders can only lead with their followers' support (Bjugstad et al., 2006a; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; DePree, 1992; Goffee & Jones, 2001; Kelley & Caplan, 1993).

The study explored the influence that leadership behaviors, according to the full range leadership model, and LMX quality has on followership. The study sought to explore how these individual elements of the leader-follower relationship work together to better understand the leader-follower experience. The following section brings the followership, leadership, and LMX literature together to build a theoretical foundation for how the leader-follower relationship can influence followership style and the implications of those changes on organizational outcomes.

Implications of Followership Style on Organizational Outcomes

In the modern working world, a high level of independent critical thinking and active engagement are valuable assets. More and more frequently, followers work with teammates and customers across a broad demographic spectrum and must tailor their interactions to meet various customer needs. As an example, Read (2020) found that understanding followership dimensions can promote positive organizational outcomes. They noted that incorporating an understanding of followership dimensions in leadership training helped improve the leader-follower relationship and improved organizational agility at a US government organization. The population of followers in this study includes those that solve problems as a regular part of their role. Their employer may provide guidance, resources, and training to facilitate their development, but the followers act as the driving force for their efforts to be successful.

The follower's levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement can have a material influence on how they approach their job responsibilities. Manning & Robertson (2016) developed a framework of effective followership behaviors based on both of Kelley's (1992) followership dimensions. Followers with higher levels of independent critical thinking can analyze complex information, identify errors, and develop novel solutions to complicated problems (Manning & Robertson, 2016). Independent critical thinking also enables followers to be more self-managed, communicate more effectively, and critically examine themselves to identify areas for improvement (Bennis, 2008).

The literature provides a bridge between independent critical thinking and followers' job performance. The behaviors that Manning & Robertson's (2016) identified in their framework provide followers with the tools they need to understand their customers' needs, avoid mistakes, work through solving complex problems, and help their customers make challenging decisions. Bennis's (2008) focus on using independent critical thinking for self-improvement lends itself well to the followers who participated in this research. Their ability to manage their workload effectively, develop effective lines of communication with their customers, and work to improve their skills directly influence their performance for the company and themselves (Bennis, 2008).

Active engagement also influences followers' job performance. Carsten & Bligh (2008) note that when followers participate in the design and implementation of their roles, they tend to take ownership of those roles and give the extra effort needed to be successful. Bennis (2008) observed that leaders might inspire followers, but followers do not necessarily depend on them for inspiration. Followers with high levels of active engagement may also take more initiative in their roles and work to help their teams achieve success (Goffee & Jones, 2001). Actively engaged followers may also show higher levels of commitment to their work and the organization, making them a reliable fixture within the organization (Solovy, 2005).

Followers who show high levels of active engagement can be valuable contributors to the firm and themselves. They actively design their business model,

recruit clients, and maintain relationships (Carsten & Bligh, 2008; Manning & Robertson, 2016). High levels of active engagement facilitate these follower behaviors, which benefit the follower and the firm. Actively engaged followers are also self-starters and can provide self-directed leadership to best contribute to their firm (Bennis, 2008). These qualities help facilitate a high level of responsiveness to meet changing client demands. Exemplary followers are likely to buy into the organization's mission and embrace their role. Their commitment facilitates a reciprocal relationship with the firm and their clients to maximize their collective wealth (Goffee & Jones, 2001; Solovy, 2005).

Implications of Leadership Behaviors on Followership Style Dimensions

The leader-follower dyad is a complex relationship whereby the leader receives authority from the organization, but for them to be effective, their followers must accept their leadership (DePree, 1992; Hansen, 1987). Today's organizations operate in an environment where followers have access to a wealth of information about the firm, its initiative, and its leaders. Leaders no longer have this inferred power from being the gatekeeper of corporate knowledge (Brown, 2003). Instead, they must find ways to interact with their followers to persuade them to accept their leadership according to their followers' idiosyncrasies (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). Leaders who develop a compelling reason for followers to follow them have the potential to create effective leadership and shape follower behaviors (Bjugstad et al., 2006a; Dvir et al., 2002; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Transformational leadership behaviors offer the leader a variety of avenues to influence follower behavior and are often linked with higher performance levels than transactional leadership (Sharma & Nair, 2019). Transformational leaders concern themselves with their follower's development and reaching their full potential (Avolio, 1999; Northouse, 2010; Okoli et al., 2021). Leaders can express a range of behaviors to support their followers' professional development, job satisfaction, and job performance (e.g., Dai et al., 2022; Yuwono et al., 2022a).

Idealized influence behaviors offer the follower a template to model their behaviors and provide a means for self-reflection to understand their strengths and opportunities (Northouse, 2010). Idealized influence behaviors may help followers see active engagement clearly, help them learn new problem-solving techniques, and be more accepting of organizational change (Busari et al., 2020). Inspirational motivation behaviors may help followers understand how their role fits into broader organizational objectives and motivate them to elevate their performance in service of the mission (Arenas et al., 2018; Bennis, 2008; Changar & Atan, 2021). These behaviors may help foster a deeper sense of engagement with the organization by allowing followers to see their role more clearly. Further, Khan et al. (2020) found that all four transformational leadership dimensions were positively related to Kelley's (1988) followership style dimensions.

Intellectual stimulation behaviors allow the leader to provide challenging assignments to individual followers or teams of followers. By challenging their followers to work through challenging problems and allowing creativity, they can

help them develop critical thinking skills individually and collectively within the team (Bass, 1985; Manning & Robertson, 2016; Turnbull & Edwards, 2005). Individualized consideration behaviors allow leaders to understand their followers and tailor their leadership and job design approach to their particular needs (Northouse, 2010; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). If a follower shows signs of a lack of organizational commitment, the transformational leader can work with them to help demonstrate their value to the organization and their role's importance. If a follower struggles to take the initiative to find innovative solutions, the leader can develop opportunities for the follower to build their skills and gain confidence (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993b).

Transactional leadership behaviors may also influence followership behaviors. Contingent reward behaviors provide a clear, contractual exchange basis for followers' efforts (Bass, 1985). The contractual nature of contingent reward may act as a substitute for a follower's active engagement. Rather than being motivated by a sense of belonging to the organization, the dual obligation between the leader and follower may act as the motivator (Kelley, 1992). A contingent reward system may also help followers develop independent critical thinking if leaders design the system to incentivize attributes like creativity, teamwork, and novelty in developing solutions. Howell & Avolio (1993) noted that contingent reward systems do not have to be monetary. In fact, leaders can design contingent reward systems to build engagement and critical thinking, like opportunities for

cross-training, opportunities to attend seminars, and leadership opportunities (Manning & Robertson, 2016).

Management by exception behaviors have an inherently negative connotation, but they may still have utility in influencing follower behaviors (Arenas et al., 2018; Northouse, 2010). Active management by exception behaviors can be useful in helping followers develop their independent critical thinking by obtaining timely feedback so that they can modify their problem-solving approach (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Consistent and fair expressions of active management by exception may also help followers build active engagement by allowing them to see their ownership role within the process (Carsten & Bligh, 2008; Manning & Robertson, 2016).

Passive management by exception and laissez-faire behaviors have fewer opportunities to influence followership behaviors. By not addressing performance deficiencies promptly, leaders often miss the opportunity to shape follower behavior into a more desirable pattern (Antonakis et al., 2003). Though leaders may still influence followers' behaviors, they lose the benefit of the follower having meaningful context for the correction. Laissez-faire behaviors are inherently absent, so they are unlikely to influence followership behaviors (Northouse, 2010).

Without the leader's intervention, followers must develop their own levels of critical thinking and active engagement. One example of this is a recent study of gig workers showed that this is possible. They found that the participants in their study developed meaningful roles and active engagement even in the absence of

leadership (Roberts & Douglas, 2022). This may be the case for some followers, but it does not appear to be the norm. While some followers may have the self-motivation to grow without the leader's presence, laissez-faire leaders cede the opportunity to mentor and develop their followers (Hargis et al., 2011).

Implications of LMX on Followership Style Dimensions

Considering the nature and quality of the LMX enables researchers to develop new lines of inquiry into the leader-follower relationship. Danserau et al.'s (1975) research was unique in that it did not just consider the leader's authority but rather how the leader and follower work together. Further developments in understanding the importance of the quality of LMX and the nature of the In-Group and Out-Group integrate well with Kelley's (1992) followership dimensions.

Followers develop their followership style based on their personal disposition and their relationship with their leader. Similarly, followers and leaders experience LMX based on the unique nature of their vertical relationship. Graen & Scandura (1987) established that LMX quality impacts the organization and the leader's and follower's career development. The LMX-6 tool used in this study measures LMX quality via questions about the follower's contribution, the follower's loyalty, and affect between the leader and follower (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

Schriesheim et al.'s (1992) LMX dimensions and Kelley's (1988) followership style dimensions present an opportunity for alignment. Contribution

deals with the follower's ability to perform their job well and the leader's confidence in them. Exemplary followers with high levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement can use these attributes to perform well for their organization and rate highly in contribution (Gross, 2019; Kelley, 1992; Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). The LMX-6's loyalty dimension considers the leader's and follower's goal alignment in the organization. This relates well to the active engagement dimension in that it shows the follower's commitment to the organization's goals and supports their leader in pursuit of those goals (Kelley, 1988; Liang et al., 2022; Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992; Velez & Neves, 2022).

The LMX-6 measures affect by how well the leader and follower rate their levels of interaction with each other and the follower's perception of their leader's support in solving challenging problems (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). These subdimensions of affect tie in directly with active engagement and independent critical thinking. For active engagement, Bjugstad et al. (2006a) noted that followers were more successful in achieving organizational outcomes when they had their leader's support and trust. For independent critical thinking, Bennis (2008) found that followers can use their skills to amplify their leader's strengths when they feel supported. These attributes of active engagement and independent critical thinking share fundamental similarities with the affect dimension.

Followers who experience high-quality LMX rate their leaders positively in questions related to contribution, loyalty, and affect. Leaders can drive high-quality LMX by fostering a relationship where followers develop high levels of

independent critical thinking and active engagement. Manning & Robertson's (2016) effective followership behaviors framework provides direct linkages between LMX and followership theories. Actively engaged followers are dynamic, committed, and take ownership of tasks. These attributes tie directly to all three of Schriesheim et al.'s (1992) LMX dimensions. Similarly, followers with high levels of critical thinking assimilated complex information, formed independent views, and developed original solutions, which also have the potential to enhance LMX quality (Manning & Robertson, 2016).

LMX quality drives the formation of the In-Group and Out-Group in organizations. The In-Group enjoys a higher degree of trust with the leader, more interaction, and superior rewards. The Out-Group, however, experiences reduced trust, less support, and inferior rewards (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Dansereau et al. (1975) noted that the In-Group tended to be more dependable, expended extra effort toward organizational goals, and aligned better with the leader's intent. These qualities share a similarity with Kelley's (1992) exemplary followers. Kelley (1988) noted that exemplary followers displayed a willingness to support the organization's goals and expend extra effort to solve challenging problems.

It is reasonable to draw a theoretical linkage between In-Group followers and exemplary followers as well as Out-Group followers and passive followers. As an example, recent studies established theoretical linkages between high-quality LMX, organizational commitment, and followers' likelihood to take charge of their

roles (Barker, 2022; A. J. Xu et al., 2023). Similarly, Blanchard (2009) found that followers with higher degrees of independent critical thinking and active engagement reported higher levels of organizational commitment than their counterparts. Another example of the relationship between followership style and LMX quality pertains to job satisfaction. Kelley (1992) found that exemplary followers tended to have higher degrees of job satisfaction that their counterparts. Followers experiencing high-quality LMX tended to echo this sentiment in Collins' (2007) research.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the theoretical foundations of followership theory, the full range leadership model, and LMX. Kelley's (1988, 1992) followership model also provides a dynamic scale to explore the influence of leadership behaviors and LMX on followership style. Though other frameworks measure followership style, Kelley's model is the most appropriate for this research. Kelley's consideration of independent critical thinking and active engagement cover two critical success factors for followers who exercise judgment in solving organizational challenges. Independent critical thinking enables followers to work through multiple scenarios to determine the optimal solution. Active engagement keeps the follower invested in the success of the firm, their clients, and themselves. Being a self-starter and having the resilience to work through challenging times is crucial for success.

The full range leadership model is a suitable framework for this study in that it captures a wide variety of leadership behaviors. The idiosyncrasies in

transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors provide a broad spectrum of behaviors to explore. Further, as Bass (1985) noted, leaders express leadership behaviors across the full range of the model. This means that a follower's leader may express idealized influence and contingent reward behaviors fluidly depending on the situation and the follower. Further, the full range leadership model is not prescriptive; rather, it allows plots behaviors across a spectrum.

Finally, LMX theory brings into focus the vertical dyadic relationship between the leader and follower. This framework facilitates the examination of how the leader and follower work together to co-create leadership and measure the quality of the exchange (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Graen et al., 1987). High-quality LMX can improve the follower's experience at work and potentially enhance their willingness to display higher levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Kelley, 1988). Where the full range leadership model describes leadership behaviors, LMX describes the nature and quality of the exchange between the leader and follower. These data aid in developing a deeper understanding of the unique relationship.

The researcher identified a trove of studies dedicated to followership theory, the full range leadership model, and LMX. Many leadership studies considered followership as a given, while others gave limited consideration to followership style. Conversely, most followership literature took an expected follower-centric view. It considered leadership and the nature of the exchange as something that

happened to the follower. This study elucidates how leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model and LMX quality relate to followership style and each other. While searching the literature to develop thisstudy, this researcher found no works that explored the leader-follower relationship in this way.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Overview

This study explored the relationship between followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX. A varied group of followers who engage in problem-solving within their organization under the direction of a supervisor served as the population. The relevant theoretical frameworks the study used were Kelley's followership style framework, the full range leadership model, and the LMX framework (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985; Dansereau et al., 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Kelley, 1992).

Prior research using Kelley's followership framework has shown that followership style can influence work performance across a variety of organizations and cultures (e.g., Bennis, 2008; Jiang et al., 2021; Manning & Robertson, 2016; Solovy, 2005; Tanoff & Barlow, 2002). Similarly, prior research using the full range leadership framework has clarified the role leadership behaviors play in influencing, motivating, and developing followers (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985; Hargis et al., 2011; Northouse, 2010). Authors studying LMX in leader-follower relationships frequently identified relationships between LMX quality and organizational outcomes like role expansion, task completion, and organizational support (Barker, 2022; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Klieman et al., 2000). This study's overarching intent was to examine the interaction between these constructs

and how they work together as leaders and followers co-create their dyadic relationship (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

This chapter describes the procedures performed in conducting this study. It includes the study's overall strategic aims and tactical steps to accomplish them. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by bringing together observations around three separate but related constructs concerning followership and leadership. By exploring the confluence of these interactions, the research enhances the understanding of the leader-follower dyad by focusing on how the follower experiences leadership behaviors and the conditions in which those behaviors occur. The research also contributes to the body of knowledge by offering additional data points to evaluate against established theoretical frameworks.

The study's results provide firms with insights into how leadership behaviors from across the full range leadership model and LMX quality influence followership style. Tangible takeaways for business leaders include guidance on areas such as understanding follower characteristics, follower job placement, job design and enhancement, leadership recruitment, and leadership training. By better understanding their followers' characteristics, firms can design targeted action plans to enhance levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement in their followers. Firms can also use these insights to enable their leaders to deliver precision interventions that are tailored to their followers' unique needs.

Philosophical Worldview

A researcher's theoretical perspective helps determine the appropriate methods for the study to accomplish the researcher's objectives (Crotty, 1998). Gray (2013) notes that a researcher's theoretical perspective guides the research design and approach. Similarly, Creswell sees theoretical worldviews as "a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 35).

Social constructivism is the most appropriate interpretive framework for this research. It involves exploring the subjective meanings of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach acknowledges that individuals internalize their experiences according to their history and values and that different individuals may internalize a different meaning from the same experience (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gray, 2013). This research examines the relationships between leaders, followers, and the quality of their vertical relationship. A social constructivist worldview fits this research's goals because it considers the complex relationship between leaders and followers, their history with one another, and the social factors involved in their interactions.

Organization of the Remainder of the Chapter

The study's design follows in twelve main sections within this chapter. The first section of this chapter presents the research questions and sub-questions that guide the research. The second section of this chapter presents the research design,

which includes an overview of the study's quantitative approach and the rationale for selecting this methodology. The third section describes the population and sample for the study. The fourth section describes how the researcher selected and recruited participants. The fifth section discusses the instruments used in the research. The sixth section details the procedures to complete the study. The seventh section describes how the researcher collected data. The eighth section of this chapter discusses the data analysis method for the study. The ninth section introduces the study's hypotheses. The tenth section covers ethical considerations for the research, including institutional review board (IRB) documentation. The chapter's eleventh section describes the researcher's positionality. The final section describes what steps the researcher used to ensure validity and trustworthiness.

Research Questions

Three primary research questions and six sub-questions guided the research. The author used these questions to examine the leader-follower relationship and the influence of LMX on the relationship. These research questions focused the study on examining followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. The research questions are:

- **RQ1**: What is the relationship between followership style and leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model?

- **RQ1-a**: How does leadership style (i.e., transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?
- **RQ1-b**: How does leadership style (i.e., transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?
- **RQ2**: What is the relationship between followership style and LMX quality?
- **RQ2-a**: How does LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?
- **RQ2-b**: How does LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?
- **RQ3:** What relationship exists between the combination of leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model and LMX quality on followership style?
- **RQ3-a**: How does the combination of leadership behaviors and LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with independent critical thinking?
- **RQ3-b**: How does the combination of leadership behaviors and LMX quality influence follower characteristics associated with active engagement?

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach to examine the leader-follower relationship and the influence of LMX on the relationship. This research collected data from a varied group of followers who worked under a supervisor's guidance and were required to solve organizational problems as part of their job duties. Since the research questions sought to examine the relationship between leadership behaviors and LMX quality with followership style, an exploratory, correlational research approach was appropriate. Creswell (2014) notes that researchers can use correlational research to examine the existence and strength of relationships between variables. Sekaran & Bougie (2019) recommend that researchers adopt a structured approach to the research design that describes the research strategy, measurement, and data analysis plan. A reliable research plan facilitates making key decisions about the study's structure and participants and codifies the data analysis process (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

Details of the Study

This study used a nonexperimental research strategy and collected data via a survey hosted on the online platform Qualtrics. According to Creswell (2014), survey research is appropriate when the research goals are to learn about a population's beliefs and attitudes about a certain topic. The study is exploratory in nature and sought to identify what, if any, relationship exists between the constructs of followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. Survey research is well-suited for this type of exploration in that it allows the participant to describe

their perceptions of each construct and then enables researchers to examine how the responses fit together (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

There was very little interference introduced in the course of data collection. Since the study's goal was to measure participants' perceptions of their followership style, their leader's behaviors, and LMX quality within their relationship, the researcher limited their involvement in data collection to simply providing a link to the survey. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2019), this constitutes minimal interference since there was no need to seek additional details or infer the participants' motivations behind their responses. Participants responded to the survey with their unique work circumstances in mind. This approach resulted in a non-contrived setting for the study rather than a contrived, artificial environment (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

The unit of measure for the research was at the individual-level. While the research examined the leader-follower relationship, the point of view was the individual follower within that relationship. By selecting followers with particular attributes (e.g., required to solve problems) and using appropriate instrumentation, the study was able to examine the leader-follower relationship with input solely from the follower. The time horizon for the study was cross-sectional. Participants answered the survey questions with their current leader in mind, and the study did not track individual followers' perceptions of themselves and their leaders over time.

Dependent Variables

The study considered the following dependent, independent, and demographic variables in the correlational analysis. The dependent variables in this research were the sub-dimensions of followership style (i.e., independent critical thinking and active engagement). Kelley's (1988, 1992) followership framework served as the theoretical basis for followership style, along with Kelley's Followership Questionnaire as the measurement tool. This framework was appropriate as it measures followership style at a point in time and considers the follower's perceptions of their work and leader. Respondents answered 20 questions pertaining to their levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement.

The result is two scores, one for independent critical thinking and another for active engagement. The location of these data points on Kelley's (1992) scale corresponds to higher or lower levels of each sub-dimension. The plot location on the axes corresponds to a particular followership style (e.g., exemplary, alienated). Lower net scores correspond to the lower levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement found in passive followers. Conversely, higher net scores correspond to the higher levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement found in exemplary followers.

Independent Variables

The research design considered two independent variables: leadership behaviors and LMX quality. The instruments to measure these variables included scoring rubrics that enabled correlational analysis in JASP.

Leadership Style

This research used the full range leadership model and MLQ5X-Short to assess leadership style as an independent variable (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1997). This framework was appropriate for the research as it considers specific leadership behaviors as the follower perceives them. Respondents answered 45 questions about their leader's behaviors in a variety of circumstances. Each of the questions pertained to one of the leadership styles along the full range leadership model (i.e., laissez-faire, transactional, or transformational) and the leader's tendency to express those kinds of behaviors. The outcome of the assessment is a data point along the full range leadership spectrum, which correlates to a propensity for that leader to exhibit a particular leadership style.

LMX Quality

LMX quality was also an independent variable. Similar to the MLQ5X-Short, the tool to measure LMX in the study assesses LMX quality from the follower's perspective based on interactions with their leader. The LMX-6 instrument considers the follower's perception of their contribution, loyalty, and affect within their leader-follower relationship (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

The instrument includes two questions within each of the three categories and returns a numeric score from 6 – 30. Lower scores indicate lower-quality LMX and higher scores indicate higher-quality LMX. Respondents who return scores in the upper half of the scoring range fall in the In-Group, whereas those who return scores in the lower half of the scoring range fall in the Out-Group (Northouse, 2010).

Other Variables

In addition to the measures to assess the dependent variable and independent variables above, the survey also collected seven types of demographic data from the participants. These data points enabled the researcher to describe the sample group and analyze themes within smaller subsets of the sample group. These questions were optional and did not collect any personally identifiable information from participants.

Demographic Questions:

- tenure in years with current firm
- industry
- role description (e.g., individual contributor, manager)
- professional certifications
- age
- gender
- supervisor's gender

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was not specific to a particular industry and included individuals in a leader-follower relationship whose roles required them to solve organizational problems. This population was appropriate to satisfy the research objective, which was to explore the relationships between followership, leadership style, and LMX quality at an industry-agnostic level (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The research is exploratory in nature because the researcher did not identify contemporary or foundational studies that measure these three constructs together. As such, the study targeted a large population with the intent of identifying and measuring relationships within the resulting data set.

It is not feasible to estimate the population of followers who fit the study's criteria. Therefore, an a priori analysis was necessary to determine the study's minimum acceptable sample size using a power analysis. A power analysis considers the study's power (1-β), effect size, and significance (α) to determine the appropriate sample size given user inputs. Power deals with the study's risk of not rejecting a false null hypothesis, or Type II errors (Banerjee et al., 2009). Effect size measures the influence each independent variable has on the dependent variable (Memon et al., 2020). Significance pertains to the study's ability to appropriately reject the null hypothesis in the sample data (Memon et al., 2020).

The G*Power software application facilitated the study's power analysis (Faul et al., 2007, 2009). Commonly accepted values served as the basis for each entry. Power was set to 0.80 and significance was set to 0.05 (Memon et al., 2020).

Prior studies could not serve as the basis of an effect size, so a moderate effect size was set at 0.3 (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2007; Sapp, 2017). Based on these inputs, G*Power determined that a sample size of 84 participants would provide sufficient support to meet these targets. This value fell within other well-established sampling rules of thumb (e.g., Chang et al., 2006; Cohen, 1988; Roscoe, 1975) and appeared reasonable for the study.

Non-probability sampling methods drove this study's recruitment strategy. Specifically, the study used purposive sampling techniques to recruit participants who met pre-defined criteria. Sekaran & Bougie (2019) describe purposive sampling as an approach to target a group of potential participants who can contribute to the study's objectives because they meet certain pre-established criteria. Purposive sampling techniques also enable researchers to reach participants with certain desirable characteristics that fit the study's criteria (Yuwono et al., 2022). Though this technique presents a challenge to the broad generalizability of findings, it enabled the research to focus directly on an identified population (Maxheimer & Nicholls-Nixon, 2022).

Participant Selection

There were two pre-defined criteria for selecting participants (i.e., solves organizational problems as part of their role and has a direct reporting relationship with a supervisor) that pre-screened each potential participant before they took the survey. If a potential participant indicated that they did not meet either of the criteria, then the survey would end automatically.

This study used a purposive sampling approach that was industry-agnostic. For the purposes of recruitment, this study used social media (e.g., LinkedIn), professional organizations, and word of mouth. Some participants were personally known to the researcher, but since all responses were anonymous and aggregated, these results were not discernable. Further, the researcher did not act in a supervisory capacity with any associates or in a leadership position within any professional organization during the data collection process.

Participants were encouraged to share the recruiting materials with colleagues in their professional networks, which introduced a snowball sampling strategy. Snowball sampling involves participants in a study identifying and recruiting further participants and can be an effective method to reach participants with desirable qualities for a study (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Vogt, 1999). All participants were made aware of their rights via the study's informed consent verbiage (including the researcher's and major advisor's contact information) on the opening page of the survey, as shown in Appendix A.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a survey to facilitate data collection. It consisted of an informed consent page, two pre-screening questions, followed by three instruments validated by their respective authors (i.e., Kelley's Followership Questionnaire, the MLQ5X-Short, and LMX-6), and demographic questions. Refer to Appendix B for the study's instrumentation.

Kelley's Followership Questionnaire

Kelley's Followership Questionnaire survey is a 20-item survey that assesses a follower's level of independent critical thinking and active engagement at a point in time. Many researchers have validated this instrument and found support for its factors and scales (e.g., Blanchard et al., 2009; Tanoff & Barlow, 2002; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The questionnaire includes 10 items that measure independent critical thinking and 10 items that measure active engagement. Participants answer these questions based on a 7-point scale. Kelley (1992) includes a scoring rubric for participants to plot their followership style in one of five quadrants.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Rater Form (MLQ5X-Short)

The MLQ5X-Short is a 45-question questionnaire that determines the participant's leader's leadership tendencies according to the full range leadership model. Participants respond to each question on a 5-point scale based on their perceptions of their leader. Each item in the questionnaire gives an example of a leadership behavior that is either transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire. Based on the responses, the instrument classifies the leader as transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire. Since its inception, many researchers have validated this instrument, and leadership researchers use it widely in qualitative and quantitative studies (e.g., Antonakis, 2001; Antonakis et al., 2003).

The MLQ5X-Short allows followers to evaluate their leader's inclination to act as either transactional or transformational. The assessment manual recommends calculating the mean values for transactional and transformational questions and

then assessing whether a leader acts more or less transactional or transformational than the mean (Bass & Avolio, 2000). The transactional leadership scale has a range of possible scores from 0 – 80, and the transformational leadership scale has a range of possible scores from 0 – 100.

LMX-6

The LMX-6 measures LMX based on the participant's perceptions of themselves and how their leader thinks about them. Schriesheim et al. (1992) developed the LMX-6 instrument to measure the three LMX subdimensions (i.e., contribution, loyalty, and affect) introduced by Dienesch & Liden (1986). Further, Schriesheim et al. (1992) developed the instrument as a response to Dienesch & Liden's (1986) call for a reliable tool to measure LMX. The instrument consists of six questions, with two questions mapped to each of the LMX subdimensions. They developed the LMX-6 for followers to respond based on their perception of how their supervisor perceives them and their role (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

Questions pertaining to perceived contribution assess how important the follower believes their role is to their supervisor's success and their supervisor's perception of their competence at performing their job. The two questions measuring loyalty assess how well-aligned the follower's and their supervisor's goals are in their current role. The two questions measuring affect evaluate the leader-follower relationship at an interpersonal level and the level of collaboration within the relationship (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). Followers respond to

questions on a 5-point scale to assess the quality of LMX within each of the three subdimensions. A higher score indicates a higher quality level of exchange between the leader and follower.

The range of scores possible using this assessment is 6 – 30, with a score of 18 as the range's midpoint. If the score is higher than the midpoint, the follower sees themself as part of the In-Group. If the score is lower than the midpoint, the follower sees themself as part of the Out-Group (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

Procedures

The researcher obtained IRB approval for this research prior to beginning data collection. Refer to Appendix C for materials used to recruit potential participants to complete the survey. The study progressed in these four primary steps.

1. The first step in this research was to identify appropriate instruments to collect data from followers' perspectives. Kelley's (1992) Followership Questionnaire was appropriate for followers to provide data regarding their current followership style. The MLQ exists in several forms, with some used by leaders to assess their own leadership style. The MLQ5X-Short instrument was suitable for the research objective in that it allowed the follower to evaluate their leader. The LMX-6 instrument allowed followers to assess the quality of LMX in their current vertical relationship and also identify their position in the In-Group or Out-Group depending on the LMX quality.

2. After selecting instruments for the study, the researcher created a survey in Qualtrics to facilitate data collection with all instruments and scales. In addition to the instruments, the survey included information regarding participants' rights and pre-screening questions prior to accessing the instruments. The survey also included a short slate of demographic questions at the end of the survey for participant classification.
3. The survey remained open for approximately six months for recruitment and participation. A minimum sample size of 84 was necessary to mitigate the risks of Type 1 and Type 2 errors. The final sample size of 89 usable responses exceeded that condition, and the survey closed in January 2023.
4. Following data collection, the JASP statistical software application facilitated data analysis (JASP Team, 2022). This software performed the data analyses found in Chapter Four and generated data for all tables. Refer to Appendix D for an explanation of how the researcher coded the variables.

Data Collection

This work collected data in a single phase. Following receipt of IRB approval, the researcher distributed recruiting materials to potential participants. Each instrument asks the participant to evaluate an aspect of the leader-follower relationship from their perspective. Participants who chose to complete the survey did so at their convenience and without any interference. None of the questions in the pre-screening questions, instruments, or demographic questions asked the participant to identify themselves or their employer. This level of anonymity

allowed the respondents to answer questions without concern of reprisal or reputational damage based on their responses.

This study used a survey to collect data. This approach was appropriate for the study in that it could reach a large group of potential participants and ask questions of them consistently and with very limited involvement. The platform facilitated asking pre-screening questions to participants to ensure they met the study's qualifications. Further, it facilitated the entry of each instrument verbatim, utilizing the original authors' scoring matrices.

Data Analysis

This research collected data from participants using three validated instruments. Each of these instruments asks respondents to describe their experiences as a follower to assess a different facet of the leader-follower relationship. Each instrument's scoring rubric plots the responses on a continuum according to its purpose. Kelley's (1992) followership questionnaire plots followers' responses on two axes (i.e., independent critical thinking and active engagement). The plot location corresponds to lower followership scores (e.g., passive followers) or higher followership scores (e.g., exemplary followers). Bass & Avolio's (1997) MLQ5X-Short instrument plots responses on a range between laissez-faire leadership behaviors and transformational leadership behaviors. The LMX-6 instrument (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992) assesses followers' perceptions of the LMX quality between themselves and their leader and plots responses on a low-to-high scale.

These data points provide representations of the leader-follower relationship from the individual follower's perspective. The data points from each of the instruments come from a Likert-type scale and are ordinal in nature. The scoring rubric of each instrument requires the combination of responses from two or more answers to describe a particular attribute (e.g., LMX - Perceived Contribution, active engagement), so these data were treated as discrete when combined. The final data set was composed of four sets of discrete data once combined, making them good candidates for correlational analysis (Frost, 2020). Refer to Appendix D for descriptions of each data element.

Correlational Research Approach

This research integrated three elements of the leader-follower relationship to answer research questions regarding the relationship between these elements. Correlations between variables indicate the existence, strength, and direction of a relationship between variables (Dhall, 2020; Sapp, 2017). While these relationships help illustrate linkages between variables, the relationships themselves are not predictive and cannot be used to determine if a particular variable causes a change in another variable (O'Brien & Scott, 2012). With correlation studies, "the findings of the study provide predictive functions; one variable can be predicted on the basis of the knowledge about the other" (Sahoo, 2020, p. 49).

Correlation matrices return a standardized value (r) indicating the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables. A positive value indicates a positive, linear relationship between variables, and a negative value indicates an

inverse relationship between variables (Sapp, 2017). Statistical programs return a standardized value for strength, but the precise interpretation of the value varies amongst researchers. This study considered correlation strength based on several scholars' perspectives, as listed below (Akoglu, 2018; LaMorte, 2021; Moore et al., 2013).

- +/- 0 – no relationship
- +/- 0 – 0.3 – weak relationship
- +/- 0.3 – 0.6 – strong relationship
- +/- 0.6 – 0.9 – very strong relationship
- +/- 1.0 – perfect relationship

Statistical significance considers whether a result may be due to a particular variable's influence or random chance (Sapp, 2017). JASP displays significance as a p-value (Goss-Sampson, 2020), which describes the likelihood of a result being from the variables under study or random chance (Illowsky & Dean, 2022). The general consensus around determining whether a result is statistically significant or not is whether the p-value is less than 0.5 (e.g., Goss-Sampson, 2020; Illowsky & Dean, 2022; Kim, 2015). JASP returns correlation values for each set of variables and the associated p-value for each relationship.

Leadership behaviors and LMX quality occur simultaneously within the leader-follower relationship. In order to answer the research questions and test the study's hypotheses, the researcher examined the relationship between followership

style dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality with and without controls using partial correlations. Partial correlations allow for the control of the effects of a third variable in order to study the relationship between two variables of interest (Dhall, 2020; Sapp, 2017).

Correlational research designs examine data sets to assess the existence and strength of relationships between data sets (Creswell, 2014). Karl Pearson defined the mathematical formula to measure correlation in 1895, and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a widely accepted tool to measure the correlation between data sets (Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988). Correlation research does not seek to identify a causal relationship between variables but rather to describe their relationship with one another (WSSU, 2022).

Hypotheses

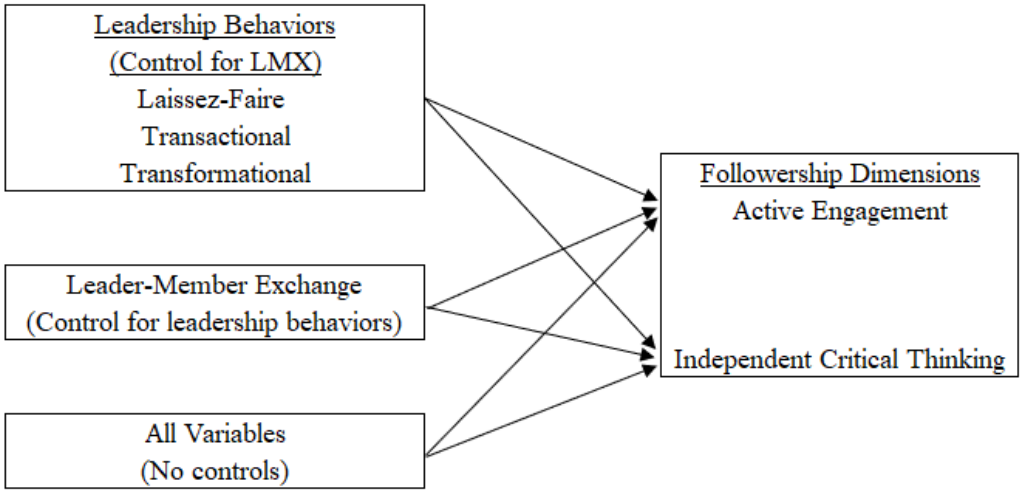
This research employed a deductive approach to the study by gathering background information, developing hypotheses, and testing those hypotheses against collected data (Gray, 2013; WSSU, 2022). Hypotheses are "logically conjectured relationships between two or more variables expressed in the form of testable statements" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p. 94). The hypotheses below synthesize the theoretical support from the literature review and consider the methodological approach discussed in this chapter. Each set of hypotheses addresses the research questions indicated and includes a null hypothesis with a '0' designation (e.g., Hypothesis 1_0).

- **Hypothesis 1_0**: No relationship exists between followership style and leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.
    - Addresses RQ1
- **Hypothesis 1_a**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and their leader's tendency to express transformational leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.
    - Addresses RQ1-a
- **Hypothesis 1_b**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of active engagement and their leader's tendency to express transformational leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.
    - Addresses RQ1-b
- **Hypothesis 2_0**: No relationship exists between followership style and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.
    - Addresses RQ2
- **Hypothesis 2_a**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.
    - Addresses RQ2-A

- **Hypothesis 2_b**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of active engagement and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.
    - Addresses RQ2-b
- **Hypothesis 3_0**: No relationship exists between followership style and the combined influence of leadership style and LMX quality.
    - Addresses RQ3
- **Hypothesis 3_a**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement and their leader's tendency to express more transformational leadership behaviors.
    - Addresses RQ3-a
- **Hypothesis 3_b**: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement and higher-quality LMX.
    - Addresses RQ3-b

These relationships are summarized in the conceptual model in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Conceptual Model



Ethical Considerations

The study considered participant safety a paramount concern. The IRB approved the study's application prior to participant recruitment or data collection. Recruiting materials distributed to potential participants included relevant information regarding their rights and the voluntary nature of the research. Further, the survey in Qualtrics reiterated these participant rights before the participant answered the pre-screening questions. The researcher provided participants with their contact information and the contact information for the study's major advisor.

The survey provided potential participants with an informed consent letter at the beginning of the workflow. The researcher followed its guidelines, including maintaining confidentiality, explaining the study's nature and purpose, notification that their responses would be aggregated, data security, and the intent to publish the study. Participants were also made aware that their participation was voluntary and

that they were free to terminate their participation at any time. The study did not put the participants in harm's way or at risk for bodily danger.

The leader-follower relationship is complicated, and the researcher understood the need to build trust and rapport to receive complete and accurate feedback (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The study built this level of trust through rigorous adherence to IRB guidelines and protecting participants' interests. This degree of participant protection served two purposes. First, it safeguarded participants from potential reputational harm due to their participation. Second, it enabled participants to provide open and honest feedback, thereby mitigating the risk of introducing biased responses to the data.

Positionality

The researcher has extensive experience as a leader and follower. They have experience hiring, developing, and coaching followers in various financial and internal audit roles. They have led teams of hourly and salaried employees in person and virtually for over 15 years. Even when employed as a leader, the researcher has always held a dual role as a follower. They have a finance and internal audit background and have worked for firms in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina in person and remotely. They believe that leadership is a privilege and that leaders owe a duty of care to their followers to provide for their professional development and take reasonable steps to prioritize their personal well-being.

The researcher is an active member of the professional organization from which a portion of the sample originated. They are not, however, a member of the organization's leadership or governing boards. They also solicited participation from their current employer. During data collection, they did not act in a supervisory capacity and held no actual or perceived authority over any participants. This level of personal and professional separation enabled the limitation of bias into the study, but it cannot eliminate all risks. They worked to set aside their experiences as a leader and follower to highlight the participants' voices rather than their own in interpreting the study's results (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994).

Validity and Trustworthiness

This research followed Sekaran & Bougie's (2019) research design framework. This tool provided a roadmap for planning, executing, analyzing, and reporting the quantitative study's results. Still, it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure they present the data accurately and fairly. The study took care not to introduce bias to the study by considering reflexivity and representation in the study. Creswell & Poth (2018) define reflexivity as a process of self-examination to identify sources of potential bias and the personal feelings individuals bring to the study. The researcher mitigated this risk by letting the data speak for itself and presenting it completely and accurately.

The study took steps to ensure internal validity through activities recommended by Creswell (2014), such as triangulation of data, peer examination, and self-identification of potential researcher bias. Triangulating data involves

collecting data from a varied group of participants and sources. This study achieved this aim by soliciting participation from a pool of participants with varied backgrounds, professions, and tenure within their firms. The researcher also sought feedback from their DBA cohort to guard against the introduction of bias into the study. They also took steps to enhance external validity by following the study's protocol and presenting research instruments with their original text and scales (Creswell, 2014).

Summary

The preceding sections detailed the study's methods. The study leveraged reliable approaches to quantitative research from sources such as Creswell, Sekaran and Bougie, and Poth. The researcher integrated the study's research questions and objectives within these frameworks to develop a reliable representation of the leader-follower relationship and the influence of LMX quality on this relationship. This section also presented a slate of hypotheses based on the study's research questions and themes from the literature. Finally, the chapter identified precautionary measures used to ensure participant confidentiality and safety throughout the study. The following chapter discusses the study's findings and the outcomes of hypothesis testing.

Chapter 4. Findings

Overview

This study examined some of the interpersonal factors inherent in the leader-follower relationship from the follower's perspective. The research considered three variables as part of the study: dimensions of followership style, leader behaviors, and the quality of the vertical dyadic relationship. The study measured followership style according to Kelley's (1988, 1992) framework, which assesses followers' independent critical thinking and active engagement levels. The researcher examined leader behaviors via the full range leadership model, which categorizes leaders according to their propensity toward exhibiting transformational or transactional behaviors (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 1991; Bass, 1985). Finally, the study assessed the leader-follower relationship's quality using leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (e.g., Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The study used validated instruments to measure each of the variables above. Kelley's followership questionnaire measured followers' followership dimensions, the MLQ5X-Short measured leadership behaviors, and the LMX-6 instrument measured LMX quality. Followers who work within a leader-follower relationship and whose job requires solving organizational problems completed these instruments via an online survey hosted on Qualtrics. After closing the survey for data collection, the results were exported and the data analysis process began. This chapter begins by describing the data analysis process and findings, followed

by an analysis of how the data integrates. The chapter concludes by discussing how practitioners could apply the research results to their organizations.

Research Findings

This section reviews the study's results, including details of the sample group, correlations between variables, and hypothesis testing. The section culminates with a review of previously stated hypotheses and whether or not the data supported those hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics help to obtain a basic understanding of the data and present the reader with an overview of the data's characteristics (Chen, 2012). For this research, the data set consists of followers' responses to questions regarding their experience within the leader-follower relationship and demographic data. Followers responded to these demographic questions at the conclusion of the survey. Three sub-sections follow, which describe respondents' personal characteristics, characteristics regarding their employment, and descriptive data of each variable (i.e., followership style, leader behaviors, and LMX quality).

The survey was available for data collection between August 2022 and January 2023. An online survey was appropriate for the study's goals in that it allowed for the collection of data directly from participants with minimal intervention while working toward a desired response rate (Vogt et al., 2012). Respondents answered two screening questions to confirm they were members of

the target population before they could access the survey. Responses to each item in the questionnaires were mandatory, while responses to demographic questions were optional in the survey logic.

A total of 124 potential respondents accessed the survey. The screening functionality in the survey excluded six respondents who did not meet the criteria of working in a leader-follower relationship and one who was not required to solve organizational problems as part of their routine job duties. A further 28 respondents began the survey but failed to complete all sections. These partial responses were excluded since they did not provide a clear picture of the follower's leader-follower relationship. Finally, one respondent completed all sections except for demographic data. This result was included since the respondent's answers provided usable data about the leader-follower relationship and were suitable for hypothesis testing. In total, the survey yielded 89 responses suitable for hypothesis testing and 88 responses suitable for demographic analysis.

Follower Characteristics

Table 1 shows followers' self-reported data regarding themselves, their position and tenure within their firm, and details regarding their industry. The 88 responses suitable for demographic analysis form the basis of all the following data. Female respondents accounted for 62.5% of responses, with males making up the remaining 37.5%. The majority (53.4%) of respondents of both genders were between the ages of 35-44.

Table 1. Personal Characteristics

Descriptor	Female Respondents (n=55)	Male Respondents (n=33)
Gender	55	33
Age 18 - 24	2	1
Age 25 - 34	16	8
Age 35 - 44	29	18
Age 45 – 54	5	3
Age 55 – 64	3	3
Age 65+	0	0

The survey requested respondents to provide details regarding their current position, tenure with their firm, and immediate supervisor. Table 2 displays summary data for the sample group. The majority of female and male respondents (31.8%) indicated that they worked in individual contributor roles with no direct reports. The next highest categories were managerial roles for females (25.4% of female respondents) and Senior Manager or Director roles for males (30.3% of male respondents). Most male and female respondents (65.9%) had a tenure of fewer than five years with their current firm. The proportion of respondents holding a professional certification was nearly equal between both genders, with 60% of females and 60.6% of males indicating that they held at least one professional certification.

Table 2. Position Type and Tenure

	Female Respondents (n=55)	Male Respondents (n=33)
Individual Contributor	16	12
Manager	14	5
Senior Manager/Director	7	10
Supervisor	7	3
Other	7	1
Vice President	3	1
C-Level Executive	1	1
Tenure <5 years	40	18
Tenure 6-9 years	5	6
Tenure >10 years	10	9
Holds a Professional Certification?	33	20

Table 3 shows that about 54.5% of female respondents indicated that their immediate supervisor was male, while about 27.2% of male respondents indicated that their supervisor was female. In total, about 38.6% of respondents indicated that their supervisor was female, which is slightly below the national average of about 42% reported by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) (GAO, 2022).

Table 3. Supervisor Details

	Female Respondents (n=55)	Male Respondents (n=33)
Supervisor of Opposite Gender	30	9
Supervisor is Female	25	9
Supervisor is Male	30	24

Table 4 shows that the most frequent industries for all respondents were finance and accounting (40.9%). These categories accounted for about 45.5% of female respondents and about 30.3% of male respondents. Government/military

and manufacturing roles were males' next most common industries (14.7%). Professional services and medical fields were females' next most common fields (12.5%). The 'Other' category includes fields with only one respondent or self-described industries that did not align with other options.

Table 4. Industry Details

	Female Respondents (n=55)	Male Respondents (n=33)
Finance/Banking/Insurance	15	6
Accounting	10	4
Government/Military	2	5
Professional Services	4	2
Consulting	2	3
Manufacturing	2	4
Medical	4	1
Other	16	8

Table 5 summarizes the sample-level dependent and independent variable data. Based on their responses to Kelley's Followership Questionnaire (Kelley, 1992), about 82% of respondents fall into the exemplary followership style. The pragmatist followership style was the next highest category, with about 13.5% of respondents included in this category. Conformist, passive, and alienated followership styles accounted for about 4.5% of the remaining sample group. Kelley's Followership Questionnaire yields a score for each sub-dimension of followership style on a scale of 0 – 60. The mean values for followership style's sub-dimensions of independent critical thinking (ICT) and active engagement (AE) in the sample group were 44.35 and 47.12, respectively.

The mean values for transactional and transformational leadership were 41.85 and 70.83, respectively. When comparing individual leaders to the mean, 38 leaders expressed more transactional leadership behaviors than the mean, while 52 leaders expressed more transformational leadership behaviors than the mean. Note that a leader's score may be above the mean for both transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. Based on their responses to the LMX-6 instrument, about 87.6% of respondents saw themselves as part of the In-Group, and 12.4% saw themselves in the Out-Group. The mean LMX score for the group was about 24.07, which places the sample mean within the In-Group.

Table 5. Variable Data

Variable	Variable Category	Score
Followership Style	Exemplary	73
	Pragmatist	12
	Conformist	2
	Passive	1
	Alienated	1
	Mean ICT (0 – 60)	44.35
	Mean AE (0 – 60)	47.12
Leadership Behaviors	# Leaders more Transactional	38
	# Leaders more Transformational	52
	Mean Transactional Score (0 -80)	41.85
	Mean Transformational Score (0 – 100)	70.83
LMX quality	In-Group Followers	78
	Out-Group Followers	11
	Mean LMX quality (6 – 30)	24.07

Correlation Tables

Table 6 displays correlations between followership style dimensions and leadership behaviors while controlling for LMX quality. The data indicate a weak but statistically significant relationship between independent critical thinking and transactional leadership behaviors ($r = 0.241$, $p = 0.023$). Similarly, the data presented a weak but statistically significant relationship between active engagement and transactional leadership behaviors ($r = 0.239$, $p = 0.025$). P-values for transformational leadership behaviors did not indicate a statistically significant relationship for independent critical thinking ($p = 0.391$) or active engagement ($p = 0.107$) when controlling for LMX quality.

Table 6. Correlations Controlled for LMX Quality

Variable		ICT	AE	Total Transactional	Total Transformational
1. ICT	Pearson's r	-			
	p-value	-			
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.629***	-		
	p-value	<.001	-		
3. Total Transactional	Pearson's r	0.241*	0.239*	-	
	p-value	0.023	0.025	-	
4. Total Transformational	Pearson's r	0.093	0.173	0.019	-
	p-value	0.391	0.107	0.863	-

*p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 7 displays correlation statistics between followership style dimensions and LMX quality while controlling for leadership behaviors. The data indicated a weak but statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality ($r = 0.239$, $p = 0.026$). The data did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between independent critical thinking and LMX quality ($p = 0.350$) when controlling for leadership behaviors.

Table 7. Correlations Controlled for Leadership Behaviors

Variable		ICT	AE	LMX
1. ICT	Pearson's r	-		
	p-value	-		
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.606***	-	
	p-value	<.001	-	
3. LMX	Pearson's r	0.101	0.239*	-
	p-value	0.350	0.026	-

*p < .05, ***p < .001

Table 8 displays correlation statistics between followership style dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. Note that this data set is not a partial correlation and does not control for any variables. The data indicate a weak but statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and independent critical thinking ($r = 0.216$, $p = 0.042$). The data also indicated a strong, statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and active engagement ($r = 0.477$, $p < .001$). Finally, the data indicated a strong, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality ($r = 0.482$, $p < 0.001$). The data did not present any statistically

significant relationships between followership style dimensions and transactional leadership behaviors or between independent critical thinking and LMX quality.

Table 8. Full Correlation Matrix - No Control Variables

Variable		ICT	AE	Total Transactional	Total Transformational	LMX
1. ICT	Pearson's r	-				
	p-value	-				
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.637***	-			
	p-value	<.001	-			
3. Total Transactional	Pearson's r	0.159	0.042	-		
	p-value	0.137	0.695	-		
4. Total Transformational	Pearson's r	0.216*	0.477***	0.019	-	
	p-value	0.042	<.001	0.863	-	
5. LMX	Pearson's r	0.201	0.482***	-0.323**	0.802***	-
	p-value	0.059	<.001	0.002	<.001	-

*p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001

Population-Level Results

The study's sample group included followers from multiple industries, ages, and tenures. Figure 5 plots the study's results according to each follower's responses to the online survey questions. The normalized leadership style score accounts for the 20 extra possible points possible in the scoring rubric for transformational leadership behaviors. The grid location was determined by subtracting the transactional leadership score from the transformational leadership score. Responses less than zero indicated that the follower's leader tended to display more transactional leadership behaviors than transformational.

The LMX-6 instrument allows for scores ranging from 6 – 30, with 18 being the lower threshold for the In-Group. The researcher then scored each participant's responses to identify their followership style. As noted in the previous chapter, the vast majority of respondents (n=73) rated themselves as exemplary followers. Additionally, most followers (n=78) rated themselves as belonging to the In-Group. The data did not present an obvious visual relationship between followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. The data did, however, present a relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and higher LMX quality. Though not the focus of the study, this finding may be an opportunity for further research in future studies.

Figure 5Population-Level Results

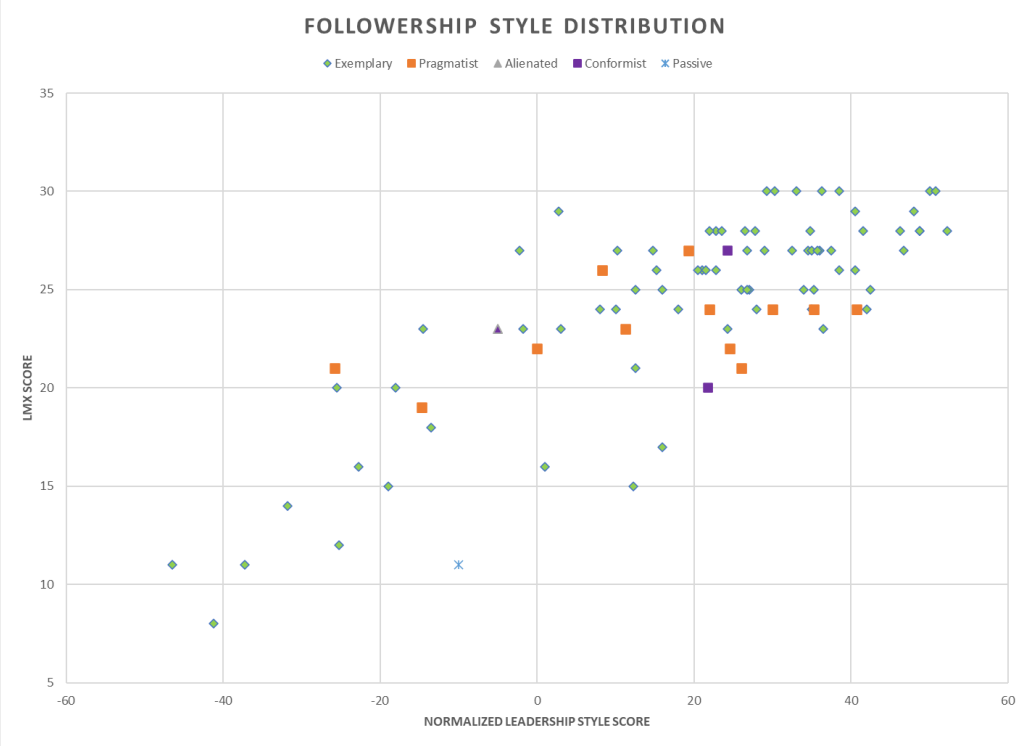


Table 9 displays a selection of relevant correlation data between followership style dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. This summarized table includes all statistically significant correlations from the study. Refer to Appendix E for the full correlation table and the following chapter for a discussion of these results. This data includes the full sample group (n=89) with no control variables.

Table 9. Selected Correlations - No Control Variables

	Independent Critical Thinking	Active Engagement
Contingent Reward	-	r = 0.296**
Idealized Influence – Attributed	r = 0.222*	r = 0.476***
Idealized Influence – Behaviors	r = 0.292**	r = 0.493***
Individual Consideration	-	r = 0.388***
Inspirational Motivation	-	r = 0.436***
Intellectual Stimulation	-	r = 0.356***
LMX – Perceived Contribution	-	r = 0.376***
LMX – Affect	-	r = 0.441***
LMX - Loyalty	r = 0.214*	r = 0.453***

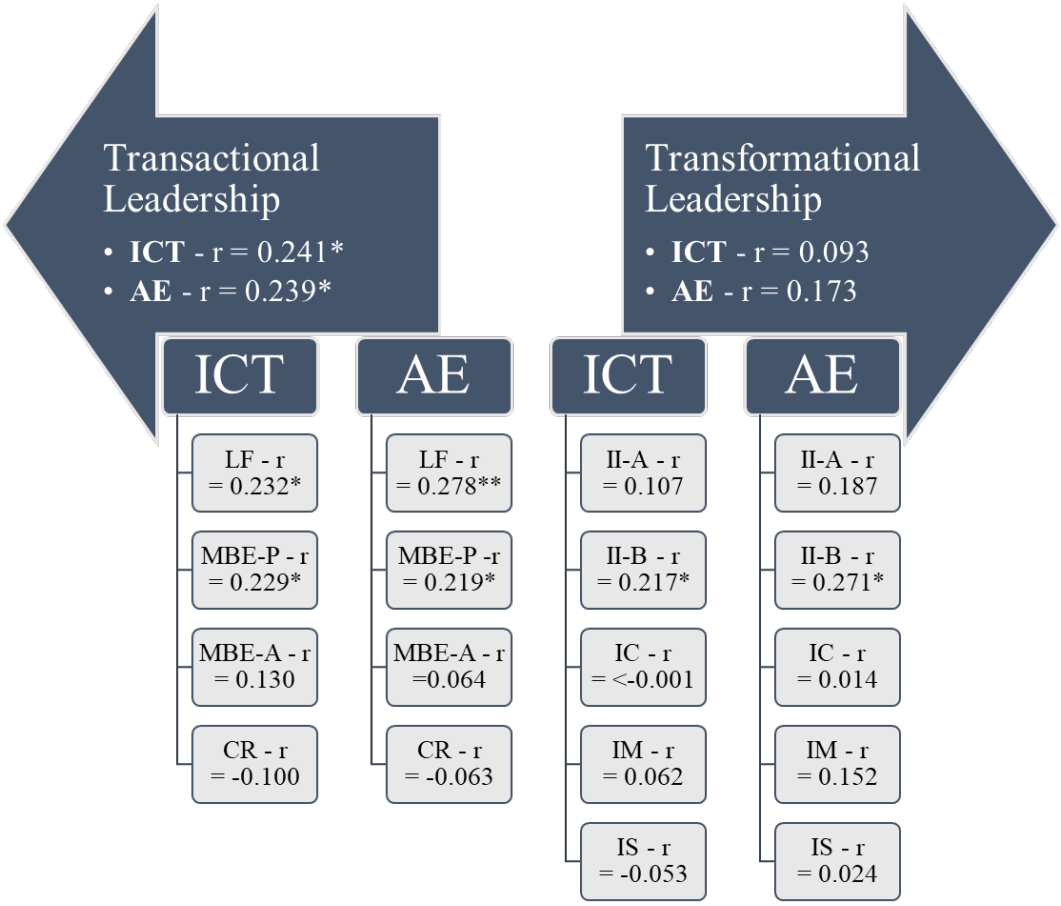
** p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001*

Demographic-Level Results

Figure 6 displays a breakdown of correlation data between followership style dimensions and each subdimension within the full range leadership model while controlling for LMX quality. Data from the sample group indicated the strongest relationships between followership style dimensions and laissez-faire behaviors, followed closely by passive management by exception behaviors. One possible explanation for this finding is the control for LMX quality in the analysis.

Controlling for LMX quality diminishes the role of the vertical dyadic relationship and diminishes the leader-follower relationship to a more contractual arrangement. As such, the analysis lessens the importance of the leader's behaviors and emphasizes the follower's preferences.

Figure 6. Relationships between followership dimensions and the full range leadership model (control for LMX)

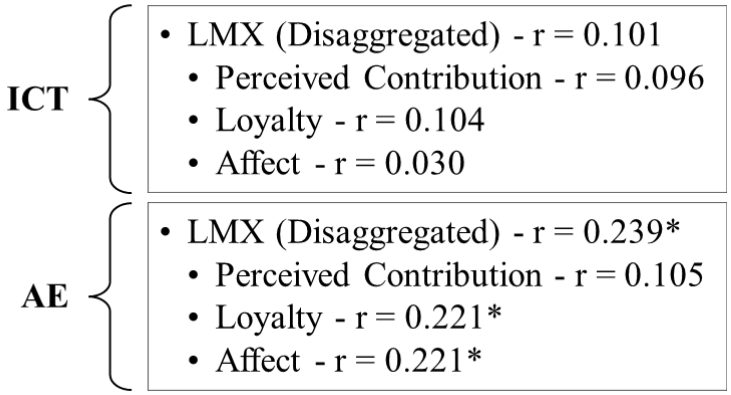


** $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$*

As expected, the data supported rejecting the null hypothesis that no relationship existed between LMX quality and followership style dimensions. The

author expected to find a positive relationship between LMX quality and both followership style dimensions but only identified a weak, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality. The results were disaggregated to examine each subdimension of the LMX-6 instrument in Figure 7. The data presented no statistically significant relationships between independent critical thinking and LMX subdimensions. The data indicated a weak, statistically significant relationship between active engagement, loyalty, and affect.

Figure 7. Relationships between followership dimensions and LMX quality



** $p<0.05$*

Table 10 details select statistically significant correlations between followership dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX bifurcated between male and female respondents with no control variables. Table 11 details select, statistically significant correlations between followership dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX bifurcated between respondents with male and female supervisors with no control variables.

Table 10. Selected Correlations - Male and Female Responses, No Control Variables

	Male Respondents (n=33)		Female Respondents (n=55)	
	ICT	AE	ICT	AE
Contingent Reward	-	r = 0.411*	-	-
Individual Consideration	-	r = 0.508**	-	r = 0.319*
Inspirational Motivation	-	r = 0.491**	-	r = 0.423**
Intellectual Stimulation	-	r = 0.537**	-	r = 0.272*
Idealized Influence – Attributed	-	r = 0.546**	-	r = 0.468***
Idealized Influence – Behaviors	r = 0.350*	r = 0.545**	r = 0.332*	r = 0.483***
LMX – Perceived Contribution	-	r = 0.355*	-	r = 0.429**
LMX – Affect	-	r = 0.420*	-	r = 0.511***
LMX - Loyalty	-	r = 0.472**	-	r = 0.475***

** p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001*

Table 11. Selected Correlations - Male and Female Supervisors, No Control Variables

	Male Supervisor (n=54)		Female Supervisor (n=34)	
	ICT	AE	ICT	AE
Mgt. by Exception - Passive	r = 0.275*	-	-	-
Contingent Reward	-	r = 0.372**	-	-
Individual Consideration	-	r = 0.438**	-	-
Inspirational Motivation	-	r = 0.494***	-	-
Intellectual Stimulation	-	r = 0.358**	-	r = 0.354*
Idealized Influence – Attributed	-	r = 0.539***	-	r = 0.368*
Idealized Influence – Behaviors	-	r = 0.454***	r = 0.607***	r = 0.576***
LMX – Perceived Contribution	-	r = 0.303*	r = 0.356*	r = 0.490**
LMX – Affect	-	r = 0.374**	r = 0.421*	r = 0.610***
LMX - Loyalty	-	r = 0.383**	-	r = 0.532**

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

Synthesis and Summary of Data

Hypothesis Testing

The study advanced a set of hypotheses based on foundational and contemporary literature regarding the relationships between followership style, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality to test against sample data. Each set of hypotheses included a null hypothesis stating that a relationship did not exist between the variables. The researcher could reject the null hypothesis if the data supported the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the variables under scrutiny (Frost, 2020).

The first set of hypotheses considered the relationship between followership style dimensions and leadership behaviors while controlling for LMX quality. The data indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between independent critical thinking, active engagement, and transactional leadership behaviors. As such, the data supports rejecting Hypothesis 1_0. Hypothesis 1_a and 1_b predicted a positive relationship between independent critical thinking, active engagement, and transformational leadership behaviors. The data did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between either dimension of followership style or transformational leadership behaviors. Thus, the data support rejecting Hypotheses 1_a and 1_b.

The second set of hypotheses considered the relationship between followership style dimensions and LMX quality while controlling for leadership behaviors. The data indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality. As such, the data supports rejecting Hypothesis 2_0. Hypothesis 2_a and 2_b predicted a positive relationship between independent critical thinking, active engagement, and LMX quality. The data did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between independent critical thinking and LMX quality. The data did, however, indicate a positive, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality. Considering these factors, the data supports rejecting Hypothesis 2_a and supporting Hypothesis 2_b.

The third set of hypotheses considered the relationship between followership style dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality with no control variables. The data indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between the variables. As such, the data supports rejecting Hypothesis 3_0. Hypothesis 3_a predicted a positive relationship between followership style dimensions and transformational leadership behaviors. The data indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between both followership style dimensions and transformational leadership behaviors. Based on these results, the data supports accepting Hypothesis 3_a.

Hypothesis 3_b predicted a positive relationship between followership style dimensions and LMX quality. The data did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between the independent critical thinking dimension of followership style and LMX quality. The data showed a positive, statistically significant relationship between the active engagement dimension of followership style and LMX quality. Considering these results, the data support partially accepting Hypothesis 3_b.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between followership style and elements of the leader-follower relationship. Responses from 89 followers with direct reporting relationships and roles that require them to solve organizational problems comprised the sample group. The data collected via an online survey provided sufficient evidence to reject all the proposed null hypotheses. There was

limited support for the alternative hypotheses, which the dissertation explores in detail in the following chapter. Table 12 summarizes the results of the study's hypothesis testing.

Table 12. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Outcome
Hypothesis 1_0: No relationship exists between followership style and leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.	Rejected
Hypothesis 1_a: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and their leader's tendency to express transformational leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.	Rejected
Hypothesis 1_b: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of active engagement and their leader's tendency to express transformational leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2_0: No relationship exists between followership style and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2_a: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2_b: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of active engagement and LMX quality when controlling for leadership behaviors.	Supported
Hypothesis 3_0: No relationship exists between followership style and the combined influence of leadership style and LMX quality.	Rejected
Hypothesis 3_a: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement and their leader's tendency to express more transformational leadership behaviors.	Supported
Hypothesis 3_b: A positive relationship exists between followers' levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement and higher-quality LMX.	Partially Supported

Contribution to Applied Practice

This study yielded interesting insights into the leader-follower relationships of the sample group. While many studies focus on this relationship from the leader's perspective, this research examined the relationship from the follower's perspective. The study's findings provide leaders with insights into how their behaviors and the quality of exchange between themselves and their followers impact their followers. By developing a better understanding of how followers and leaders interact, firms can leverage these and similar findings to assess their organizations and their leadership development curriculums.

Many leadership courses teach tenets of transformational leadership because of the positive organizational outcomes scholars have identified (e.g., Arenas et al., 2018; Hargis et al., 2011; Kirkbride, 2006). These courses are valuable, but this study helped illustrate transactional leadership's utility when controlling for LMX quality. In real-world scenarios, leaders often do not always have the bandwidth to focus on enhancing the leader-follower relationship within their teams. This research helped to illustrate the usefulness of transactional leadership behaviors in the absence of high-quality LMX.

Similarly, the research showed that practitioners might be able to drive improvements in associate engagement by improving LMX quality. In the absence of control variables, Hypotheses 3_a and 3_b help reinforce the importance of firms prioritizing effective leadership and high-quality relationships between followers, leaders, and the broader organization. The study supports the efficacy of adopting a

multipronged approach to associate development rather than simply focusing on what the leader should do. Practitioners may see a benefit in developing the leader, follower, and the vertical relationship between them.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research findings and the outcomes of hypothesis testing. Based on responses from 89 followers, the data supported rejecting all null hypotheses, found support for two alternate hypotheses, and partial support for one alternate hypothesis. The chapter concluded by highlighting the study's applicability to leaders and decision-makers at firms. Chapter five concludes the dissertation by discussing how the research findings integrate into the broader literature, a discussion of the findings in the context of followership, leadership, and LMX, and recommendations for future studies to continue the scholarly conversation.

Chapter 5. Discussion, Implications, Recommendations

Overview

Though the term "follower" may have a negative connotation, nearly everyone in the workforce plays the follower role. Whether it be to a line supervisor, vice president, or a board of directors, followership exists at all levels of an organization. This research examined the leader-follower relationship from the follower's perspective to develop a more robust understanding of the relationship. This research contributes to the body of knowledge through its analysis and synthesis of followers' responses to instruments designed to assess their followership style, leaders' behaviors, and leader-member exchange (LMX) quality within their relationship. By examining these attributes from the follower's perspective, the study gleaned new insights into the leader-follower relationship and enhanced the robustness of extant theory by remeasuring them in a new way (Hancké, 2009).

Many studies concerning the leader-follower relationship focus on what the leader does or should do to elicit a desired response from the follower. By using this approach, researchers disregard the follower's individual characteristics and motivations and consider them simply responders to the leader's will (Wang et al., 2019). The study sought feedback from followers to develop an impression of their unique leader-follower relationship. The research employed a quantitative approach

using validated instruments designed to measure followership, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. A total of 89 followers from varied backgrounds and industries provided first-hand accounts of their experiences via an online survey. JASP enabled the identification and measurement of relationships between the variables under study.

The research advanced three sets of hypotheses based on a review of foundational and contemporary literature. Each set of hypotheses included a null hypothesis stating that no relationship existed between the variables. As expected, the data supported rejecting the null hypothesis in each grouping by identifying a relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The data yielded some surprising results by examining each followership dimension and independent variable separately. Some of the results support the existing theory, while others provide a differing view.

Discussion and Implications

Discussion of Followership Dimensions and Leadership Behaviors

The study examined the relationship between followership dimensions and leadership behaviors according to the full range leadership model. Leaders employ leadership behaviors that fit their unique leadership style with the intent of persuading followers to accept their direction (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). Followers, in turn, have a choice as to whether they will accept leadership and work with their leader to co-create the leader-follower relationship (Hansen, 1987; Uhl-Bien et al.,

2014). The full range leadership model considers a wide variety of leadership behaviors that leaders may use as part of their leadership style.

Based on a review of the literature, the author expected to see statistically significant positive relationships between followership style dimensions and transformational leadership behaviors when controlling for LMX quality. Instead, the data presented weak but statistically significant positive relationships between followership style dimensions and transactional leadership dimensions. To examine this more closely, the author performed an analysis of each subdimension within the transactional and transformational dimensions separately.

Laissez-faire behaviors generally consist of a lack of engagement and direction from the leader (Hargis et al., 2011; Northouse, 2010). For the sample group, the absence of leadership had a positive relationship with their levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement. This could indicate that the sample group found opportunities to be creative problem-solvers without the need for or possibility of leadership interventions. Though weak, the relationship between active engagement and laissez-faire leadership behaviors has a strong statistical significance with $p < 0.01$. This finding aligns with existing literature showing that followers with high levels of active engagement serve as active participants in implementing organizational objectives, taking responsibility within the organization, and working independently to deliver results (Carsten & Bligh, 2008; Jiang et al., 2021; Solovy, 2005).

Data from the sample group also indicated a weak but statistically significant relationship between followership style dimensions and passive management by exception. Leaders express passive management by exception behaviors by taking corrective action by addressing performance deficiencies after the follower fails to meet expectations (Arenas et al., 2018; Howell & Avolio, 1993). These leadership behaviors share similarities with laissez-faire behaviors in that leaders do not engage with their teams proactively and appear disconnected (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). While controlling for LMX quality in the analysis, the sample group appears to find similar opportunities for problem-solving and self-leadership with both management by exception and laissez-faire leadership behaviors.

Though transformational leadership behaviors were not significant in the aggregate, one subdimension did present a statistically significant positive relationship when disaggregated. Idealized influence behaviors involve the leader behaving within a strong moral code and endearing trust with colleagues (Arenas et al., 2018; Bass, 1985). While controlling for LMX quality, this finding indicates that leaders who express desirable behaviors tend to have followers who express similar attributes. This finding supports existing theory around idealized influence behaviors helping followers to develop better problem-solving techniques, understand strengths and weaknesses, and support followers' growth (Busari et al., 2020; Okoli et al., 2021).

Discussion of Followership Dimensions and LMX quality

The study examined LMX quality using the LMX-6 instrument, which measures the quality of perceived contribution, loyalty, and affect within the leader-follower relationship (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). The second slate of hypotheses examined the relationship between followership dimensions and LMX quality while controlling for the effects of leadership behaviors. Isolating this relationship allowed for the examination of the influence of relationship quality while diminishing the effects of the leader's behaviors. The data presented mixed results when examining the relationship between followership style dimensions and LMX quality while controlling for leadership behaviors.

Though weak, the data still presented a statistically significant relationship between active engagement and LMX quality. The LMX-6 instrument measures the loyalty subdimension by identifying the level of leader-follower alignment in supporting the organization's goals (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). A statistically significant relationship makes sense when controlling for leadership behaviors because the level of goal alignment is inherent in the follower. Followers who align with the organization may find the motivation to support the organization's mission even in the absence of leaders' interventions (Kelley, 1988; Velez & Neves, 2022). Leadership behaviors may enhance the level of alignment, but the sample group appears to have a baseline level of alignment and engagement with their organizations.

The data presented an equally weak, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and the affect subdimension of LMX. The LMX-6 instrument assesses affect by identifying how well followers and leaders understand each other and the leader's ability to help their teams solve problems (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992). Transformational leadership behaviors, specifically individual consideration, may enhance levels of leader-follower understanding (Bass & Avolio, 1993a), but a level of understanding can still exist without accounting for leadership behaviors. Actively engaged followers are driven to solve organizational problems in support of the organization's goals (Bjugstad et al., 2006b; Manning & Robertson, 2016). Leadership behaviors may enhance the follower's drive, but it is not a necessary precondition.

Discussion of Followership Dimensions, Leadership Behaviors, and LMX quality

When analyzed with no control variables, the data returned one statistically significant correlation within the transactional leadership dimension with contingent reward. The data presented a weak, statistically significant relationship between active engagement and contingent reward. This finding supports several scholars' views that contingent reward systems can enhance engagement by providing a clear system of rewards (monetary and otherwise) in exchange for the follower's efforts (e.g., Howell & Avolio, 1993; Manning & Robertson, 2016).

The sample data showed only one leadership dimension with a statistically significant relationship to independent critical thinking. Idealized influence

attributions and behaviors showed a weak but statistically significant relationship with independent critical thinking. A possible explanation for this result may lie in the way followers develop and enhance their critical thinking. Followers express independent critical thinking by synthesizing their past experiences and reconfiguring those lessons learned to solve organizational problems (Elder & Paul, 2010; Kelley, 1992; Shipp et al., 2009). They may draw inspiration from their leader's ability to solve problems, but lived experience may be a more effective antecedent of developing independent critical thinking.

A surprising result was the absence of a statistically significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and independent critical thinking. The literature presents many examples of intellectual stimulation behaviors enhancing followers' critical thinking levels (e.g., Manning & Robertson, 2016; Turnbull & Edwards, 2005). Still, the sample group's mean independent critical thinking score was 44.35, which places them just outside the upper quartile in the range. This may indicate that the sample group draws their independent critical thinking levels intrinsically or from other sources. Exploring this finding further may be an opportunity for future research.

The data indicated positive, statistically significant relationships between active engagement and several leadership behaviors. Contingent reward behaviors showed a weak relationship, and all transformational leadership dimensions showed a strong relationship. This weak relationship may be due to the substitution effect contingent reward behaviors have on active engagement. A contractual basis of

defined rewards for efforts may take the place of an inherent sense of duty and commitment to the organization (Arenas et al., 2018; Northouse, 2010). This is not to say that the leader's behaviors within a contingent reward system are irrelevant. A mutual level of trust must exist between followers and leaders to honor commitments and continue to grow within the organization (Antonakis et al., 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

The sample data showed strong, very statistically significant relationships between active engagement and all transformational leadership dimensions. These findings support Bass's (1985, 2008) position that transformational leadership can drive superior results through specific and individualized leadership behaviors. Leaders' idealized influence behaviors may have motivated their followers to emulate their level of commitment to the organization and their actions as ethical leaders (Bass, 1999; Hargis et al., 2011). The positive relationship between individual consideration and active engagement may be the result of their leaders' targeted interventions. Leaders employ individual consideration behaviors to address specific areas where their followers need support and to help guide them to enhanced performance (Avolio, 1999; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

The relationship between the sample group's levels of inspirational motivation and active engagement also supports existing research in these areas. Leaders who express inspirational motivation help followers understand their contributions to the organization and clarify their importance in achieving organizational goals (Changar & Atan, 2021; S. N. Khan et al., 2020). The sample

group's responses appear to align with these researchers' findings. Leaders exhibit intellectual stimulation behaviors by providing opportunities for followers to solve problems independently (Arenas et al., 2018). Followers in the sample group may have found that owning responsibility for problem-solving gave them a higher sense of involvement within the organization and enhanced their sense of engagement (A. Blanchard et al., 2009; Carsten & Bligh, 2008).

The data presented a statistically significant relationship between LMX and followership subdimensions. The loyalty subdimension had a weak but statistically significant relationship with independent critical thinking. This finding aligns with other researchers who noted that loyalty drives leaders and followers to work together to find solutions to organizational problems (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992; Velez & Neves, 2022). Leader-follower alignment on goals may also drive a more open working environment where leaders encourage followers to try new ideas and develop innovative solutions.

Responses from the sample group returned strong, statistically significant relationships between all LMX subdimensions and active engagement. The relationship between perceived contribution and active engagement aligned with expectations. Followers who report high levels of perceived contribution tend to have confidence that they do their job well and have their leader's confidence in them (Schriesheim, Scandura, et al., 1992). These followers tend to express active engagement by taking ownership of their role and finding ways to deliver results (Carsten & Bligh, 2008; Jiang et al., 2021).

Participants' responses toward affect and active engagement also aligned with expectations. Affect and active engagement both rely on mutual trust and support between the follower, leader, and the organization (Bjugstad et al., 2006a; Velez & Neves, 2022). The sample group's results demonstrated a clear, strong relationship within these subdimensions. The relationship between loyalty and active engagement was the strongest relationship of the LMX subdimensions. Followers with high levels of loyalty indicate a close alignment in goals with their leader and the organization (Schriesheim, Scandura, et al., 1992). Very similarly, actively engaged followers work to support the organization's goals and express a reciprocal level of trust with their leader (Manning & Robertson, 2016).

Discussion of Demographic-Specific Results

The study obtained optional demographic data from participants in the survey's final section. Of the 89 respondents who completed all three instruments, 88 completed all the demographic questions. Respondents' demographic results represented the survey's broad reach and illustrated their varied backgrounds, tenures, and industries. These demographic results help describe the sample group and provide an opportunity for further analysis. Questions about the respondents' self-described gender and their supervisor's genders yielded distinctive subgroups suitable for comparison. The following sections describe select differences between each group whenever the analysis yielded a statistically significant result.

Consistent with prior results, leadership behaviors and LMX quality had little correlation with independent critical thinking. Male and female respondents

identified a strong, positive correlation with only the behavioral dimension of idealized influence. No other dimensions indicated a statistically significant relationship with independent critical thinking. Male respondents indicated a strong, positive relationship between active engagement levels and contingent reward behaviors, while female respondents did not indicate a statistically significant relationship in this dimension.

Responses from male participants indicated strong, positive relationships between all four transformational leadership dimensions and active engagement. Female respondents also indicated positive relationships between these dimensions. However, the results for females were consistently weaker than their male counterparts. These findings align with existing research showing a relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee engagement (e.g., Thanh et al., 2022) and add a new data point to the theoretical discussion of how males and females respond to transformational leadership behaviors.

LMX quality also had a different relationship with male and female respondents. Again, both subgroups reported strong, positive relationships between active engagement and all LMX sub-dimensions, but females' responses were stronger and had a higher statistical significance. This finding adds to the conversation around the relationship between gender and the influence of LMX. As noted by Goertzen & Fritz (2004), studies examining gender and LMX have not yet reached a consensus on the nature of the relationship.

Being mindful not to draw causal inferences, it appears that leadership behaviors were more impactful to male respondents, while the quality of exchange within the leader-follower relationship was more impactful to female respondents. With respect to leadership behaviors, the largest differences were in contingent reward, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Relationships between LMX quality and active engagement skewed more strongly with female respondents, but the differences were not as pronounced as the differences with leadership behaviors. These results add nuance to the existing literature around the full range leadership model and LMX. Researchers should focus on studies designed to explore this phenomenon more deeply to determine replicability and the causes of differences.

Respondents with male supervisors identified positive, statistically significant correlations between two transactional leadership behaviors and followership dimensions. The data presented a weak relationship between passive management by exception behaviors and independent critical thinking and a strong relationship between contingent reward behaviors and active engagement. These findings continue to support the value of expressing leadership behaviors across the full range of leadership behaviors (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Respondents also noted strong, positive relationships between transformational leadership dimensions and active engagement. Those with male supervisors had more statistically significant relationships than females and stronger correlations in these areas, with the exception of the behavioral dimension of

idealized influence. Additionally, those with female supervisors reported a very strong relationship between independent critical thinking and the behavioral dimension of idealized influence. This relationship was the only statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership dimensions and independent critical thinking. This difference in results is representative of the broader conversation in the literature showing mixed results when it comes to males and females using transformational leadership (Igram et al., 2018; Munir & Aboidullah, 2018; Silva & Medis, 2017).

The data illustrated strong relationships between independent critical thinking and LMX sub-dimensions for respondents with female supervisors, but no statistically significant relationships in this area for respondents with male supervisors. Though respondents with supervisors of both genders reported statistically significant relationships with LMX quality and active engagement, those with female supervisors reported stronger correlations in each sub-dimension. The largest differences were in the perceived contribution and affect subdimensions.

Results regarding leadership behaviors were somewhat surprising. In his reflections on leadership research, Bass (1999) noted that women tended to be more likely to express transformational leadership behaviors than men. The results around transactional leadership behaviors and followership dimensions for male supervisors tend to support this idea, but less so with transformational leadership behaviors and female supervisors. Not only did the data present an absence of

statistically significant relationships between individual consideration and inspirational motivation, but correlations were also weaker for respondents with female supervisors in nearly every other subdimension.

Results for LMX quality were also surprising to the researcher. Given male respondents' stronger relationships between leadership behaviors and followership dimensions, it was expected that a similar relationship would exist when considering LMX. Instead, respondents with female supervisors reported consistently stronger relationships between followership dimensions and LMX quality, especially in the affect sub-dimension. The female supervisors in the sample group appeared more effective in leveraging their levels of alignment and relationship quality with their followers. This supports recent studies (e.g., Liang et al., 2022, Velez & Neves, 2022) that found relationships between LMX and organizational commitment. This finding challenges a recent study where gender did not have a moderating effect when examining LMX and other organizational outcomes (Stewart & Wiener, 2021). Future research should focus on understanding these results more clearly and determining the underlying causes of the relationships.

Implications

This study helps firms better understand the leader-follower relationship by examining critical elements within that relationship. It helped highlight the importance of leadership behaviors and LMX quality by controlling for these variables separately and then removing those controls. Taken separately,

leadership behaviors and LMX quality correlated weakly with positive followership dimensions. However, once those controls were released, the data presented additional strong relationships between leadership behaviors, LMX quality, and positive followership dimensions. This emphasizes the cumulative effect these variables can play in forming and enhancing the leader-follower relationship. For practitioners, these results may help inform the direction of training programs, follower and leader development, and focus areas for internal assessments.

The study's results also have implications for the academic conversation around the leader-follower relationship. An abundance of research exists concerning the full range leadership model and LMX, with several studies examining both constructs together. There are limited studies that consider these constructs together with followership dimensions. The results indicate the existence of a range of supporting relationships between the variables and followership dimensions that require further exploration. As Kelley (1998) originally noted, exemplary followers add value to the organization by taking ownership of their roles, supporting and challenging their leader, and committing to the organization's objectives. The study's results may help firms identify and develop more exemplary followers within their ranks.

Limitations

The study was an initial exploration into the relationships between followership dimensions, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. An inherent limitation of the study is its inability to determine a causal relationship between the

variables. Correlation research is not designed to draw such inferences but rather to identify and measure trends within a given data set. For example, it is not possible to definitively state that leaders in the sample group who demonstrated inspirational motivation directly caused their followers to report higher levels of active engagement.

Another limitation of the study was the varied composition of the sample group. There was a degree of homogeneity within the participant group achieved through the survey's screening logic, but it did not limit participation based on factors like industry or tenure. A more homogenous sample group may lead to more refined results and would allow for comparison across populations. Further, the sample group's responses were significantly skewed toward the positive when assessing their followership style. As shown in Figure 5, there was a very limited representation of followers who did not rate themselves as exemplary followers. A more varied data set may yield different insights into the relationships within the leader-follower relationship.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Scholars

This study contributed to the literature by identifying the existence of relationships between followership attributes, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. Future studies should carry on this exploration to develop a more robust understanding of the relationships and their causes. Mixed methods research and

case studies may help to examine the leader-follower relationship more closely. These approaches can help researchers uncover more insights into the relationship by exploring the phenomenon more deeply and enhance the robustness of results by measuring the phenomena using different methods (Hancké, 2009).

Adding a qualitative view to the variables in this work could yield valuable insights. Qualitative methods help researchers understand and explore phenomena (Sekaran, 2003). Creswell & Poth (2018) define qualitative research as a way of studying human problems in their natural setting and examining the phenomenon's intricate nature by identifying patterns and themes. Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative research is appropriate when studying complex situations that deal with individuals' perceived meanings. A mixed methods approach would allow researchers to identify population-level characteristics via a survey and supplement those findings with long-form interview questions with a subgroup. The qualitative data would supplement the quantitative data and help researchers develop a richer description of the phenomenon.

Case study research is another option to explore the leader-follower relationship. This methodology allows researchers to examine a phenomenon within its natural environment and explore it in depth (Yin, 2018). Case studies take into account that phenomena rarely occur in isolation and rely on multiple data sources to develop a rigorous description of the case (Abma & Stake, 2014; Yin, 2018). Case study reports go beyond isolated findings and provide the reader with a rich understanding of environmental factors, how participants find meaning in their

environment, and the tacit knowledge the participants have developed over time (Abma & Stake, 2014; Stake, 1978; Yin, 2018). Researchers should consider conducting a case study of a single firm or industry to develop a deep understanding of the direct and indirect factors that influence the leader-follower relationship. Though not widely generalizable, these findings would be valuable in understanding what drives the leader-follower relationship within a closed population.

Recommendations for Practitioners

The study's results presented a mixed picture of relationships between followership characteristics, leadership behaviors, and LMX quality. The study's findings identified differing relationships between transactional and transformational leadership when controlling for LMX quality. It also found a steady, positive relationship between LMX quality and followers' active engagement levels. While studies that follow the recommendations above may yield more refined, actionable results, this research yielded some findings that practitioners may find useful as they train and develop their teams and leaders.

A study from the Harvard Business Review examined corporate training programs in the US and abroad. The authors noted that firms in the US spent about $160 billion, and corporations abroad spent around $356 billion on corporate training initiatives in 2015 alone (Beer et al., 2016). They found that most training initiatives fail because the context in which participants learn does not match the context in which they work. They recommended that firms take a dual approach to

training that works to align working conditions to training conditions (Beer et al., 2016). Recommendations from this study build on this approach with recommendations for enhancing leadership behaviors and LMX quality.

When controlling for LMX quality, the data did not present a statistically significant relationship between followership characteristics and transformational leadership behaviors. However, the data did illustrate a positive relationship between followership characteristics and transactional leadership behaviors. This finding indicates that, while often overlooked in favor of transformational leadership behaviors (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), transactional leadership behaviors remain valuable tools for leaders. The study also supported the notion that contingent reward programs can be useful tools for organizations. Setting clear expectations of rewards for performance can still allow followers to develop their independent critical thinking skills and work toward the organization's benefit.

The full analysis with no controls indicated strong relationships between transformational leadership behaviors and followership dimensions, particularly in active engagement. Training the full range of transformational leadership behaviors helps equip leaders with the tools to critically examine their followers and themselves to provide their most effective interventions (Lipman, 2013). Training courses that strengthen transformational leadership behaviors are already commonplace, but this work further highlights their utility in driving engagement (Forbes, 2022; Roundtable Learning, 2023).

Practitioners should also look to enhance LMX quality within their organizations. This study showed strong, statistically significant relationships between LMX quality and active engagement. Leaders should critically examine themselves to understand the alignment between their goals and those of their followers, their support for their followers, and the degree of trust within the relationship. A recent study supported the need for leaders to listen to their teams and empower them to achieve success (Pappas, 2021). They noted that the most effective leaders provide guidance but allow their teams to work together to solve organizational challenges. This approach ties in closely with LMX theory, this study's findings, and recommendations noted in other studies.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Purpose of the Study
Thank you for your participation in this study! The study's purpose is to examine the relationship between followership style, certain leadership behaviors, and the quality of interactions between leaders and followers. The study will highlight the importance of followership and help to build a better understanding of its role in leader-follower interactions and job performance.

If you agree to participate, you will answer questions in this online survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes. The questions focus on you, your leader, and the way you interact and work together. Additionally, there are some basic demographic questions about you, your firm, and your current leader. The survey will not ask for your name or your current employer, and the survey tool is configured to not collect any identifiable information about you. We assure you that any reports about this research will contain data that are anonymous or statistical in nature.

Risks & Confidentiality
There are no known significant risks involved in participating with this study and there is no compensation available for this study. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number instead of any personally identifying information. All of the study's data will be destroyed once the study is completed.

Participant Rights
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You may also refuse to answer any of the questions in the surveys. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

For questions about the study, you may contact David Ross at rossd2020@my.fit.edu or Dr. Delgado Perez at idelgado@fit.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant in the study:
Dr. Jignya Patel, IRB Chairperson
150 W. University Blvd.
Melbourne, FL 32901-6975
FIT_IRB@fit.edu
321-674-7391

Appendix B: Instrumentation

Pre-Screening Questions

Questions introduced at the beginning of the survey to ensure participants met both study criteria. If the potential participant responded 'No' to either question the survey ended.

1. Do you currently have a direct reporting relationship with someone in a supervisory or managerial role?
    a. Yes
    b. No
2. Does your current role require you to solve problems independently?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Kelley's Followership Questionnaire

Questionnaire used to measure follower characteristics in independent critical thinking and active engagement. Followers answer questions on a 0 – 6 scale, with 0 meaning rarely, 3 meaning occasionally, and 6 meaning almost always (Kelley, 1992).

1. Does your work help you fulfill some societal goal or personal dream that is important to you?
2. Are your personal work goals aligned with the organization's priority goals?
3. Are you highly committed to and energized by your work and organization, giving them your best ideas and performance?
4. Does your enthusiasm also spread to and energize your co-workers?
5. Instead of waiting for or merely accepting what the leader tells you, do you personally identify which organizational activities are most critical for achieving the organization's priority goals?
6. Do you actively develop a distinctive competence in those critical activities so that you become more valuable to the leader and the organization?
7. When starting a new job or assignment, do you promptly build a record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?
8. Can the leader give you a difficult assignment without the benefit of much supervision, knowing that you will meet your deadline with the highest-quality work and that you will "fill in the cracks" if need be?

9. Do you take the initiative to seek out and successfully complete assignments that go above and beyond your job?
10. When you are not the leader of a group project, do you still contribute at a high level, often doing more than your share?
11. Do you independently think up and champion new ideas that will contribute significantly to the leader's or the organization's goals?
12. Do you try to solve the tough problems (technical or organizational), rather than look to the leader to do it for you?
13. Do you help out other co-workers, making them look good, even when you don't get any credit?
14. Do you help the leader or group see both the upside potential and downside risks of ideas or plans, playing the devil's advocate if need be?
15. Do you understand the leader's needs, goals, and constraints, and work hard to help meet them?
16. Do you actively and honestly own up to your strengths and weaknesses rather than put off evaluation?
17. Do you make a habit of internally questioning the wisdom of the leader's decision rather than just doing what you are told?
18. When the leader asks you to do something that runs contrary to your professional or personal preferences, do you say "no" rather than "yes"?
19. Do you act on your own ethical standards rather than the leader's or the group's standards?

20. Do you assert your views on important issues, even though it might mean conflict with your group or reprisals from the leader?

MLQ5X-Short

A 45-question instrument used to measure the follower's perceptions of their leader's leadership behaviors. Note that Mind Garden's copyright policy prohibits the inclusion of the full instrument in publications. Instead, they provided the following description and example questions.

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.
Sample Items:

As a leader ….
- I talk optimistically about the future.
- I spend time teaching and coaching.
- I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating….
- Talks optimistically about the future.
- Spends time teaching and coaching.
- Avoids making decisions

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

LMX-6 Survey

Questionnaire used to measure the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX). Followers answer questions on a 1 – 5 scale based on the descriptions provided (Schriesheim, Neider, et al., 1992).

1. The way my supervisor sees it, the importance of my job to his/her performance is:
    a. [5] Very great—it critically affects his/her performance
    b. [4] Great
    c. [3] Moderate
    d. [2] Somewhat
    e. [1] Light to none—it has little effect on his/her performance
2. My supervisor would probably say that my work goals and his/hers are:
    a. [5] The same
    b. [4] Similar
    c. [3] Unrelated
    d. [2] Different
    e. [1] Opposite
3. On my present job, this is how I feel about the way my supervisor and I understand each other:
    a. [5] Very satisfied
    b. [4] Satisfied
    c. [3] Undecided or neutral

d. [2] Dissatisfied

e. [1] Very dissatisfied

4. The way my supervisor sees me, he/she would probably say that my ability to do my job well is:

    a. [5] Exceptional

    b. [4] Good to very good

    c. [3] Average

    d. [2] Below average

    e. [1] Poor

5. I feel that my work goals and those of my supervisor are:

    a. [5] The same

    b. [4] Similar

    c. [3] Unrelated

    d. [2] Different

    e. [1] Opposite

6. On my present job, this is how I feel about the way my boss provides help on hard problems:

    a. [5] Very satisfied

    b. [4] Satisfied

    c. [3] Undecided or neutral

    d. [2] Dissatisfied

    e. [1] Very dissatisfied

Demographic Questions

Questions used to gather demographic data about followers and their leaders. Followers answered these optional questions based on the provided possible response options.

1. How long have you worked for your current employer?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1-2 years
    c. 3-5 years
    d. 6-9 years
    e. 10-14 years
    f. 15+ years
2. In which industry do you currently work?
    a. Accounting
    b. Advertising
    c. Agriculture
    d. Computers
    e. Construction
    f. Consulting
    g. Engineering
    h. Entertainment
    i. Finance/Banking/Insurance
    j. Food service

k. Government

l. Hospitality

m. Legal

n. Manufacturing

o. Marketing

p. Non-profit

q. Pharmaceutical

r. Real estate

s. Retail

t. Telecommunications

u. Utilities

v. Professional Services

w. Other

    i. Free text response

3. Which choice best describes your current role?

    a. Individual contributor

    b. Supervisor

    c. Manager

    d. Senior Manager / Director

    e. Vice President

    f. C-Level executive

    g. Other

        i. Free text response

4. Do you hold an active professional certification?
    a. Yes
    b. No
5. How old are you?
    a. Under 18
    b. 18-24 years old
    c. 25-34 years old
    d. 35-44 years old
    e. 45-54 years old
    f. 55-64 years old
    g. 65+ years old
6. How do you describe yourself?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary / third gender
    d. Prefer to self-describe
        i. Free text response
    e. Prefer not to say
7. To the best of your knowledge, how does your supervisor or manager describe themselves?
    a. Male

b. Female

c. Non-binary / third gender

d. Prefer to self-describe

    i. Free text response

e. Prefer not to say

Appendix C: Recruiting Materials

Recruiting Letter

Hello,

My name is David Ross, and I am working toward my Doctor of Business Administration degree at the Florida Institute of Technology. I am writing my dissertation and seeking participants from a wide variety of backgrounds to complete a survey as part of the study. In short, the study focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the leader-follower relationship from the follower's perspective. A better understanding of this important relationship may help improve the interpersonal relationship between followers and leaders, inform training decisions, and help associates perform at a higher level.

Associates in a leader-follower relationship who solve organizational problems are great candidates for my study because of the nature of your work and the skills you need to excel. My study uses a followership model that considers individuals' levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement. Today's workplace requires both of these characteristics to find creative solutions to problems, work well in a team environment, and put in extra effort to ensure a successful result.

The link below will take you to the survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you choose to participate, you will find information about the study's purpose, your rights as a participant, and contact information for me, my major advisor, and the university's Institutional Review Board chair. Thank you very much for your consideration!

David Ross, CIA, CFE

<<Please Click Here to Access the Survey>>

Appendix D: Data Scale and Types

Variable	Description	Scale	Data Type
Dependent Variables			
Independent Critical Thinking	Follower's score of 10 items in Kelley's Followership Questionnaire	10 items scored from 0 to 6	Discrete
Active Engagement	Follower's score of 10 items in Kelley's Followership Questionnaire	10 items scored from 0 to 6	Discrete
Independent Variables			
Transactional Leadership Behaviors	Follower's score of 16 items in the MLQ5X-Short	16 items scored from 0 to 4	Discrete
Transformational Leadership Behaviors	Follower's score of 20 items in the MLQ5X-Short	20 items scored from 0 to 4	Discrete
LMX – Perceived Contribution	Follower's score of 2 items in the LMX-6 Instrument	2 items scored from 1 to 5	Discrete
LMX – Loyalty	Follower's score of 2 items in the LMX-6 Instrument	2 items scored from 1 to 5	Discrete
LMX - Affect	Follower's score of 2 items in the LMX-6 Instrument	2 items scored from 1 to 5	Discrete

Variable	Description	Scale	Data Type
Demographics			
Tenure in years with current firm	Participant's years of service with their current firm, selected from a range of values	<1; 1 to 2; 3 to 5; 6 to 9; 10 to 14; >15	Ordinal
Industry	Participant's description of their firm's industry, selected from a range of values	Included a pre-populated selection of 22 options and a free response field	Nominal
Role description (e.g., individual contributor, manager)	Participant's description of their role, selected from a range of values	Included a pre-populated selection of 6 options and a free response field	Nominal
Professional certifications	Dichotomous variable described by respondent	0 = no; 1 = yes	Nominal
Age	Participant age at the time of the survey selected from a range of values	<18; 18 to 24; 25 to 34; 35 to 44; 45 to 54; 55 to 64; >65	Ordinal
Gender	Dichotomous variable described by respondent	0 = male; 1 = female	Nominal
Supervisor's gender	Dichotomous variable described by respondent	0 = male; 1 = female	Nominal

Appendix E: Selected Charts

Full Correlation Table – No Partial Correlations

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		ICT	AE	LF	MBE-P	MBE-A	CR	II-A	II-B	IC	IM	IS	LMX-PC	LMX-A	LMX-L
1. ICT	Pearson's r	—													
	p-value	—													
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.637***	—												
	p-value	< .001	—												
3. LF	Pearson's r	0.056	−0.103	—											
	p-value	0.603	0.337	—											
4. MBE-P	Pearson's r	0.072	−0.113	0.821***	—										
	p-value	0.503	0.293	< .001	—										
5. MBE-A	Pearson's r	0.104	0.001	0.130	0.163	—									
	p-value	0.331	0.991	0.224	0.126	—									
6. CR	Pearson's r	0.070	0.296**	−0.652***	−0.644***	−0.026	—								
	p-value	0.514	0.005	< .001	< .001	0.806	—								
7. II-A	Pearson's r	0.222*	0.476***	−0.574***	−0.599***	−0.131	0.796***	—							
	p-value	0.037	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.220	< .001	—							
8. II-B	Pearson's r	0.292**	0.493***	−0.417***	−0.433***	0.024	0.689***	0.752***	—						
	p-value	0.006	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.823	< .001	< .001	—						
9. IC	Pearson's r	0.159	0.388***	−0.580***	−0.609***	−0.075	0.736***	0.806***	0.731***	—					
	p-value	0.137	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.483	< .001	< .001	< .001	—					
10. IM	Pearson's r	0.186	0.436***	−0.492***	−0.566***	−0.158	0.758***	0.822***	0.815***	0.746***	—				
	p-value	0.081	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.140	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
11. IS	Pearson's r	0.106	0.356***	−0.515***	−0.520***	−0.078	0.694***	0.762***	0.688***	0.820***	0.745***	—			
	p-value	0.321	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.470	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
12. LMX-PC	Pearson's r	0.204	0.376***	−0.405***	−0.382***	−0.078	0.519***	0.581***	0.560***	0.675***	0.584***	0.546***	—		
	p-value	0.055	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.467	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
13. LMX-A	Pearson's r	0.131	0.441***	−0.726***	−0.676***	−0.162	0.734***	0.795***	0.613***	0.784***	0.708***	0.702***	0.667***	—	
	p-value	0.223	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.129	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
14. LMX-L	Pearson's r	0.214*	0.453***	−0.432***	−0.374***	−0.041	0.551***	0.623***	0.522***	0.605***	0.566***	0.603***	0.662***	0.669***	—
	p-value	0.044	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.706	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Correlation Table - Male Respondents Only

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		ICT	AE	LF	MBE-P	MBE-A	CR	IC	IM	IS	II-A	II-B	LMX-PC	LMX-L	LMX-A
1. ICT	Pearson's r	—													
	p-value	—													
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.649***	—												
	p-value	< .001	—												
3. LF	Pearson's r	−0.127	−0.233	—											
	p-value	0.483	0.192	—											
4. MBE-P	Pearson's r	0.104	−0.151	0.819***	—										
	p-value	0.565	0.402	< .001	—										
5. MBE-A	Pearson's r	−0.100	−0.070	0.197	0.106	—									
	p-value	0.580	0.700	0.272	0.558	—									
6. CR	Pearson's r	0.312	0.411*	−0.545**	−0.546**	0.098	—								
	p-value	0.078	0.017	0.001	0.001	0.589	—								
7. IC	Pearson's r	0.286	0.508**	−0.549***	−0.545**	−0.088	0.618***	—							
	p-value	0.107	0.003	< .001	0.001	0.627	< .001	—							
8. IM	Pearson's r	0.255	0.491**	−0.555***	−0.545**	0.026	0.813***	0.755***	—						
	p-value	0.152	0.004	< .001	0.001	0.888	< .001	< .001	—						
9. IS	Pearson's r	0.295	0.537**	−0.454**	−0.461**	0.020	0.657***	0.842***	0.819***	—					
	p-value	0.095	0.001	0.008	0.007	0.911	< .001	< .001	< .001	—					
10. II-A	Pearson's r	0.292	0.546**	−0.518**	−0.536**	−0.081	0.773***	0.838***	0.850***	0.847***	—				
	p-value	0.099	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.654	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
11. II-B	Pearson's r	0.350*	0.545**	−0.568***	−0.603***	−0.011	0.759***	0.758***	0.883***	0.743***	0.834***	—			
	p-value	0.046	0.001	< .001	< .001	0.952	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
12. LMX-PC	Pearson's r	0.327	0.355*	−0.588***	−0.424*	−0.153	0.573***	0.785***	0.607***	0.663***	0.654***	0.537**	—		
	p-value	0.063	0.043	< .001	0.014	0.396	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.001	—		
13. LMX-L	Pearson's r	0.236	0.420*	−0.477**	−0.343	0.004	0.502**	0.663***	0.595***	0.735***	0.546**	0.471**	0.722***	—	
	p-value	0.185	0.015	0.005	0.051	0.982	0.003	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.001	0.006	< .001	—	
14. LMX-A	Pearson's r	0.226	0.472**	−0.737***	−0.633***	−0.113	0.715***	0.794***	0.771***	0.765***	0.791***	0.700***	0.842***	0.694***	—
	p-value	0.206	0.006	< .001	< .001	0.531	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Correlation Table - Female Respondents Only

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		ICT	AE	LF	MBE-P	MBE-A	CR	IC	IM	IS	II-A	II-B	LMX-PC	LMX-L	LMX-A
1. ICT	Pearson's r	—													
	p-value	—													
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.646***	—												
	p-value	< .001	—												
3. LF	Pearson's r	0.123	−0.037	—											
	p-value	0.369	0.789	—											
4. MBE-P	Pearson's r	0.016	−0.094	0.814***	—										
	p-value	0.910	0.493	< .001	—										
5. MBE-A	Pearson's r	0.170	0.042	0.104	0.197	—									
	p-value	0.214	0.762	0.449	0.150	—									
6. CR	Pearson's r	0.002	0.260	−0.675***	−0.687***	−0.063	—								
	p-value	0.989	0.055	< .001	< .001	0.646	—								
7. IC	Pearson's r	0.142	0.319*	−0.578***	−0.634***	−0.039	0.805***	—							
	p-value	0.302	0.018	< .001	< .001	0.778	< .001	—							
8. IM	Pearson's r	0.204	0.423**	−0.426**	−0.558***	−0.225	0.725***	0.730***	—						
	p-value	0.136	0.001	0.001	< .001	0.098	< .001	< .001	—						
9. IS	Pearson's r	0.064	0.272*	−0.508***	−0.525***	−0.099	0.692***	0.800***	0.689***	—					
	p-value	0.642	0.044	< .001	< .001	0.472	< .001	< .001	< .001	—					
10. II-A	Pearson's r	0.245	0.468***	−0.575***	−0.623***	−0.137	0.793***	0.799***	0.803***	0.713***	—				
	p-value	0.072	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.320	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
11. II-B	Pearson's r	0.332*	0.483***	−0.297*	−0.286*	0.078	0.647***	0.695***	0.767***	0.635***	0.707***	—			
	p-value	0.013	< .001	0.028	0.034	0.572	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
12. LMX-PC	Pearson's r	0.214	0.429**	−0.248	−0.313*	0.034	0.506***	0.547***	0.564***	0.444***	0.555***	0.556***	—		
	p-value	0.116	0.001	0.068	0.020	0.805	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
13. LMX-L	Pearson's r	0.270*	0.511***	−0.341*	−0.338*	−0.051	0.555***	0.524***	0.519***	0.488***	0.655***	0.522***	0.600***	—	
	p-value	0.046	< .001	0.011	0.012	0.710	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
14. LMX-A	Pearson's r	0.140	0.457***	−0.692***	−0.679***	−0.181	0.738***	0.759***	0.651***	0.639***	0.801***	0.525***	0.495***	0.607***	—
	p-value	0.306	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.186	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Correlation Table - Respondents with Male Supervisors Only

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		ICT	AE	LF	MBE-P	MBE-A	CR	IC	IM	IS	II-A	II-B	LMX-PC	LMX-L	LMX-A
1. ICT	Pearson's r	—													
	p-value	—													
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.605***	—												
	p-value	< .001	—												
3. LF	Pearson's r	0.245	−0.140	—											
	p-value	0.074	0.314	—											
4. MBE-P	Pearson's r	0.275*	−0.145	0.807***	—										
	p-value	0.044	0.295	< .001	—										
5. MBE-A	Pearson's r	0.062	−0.037	0.181	0.207	—									
	p-value	0.659	0.791	0.190	0.134	—									
6. CR	Pearson's r	0.011	0.372**	−0.711***	−0.669***	−0.099	—								
	p-value	0.936	0.006	< .001	< .001	0.474	—								
7. IC	Pearson's r	0.072	0.438***	−0.591***	−0.619***	0.033	0.800***	—							
	p-value	0.605	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.815	< .001	—							
8. IM	Pearson's r	0.125	0.494***	−0.502***	−0.575***	−0.124	0.784***	0.764***	—						
	p-value	0.367	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.371	< .001	< .001	—						
9. IS	Pearson's r	0.054	0.358**	−0.621***	−0.616***	−0.016	0.790***	0.838***	0.786***	—					
	p-value	0.698	0.008	< .001	< .001	0.906	< .001	< .001	< .001	—					
10. II-A	Pearson's r	0.134	0.539***	−0.637***	−0.643***	−0.124	0.831***	0.838***	0.843***	0.809***	—				
	p-value	0.334	< .001	< .001	< .001	0.372	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
11. II-B	Pearson's r	0.146	0.454***	−0.433**	−0.469***	0.014	0.756***	0.789***	0.840***	0.722***	0.811***	—			
	p-value	0.292	< .001	0.001	< .001	0.921	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
12. LMX-PC	Pearson's r	0.102	0.303*	−0.425**	−0.398**	−0.116	0.554***	0.638***	0.601***	0.541***	0.595***	0.573***	—		
	p-value	0.461	0.026	0.001	0.003	0.402	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
13. LMX-L	Pearson's r	0.075	0.374**	−0.596***	−0.456***	−0.156	0.645***	0.601***	0.587***	0.606***	0.593***	0.525***	0.578***	—	
	p-value	0.592	0.005	< .001	< .001	0.259	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
14. LMX-A	Pearson's r	0.028	0.383**	−0.769***	−0.676***	−0.178	0.773***	0.797***	0.725***	0.771***	0.838***	0.632***	0.669***	0.731***	—
	p-value	0.839	0.004	< .001	< .001	0.197	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Correlation Table - Respondents with Female Supervisors Only

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		ICT	AE	LF	MBE-P	MBE-A	CR	IC	IM	IS	II-A	II-B	LMX-PC	LMX-L	LMX-A
1. ICT	Pearson's r	—													
	p-value	—													
2. AE	Pearson's r	0.682***	—												
	p-value	< .001	—												
3. LF	Pearson's r	−0.202	−0.042	—											
	p-value	0.252	0.816	—											
4. MBE-P	Pearson's r	−0.202	−0.060	0.844***	—										
	p-value	0.253	0.738	< .001	—										
5. MBE-A	Pearson's r	0.172	0.069	0.065	0.105	—									
	p-value	0.332	0.700	0.716	0.553	—									
6. CR	Pearson's r	0.154	0.141	−0.593***	−0.626***	0.106	—								
	p-value	0.383	0.427	< .001	< .001	0.551	—								
7. IC	Pearson's r	0.297	0.291	−0.577***	−0.601***	−0.243	0.615***	—							
	p-value	0.088	0.096	< .001	< .001	0.167	< .001	—							
8. IM	Pearson's r	0.300	0.294	−0.514**	−0.592***	−0.221	0.700***	0.720***	—						
	p-value	0.085	0.092	0.002	< .001	0.208	< .001	< .001	—						
9. IS	Pearson's r	0.188	0.354*	−0.334	−0.370*	−0.183	0.535**	0.795***	0.675***	—					
	p-value	0.288	0.040	0.054	0.031	0.300	0.001	< .001	< .001	—					
10. II-A	Pearson's r	0.354*	0.368*	−0.489**	−0.539**	−0.138	0.743***	0.749***	0.809***	0.684***	—				
	p-value	0.040	0.032	0.003	0.001	0.435	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
11. II-B	Pearson's r	0.607***	0.576***	−0.439**	−0.400*	0.066	0.522**	0.609***	0.737***	0.648***	0.654***	—			
	p-value	< .001	< .001	0.009	0.019	0.710	0.002	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
12. LMX-PC	Pearson's r	0.356*	0.490**	−0.387*	−0.361*	−0.020	0.466**	0.740***	0.581***	0.568***	0.558***	0.559***	—		
	p-value	0.039	0.003	0.024	0.036	0.910	0.006	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
13. LMX-L	Pearson's r	0.421*	0.610***	−0.238	−0.286	0.094	0.486**	0.655***	0.647***	0.632***	0.696***	0.628***	0.794***	—	
	p-value	0.013	< .001	0.175	0.101	0.597	0.004	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
14. LMX-A	Pearson's r	0.292	0.532**	−0.672***	−0.684***	−0.132	0.663***	0.759***	0.682***	0.575***	0.719***	0.580***	0.668***	0.623***	—
	p-value	0.094	0.001	< .001	< .001	0.458	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001