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## Examining Followership Role Orientation

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# **EXAMINING FOLLOWERSHIP ROLE ORIENTATION**

by

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B.S. University of South Florida, 2015

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in Industrial-Organizational Psychology  
in the Department of Psychology  
in the College of Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to make steps toward filling significant gaps in the followership literature. The study of followership has often been seen through the lens of leaders' ability to impart change in follower behavior. In doing so, the literature has primarily focused on leader behavior as the agent of change rather than acknowledging followers as active agents in their own behaviors. However, some recent research has shown the emergence of followers as the primary focus, even looking at how their actions can change the way leaders act. This research focuses primarily on followership role orientations as mental models which specify the attributes an individual expects good followers to possess. In particular, follower personality traits, core self-evaluations, and self-construal were investigated as antecedents of followership role orientations (co-production and passive). Additionally, the relationship between these role orientations and enacted follower behavior (voice and upward delegation) were examined with task-specific self-efficacy investigated as a moderating variable. While most of the antecedents proved to be significant predictors, some of the coefficient directions were unexpected. Finally, results indicated that both role orientations were significant predictors of voice behavior and upward delegation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The views expressed in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the organizations with which he is affiliated or his sponsoring institutions or agencies.

I would like to thank my friends and family for being incredibly supportive in everything I do, without you completing this would have been impossible. Additionally, special thanks are in order for the chair of my committee Dr. Shawn Burke. Thank you for the incredible patience you have shown throughout this process. The countless hours you have spent helping me develop the skills and knowledge needed to complete this thesis are greatly appreciated.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE**

Followership has been historically seen as a minor, relatively unimportant subset of the leadership literature (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Researchers have looked at the interaction as a top-down, hierarchal process, in which followers are largely ignored (Meindl, 1985; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). When considered at all, followers have been seen as recipients of leader influence (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This has led to research being viewed as “the study of leaders and subordinates”, rather than acknowledging followers as actors with actual influence (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). While more recent research has begun exploring these dynamics from the follower’s point of view, there are still many questions left unanswered (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Understanding followers better is essential as the leader/follower dynamic is in fact a dyadic relationship. One subset of the followership literature concerns itself with how individuals view followers conceptually. As will be discussed throughout this paper there are a number of ways in which this can be approached. However, this research will focus primarily on followership role orientations as mental models that specify the attributes an individual expects good followers to possess (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, & Huang, 2017).

Given the limited research on followership role orientation there are a number of gaps within the literature. Research into what antecedents contribute to an individual’s followership role orientation development is particularly limited (Epitropaki & Martin, 2014). It has been shown that to modify and understand behavior, analysis of antecedents is integral (Miltenberger et al., 2004). In gathering an understanding of the circumstances in which followership role orientations develop, one can better develop tools for potential behavior modification. Additionally, it has been shown that sometimes individuals behave differently than their followership role orientation would suggest (Carsten et al., 2017). However, what factors contribute to this is mostly theoretical. In

understanding which factors contribute to individual’s followership role orientation as well as individual deviations between orientation and enacted behavior, organizations can better prepare for what may now be viewed simply dissonant behavior. These areas will be addressed in this research by:

1. Examining follower personality traits, core self-evaluations, and self-construal as antecedents of followership role orientations.
2. Investigating task specific self-efficacy as a moderator of the relationship between individual’s followership role orientations and enacted follower behavior (e.g. voice and upward delegation).

In the following sections I will outline how these research questions fit into the proposed theoretical model (Figure 1).

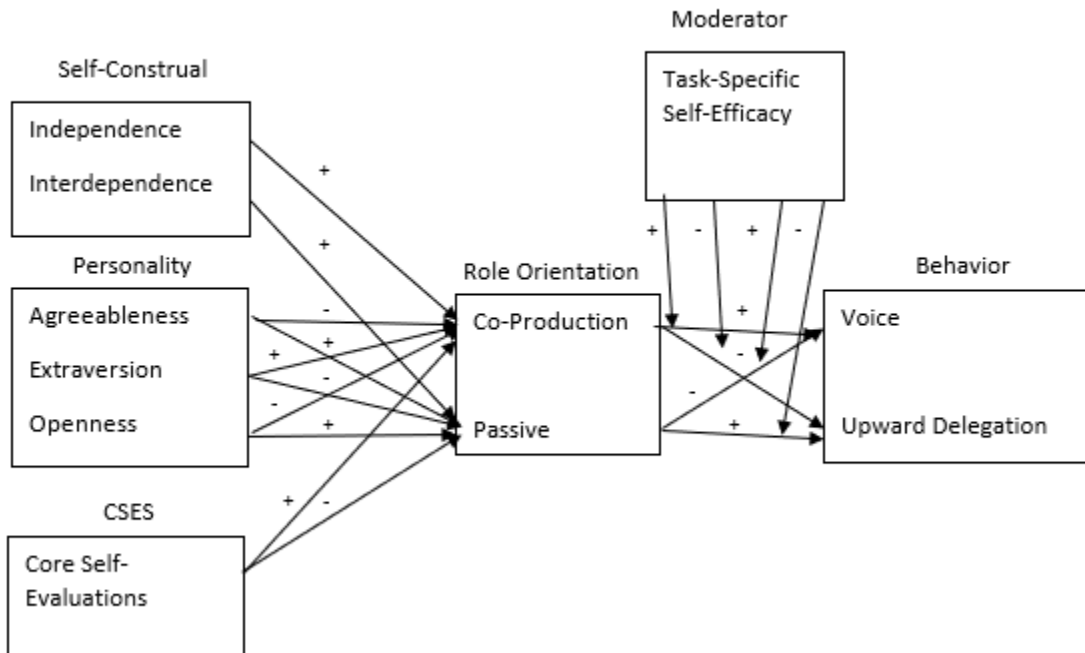


Figure 1: Proposed model of followership role orientations

First, key underlying constructs which support the theoretical framework that serves as a foundation for this thesis will be discussed. Next, a series of hypotheses will be presented that delineate how the previously mentioned antecedents (i.e., personality traits, self-evaluations, self-construal) relate to followership role orientations. Additionally, hypotheses will be presented that delineate the relationship between followership role orientation and enacted behavior as well as how task specific self-efficacy serves to moderate the above relationship. Finally, the hypotheses are followed by sections describing the methodology, results and implications.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### **Follower Role-based views**

Followership role orientation is built on role theory and follower role-based views that have emerged over the last 80 years (Carlsen et al., 2017). Follower role-based views examine how followers' enacted behaviors contribute to organizational outcomes (Uhl-Bein et al., 2010). Early frameworks classified how followers are, in practice, creating typologies for follower types based largely on behavioral observation (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In attempts to help leaders better understand how to deal with subordinates, these frameworks categorized followers by characteristic dimensions (e.g. dominance and subordination). While these dimensions varied slightly from framework to framework, they can largely be boiled down to two broad constructs, passivity and proactivity. (Zaleznik, 1965; Kelley 1988; Howell & Mendez, 2008; Uhl-Bein et al., 2010).

More recent frameworks shifted the focus looking at individuals' perceptions/ mental models of followership. Individuals can have very different interpretations of how the same role should or is being carried out (Parker, 2007). These frameworks are built upon previous work (Zaleznik, 1965; Kelley 1988; Howell & Mendez, 2008), with passivity and proactivity remaining core constructs. Sy (2010) defined implicit followership theories (IFTs) as individuals' personal assumptions about the traits and behaviors that characterize how followers are in practice. Alternatively, Carlsen et al. (2014) defined followership role orientation as cognitive belief structures or schemas regarding what a follower's role is relative to their leader (Carlsen et al., 2014). While IFTs and followership role orientations are conceptually similar, they differ regarding the scope. IFTs focus on central tendencies, or how individuals perceive followers actually are, and followership role orientations focus on prototypes, or rather how individuals think

followers should behave (Lapierre & Bremner, 2010; Carlsen et al., 2017). With the outcome variable of behavior in mind, this research is interested in how individuals believe followers should act, rather than how they believe they actually act in practice. It would be expected that individual's beliefs about prototypical behavior (role orientation) would be more indicative of how one interacts *as a follower*. Inversely, beliefs about typical behavior (IFTs), are more indicative of how one interacts *toward followers* (e.g. as a leader) (Lapierre & Bremner, 2010). Thus, I have chosen to examine followership role orientations rather than IFTs.

### **Followership role orientations**

Carsten (2010) originally defined followership role orientations on a passive to proactive (co-production) continuum. However, in more recent versions of the model this has shifted (Carlsen et al., 2017). While the two orientations are related, they are actually distinct constructs that, while rare, can co-exist on the individual level and as such must be examined/measured independently rather than as a single continuum (Carlsen et al., 2017). In observing these constructs independently, follower orientations can be more accurately assessed. For example, in the previous scale, scoring towards the middle of the continuum required deeper analysis to properly understand. An individual completely uninterested in following all together, as well as one whom is relatively moderate overall or has no firm real opinion on an optimal approach would both result in a mid-range score. In measuring these constructs separately, we can help distinguish between these individuals at the small cost of a few extra survey items. This is potentially important as individuals whom are moderate may be more likely to be versatile/ flexible in the ways in which they enact following behavior. This could potentially make these individuals useful in adapting to circumstances where leadership may be continually turned over (e.g. context with shared leadership). Conversely, individuals whom view follower duties as completely

unimportant, will likely need to be removed from consideration all together. With that in mind, while these constructs will be measured independently, it is important to note that it is expected that they will in fact show a strong negative relationship with one another, as despite the shift away from the continuum, these constructs will often be at direct odds with one another.

A co-production role orientation entails believing followers should be active participants in leader-follower relationships (Carsten et al., 2017; Shamir, 2007). An individual with a strong co-production role orientation believes followers should attempt to act more as a partner than subordinate to their leader (Carsten et al., 2017) Expected behaviors include being responsible for gathering and relaying important details, playing devil's advocate, as well as identifying and solving problems (Carsten et al., 2017). The more active a follower is, the less deference they show to their leader (Lapierre & Bremner, 2010). Passive role orientation, on the other hand, is the belief that followers should be sub-servient to leaders (Carsten et al., 2017). In fact, the more passive a follower is, the more deference they show towards their leader (Lapierre & Bremner 2010). Individuals with a strong passive role orientation see gathering information, generating ideas and goal setting as the job of the leader rather than the follower (Crossman & Crossman 2012; Carsten et al., 2017).

### **CHAPTER THREE: ANTECEDENTS**

It has been stated that role orientations cannot be categorized simply as trait or state constructs (Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Carsten et al., 2017). They have been shown to develop early in life and evolve as individuals gain life and role specific experience (Kuhn & Laird, 2011; Carsten et al., 2017). This leads to the question of exactly what factors contribute to the early development of followership role orientations in the first place. Little research has been done on what causes followership role orientations theories to develop in people in general (Epitropaki & Martin, 2014). However, some findings on implicit leadership theories (ILTs) may be leveraged to shed light on what might be expected. Implicit leadership theory states that individuals have preconceived notions about qualities that leaders should and should not have (Epitropaki & Martin, 2014). These qualities are often grouped into commonly occurring combinations to create leader prototypes (e.g. authoritarian) (Schyns & Meindl, 2005). It has been shown that ILTs are often established early in life (Ayman-Nolley & Ayman, 2005) and that personality traits, such as the big five influence the development of ILT's (Keller, 1999).

ILTs and followership role orientation are individuals preconceived notions of leaders and followers respectively, and the heavy overlap in leadership/ followership literature to date. Given that, it is expected that if personality is an antecedent for one, it will likely be for the other as well. Thus, given the fact that personality characteristics have been shown to be antecedents of ILT's, it is reasonable to posit that personality characteristics should also be antecedents to the development of followership role orientations (figure 1).



## **Personality Traits as Antecedents to Followership Role Orientations.**

**Agreeableness.** Agreeableness involves an individual's interpersonal orientation. Those scoring highly on agreeableness are often characterized as trusting, caring, altruistic, and cooperative with a preference for positive interpersonal interactions (Zhao & Seibert, 2006). Agreeableness is associated with friendliness towards others and a deference of one's own desires in favor of others (Huang & Ryan, 2011). Followership role orientations demonstrate that the more passive a follower is, the more deference they believe followers should show towards their leader (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Therefore, it would be expected that individuals scoring highly on agreeableness will relate with passive followership role orientation. Additionally, these individuals will also be more likely to view constructs of co-production negatively (e.g., devil's advocacy) due to their agreeable nature. Thus, it is expected that agreeableness will be negatively related with co-production followership role orientation.

*Hypothesis 1a. Agreeableness will be positively related with passive followership role orientation.*

*Hypothesis 1b. Agreeableness will be negatively related with co-production followership role orientation.*

**Extraversion.** Extraversion characterizes individuals who are outgoing, energetic and generally well spoken. (Sibley & Duckitt 2010). Extraverts tend to place themselves into more leader-oriented positions and act in a more dominate orientation (Sibley & Duckitt 2010). Research shows that when there are too many extraverts in a group, it often unfolds that there are too many people trying to lead and not enough deference to a leader figure (Barry & Stewart, 1997). Those high in extraversion are less likely to want to defer, at least completely, to their leader. It is predicted that they will believe that acting in co-productive way (e.g. devil's advocate or proposing solutions) as a follower is ideal and thus, will align positively with a co-production followership

role orientation. Inversely, it is predicted that extraversion will be negatively related with passive followership role orientation as they will view sitting back and letting someone else take full control as a generally undesirable position.

*Hypothesis 1c. Extraversion will be positively related with co-production followership role orientation.*

*Hypothesis 1d. Extraversion will be negatively related with passive followership role orientation.*

**Openness to Experience.** Individuals scoring highly on openness to experiences are characterized as innovative, analytical, and creative (Zhao & Seibert, 2006). Those who score highly on openness to experience do not feel the need to do things the way they have always done them and are open to alternative methods. (Zhao & Seibert, 2006). Openness to experience has been shown to negatively relate to social dominance (Sibley & Duckitt, 2000). This means that those open to experience will be more likely to defer, and in turn, more likely to view deference towards leaders positively than those who score low on openness to experience. Thus, openness to experience should positively relate to passive followership role orientation and negatively to co-production followership role orientation.

*Hypothesis 1e. Openness to experience will be positively related with passive followership role orientation.*

*Hypothesis 1f. Openness to experience will be will negatively related with co-production followership role orientation.*

### **Core Self – Evaluations and Self-Constraint as Antecedents to Followership Role Orientation.**

Much like personality traits, core self-evaluations and self-construal tend to be generally stable and indicators of behavior (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne 1997; Singelis, 1994). Thus, it is suspected that a link between core-self evaluations as well as self-construal and

followership role orientation can be established as well (figure 1).

**Core Self-Evaluations.** “Core self-evaluations is a broad, latent, higher-order trait indicated by four well-established traits” (Judge, Bono & Thoresen, 2003, p. 3). These traits are as follows:

(1) neuroticism, the tendency to have a focus on negative aspects of the self and associated unpleasant emotions (Watson, 2000; Costa & McCrae, 1988) (2) generalized self-efficacy, an individual’s estimate of how they will perform in certain situations (Bandura 1982); (3) self-esteem, which reflects a person's overall appraisal of their own self-worth (Harter, 1990); and (4) locus of control, or how much one believes they are a factor in their life events (Spector, 1982). Essentially, core self-evaluation is an individual’s assessment of themselves from an effectiveness, and self-worth stand point (Judge et al., 2003). With this in mind, it is expected that individuals who view themselves highly will also likely view being involved in decision making processes positively (Judge et al., 2003). These individuals are likely to see themselves as having significant control over their environment (Judge et al., 2003). Therefore, individuals scoring highly on core self-evaluation will be more likely to view co-production positively. On the other hand, individuals low in efficacy that view themselves as incapable will likely believe it is best for people more qualified to make decisions. Thus, core self-evaluation is expected to negatively relate with passive followership role orientation.

*Hypothesis 2a: Core self-evaluation will be positively related with co-production followership role orientation.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Core self-evaluation will be negatively related with passive followership role orientation.*

**Self-Construal.** Self-Construal has been conceptualized as a “constellation of thoughts,

feeling, and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others.” (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). Self-construal measures focus on establishing how independent/interdependent an individual is, on average. Although this appears to be dichotomous, in which individuals are either independent or interdependent, Singelis argues that these two views of ‘self’ can coexist in individuals. In this, he states that individuals will view themselves in both independent and interdependent contexts and act accordingly, rather than only in one way or the other. One's Independent self-construal involves an emphasis on individual ability, uniqueness and working towards one's own goals (Singelis, 1994). Due to the fact that independent self-construal's emphasis on individual ability and individual goals, it is predicted that individuals who score highly on this dimension will be more likely to have a favorable view towards co-production in their followership role orientation. Alternatively, interdependent self-construal involves taking more external factors to one's self into consideration such as relationships and attempting to fit in (Singelis, 1994). Additionally, interdependence has been shown to be associated with collectivist cultural ideals (Singelis, 1994). Individuals in collectivist cultures have been shown to have higher deference to leader figures, in an attempt to be a part of a process rather than standing out as an individual. (Dong & Avolio, 1999) Thus, I predict that individuals scoring highly on interdependent self-construal items will be more likely to view deference towards leaders favorably.

*Hypothesis 3a. Self-Construal interdependence will be positively related with passive followership role orientation.*

*Hypothesis 3b. Self-Construal independence will be positively related with co-production followership role orientation.*

## CHAPTER FOUR: ROLE ORIENTATION AND ENACTED BEHAVIOR

In better understanding what an individual's followership role orientation is, as well as what factors may contribute to its development, a look at the practical implications are in order. Evaluating how individual's role orientation translates into behavior allows for potential behavioral predictive power. If an individual's perception tends to line up with the way in which they carry out followership behavior, individuals can better be selected based on needs that align with their mental model. In particular, the two major behavioral constructs expected to line up with followership role orientation are upward delegation and voice. Upward delegation is the transfer of responsibility of problem solving and autonomy to the leader, expecting them to make the difficult decisions (Carsten et al., 2017). Voice is the process of actively engaging in the generation of ideas and suggesting changes (Carsten et al., 2017).

Carsten et al. (2017) found that co-production orientation was positively related to voice behavior ( $\beta = .33, p < .01$ ) and negatively related to upward delegation ( $\beta = -.44, p < .01$ ). Inversely they also found that passive orientation was negatively related to voice behavior ( $\beta = -.44, p < .01$ ) and positively related to upward delegation ( $\beta = .20, p < .01$ ). I will attempt to replicate these findings, which can be seen in the connection between the boxes labeled "followership role orientation" and "enacted behavior" in figure 1.

*Hypothesis 4a: Co-production orientation will be positively related with voice behavior.*

*Hypothesis 4b: Passive orientation will be negatively related with voice behavior.*

*Hypothesis 4c: Co-production orientation will be negatively related with upward delegation.*

*Hypothesis 4d: Passive role orientation will be positively related with upward delegation.*

While followership role orientations are considered to be well defined and stable, many individuals enact these two behavioral categories contrary to what their role orientation would suggest. This

results in the significant, but far from perfect relationship between role orientation and behavior described above (Carsten et al., 2017). Within specific contexts enacted behaviors have been shown to be dynamic and reactionary (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In other words, individuals have been shown to adjust their enacted behavior based on context and situational stimuli. Research on what factors contribute to differences between an individual enacting different behavior than their followership role orientation would suggest is currently largely unknown.

One potential factor moderating this relationship is task specific self-efficacy (Figure 1). Self-efficacy is an individual's estimate of how they will perform in certain situations (Bandura 1982). Task specific self-efficacy has been shown to affect individual's behavior, persistence, effort and interest (Bandura, 1977). It is suspected that an individual estimate of how well they perform should significantly interact with the way in which they believe they should be performing (role orientation). If an individual believes they are highly competent it should be expected they will be more likely to speak up (voice) and less likely to defer (upward delegation). Inversely, if an individual believes they are incompetent it logically follows that they won't want to speak up as much and be more likely to defer. These interactions further manifest when taking into consideration with accordance to an individual's scoring on each orientation resulting in the following hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 5a. As the value of the task specify self-efficacy increases, the relationship between co-production orientation and voice also increases.*

*Hypothesis 5b. As the value of the task specify self-efficacy increases, the relationship between co-production orientation and upward delegation decreases.*

*Hypothesis 5c. As the value of the task specify self-efficacy increases, the relationship between passive orientation and voice decreases.*

*Hypothesis 5d. As the value of the task specify self-efficacy increases, the relationship between passive orientation and upward delegation also increase*

## CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

### Sample

Survey data was collected via Amazon's Mechanical Turk requiring individuals be of 'Masters' qualification to maximize likelihood of valid responses. Masters qualification requires users to have completed over 1000 unique responses and maintain over 99% approval rating from survey administrators. Sample size needed was calculated via power analysis. Cohen (1988) reasoned that studies should be designed to meet a statistical power level of 0.80. To reach this power level and detect a small effect size ( $f^2 = 0.02$ ) it was calculated that a sample size of 395 was needed. 440 responses were collected to leave room for responses that needed to be removed. Participants were disqualified if they:

- 1) failed to enter a verification code (15)
- 2) were outliers (10)
- 3) failed the quality check (5)

Outliers were operationalized as individuals with a single scale score more than three standard deviations above the norm.

Within the remaining sample ( $n=410$ ) there were 243 males (59%) and 167 females (41%) with an average age of 38.49 ( $SD = 10.93$ ). When participants were asked which ethnicity best represents them 266 selected white, 27 black, 89 Asian, 17 Hispanic and 11 other. Of these individuals 255 reported having some kind of leadership experience (student organization, at work, community organization, etc.) within the last six-month time period while 155 did not.

### Procedure

All participants logged into MTurk where they were informed of the purpose of the study,

notified of any risks and benefits associated with their participation, and were asked to provide informed consent at the beginning of the survey. Individuals were first asked to answer demographic questions relating to age, gender and recent leadership experience. This was followed by the administering of survey materials detailed below. The survey took the average participant approximately 20 minutes to complete. Respondents received an MTurk verification ID code upon completion of the survey. Any respondents that did not enter their verification code on MTurk were removed from the sample in order to maintain compliance with the study's IRB agreement to pay all qualifying participants.

### **Survey Materials**

Alpha values calculated from this studies samples are provided for each survey below. However, Table 1 displays side by side comparisons with previously reported alphas.

**Personality.** Participants were given the Big Five Inventory 44 (BFI). (Srivastava, 1999). The BFI is a 44-item personality inventory which measures each of the Big 5 Factors conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion ( $\alpha$ 's ranging from 0.85 to 0.91) (Arterberry, 2014). Each item consists of brief characteristics, such as 'I see myself as someone who is talkative' that are each associated with one of the big five dimensions. Participants rated their agreement from 'Disagree Strongly' (1) to 'Agree Strongly' (5). The total score for each dimension was computed by summing the items within each 'category' to determine where they fell on the continuum for each personality dimension.

**Self-Construal.** Participants were given Singelis' (1994) Self-Construal Scale. This measure is a 24 item Likert-scale self-report in which participants indicate their level of agreement, from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5), on each item with items such as "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects". The items are divided into two sub



categories; interdependent items and independent items. Though outside ideal levels of reliability, the Cronbach's alpha for interdependent and independent are .76 and .65. Singels (1995, p. 4) addressed this concern stating that "It is felt that these reliabilities are adequate considering the broadness of the construct and the wide range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors assessed by the scale. Items more focused on a single aspect of self would yield higher internal consistency but would threaten the validity of the measure."

**Core Self-Evaluation.** Participant Core Self-Evaluations were measured using Judge et al.'s 2003 12-item Core Self-evaluation Scale (CSES). The CSES is reliable ( $\alpha$  .92) and has been shown to validly measure the 4 specific core traits (self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control) (Judge, 2006). Example items include "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life." Participants made their ratings on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5).

**Co-production Role Orientation.** Participants co-production role orientation was measured using Carsten and Uhl Bien's (2012) 5 item scale ( $\alpha$  .73). The survey asked participants to rate their agreement on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (6) with items such as "Followers should communicate their opinions, even when they know leaders may disagree."

**Passive Role Orientation.** Similarly, Passive role orientation was measured using Carsten et al.'s (2017) 4 item scale ( $\alpha$  .82). Much like the Co-production scale this survey asks participants to rate their agreement on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (6) with items such as "At the end of the day, followers cannot be held accountable for the performance of a unit."

**Task Specific Self-Efficacy.** Task Specific Self-Efficacy was measured using a modified

version of Judge et al.'s 2003 12-item Core Self-evaluation Scale (CSES). The 5 items pertaining to self-efficacy ( $\alpha$  .81) were asked with participants primed to use a specific task as their reference point.

**Voice and Upward Delegation.** Voice behavior was measured using Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) 6 item voice extra-role behavioral scale ( $\alpha$  .94) an example item includes "I get involved with my manager in issues that affect the quality of work life." Upward delegation was measured using Carlsen et al's (2017) measure ( $\alpha$  .73) which consists of four items such as "How often do you expect your manager to take care of your problems?" In both scales individuals were asked to rank the frequency at which they exhibit certain sub-behaviors of voice/upward delegation ranging from 'Never' (1) to 'Always' (6).

Table 1  
*Scale Reliabilities*

Scale	Previous studies $\alpha$	This study $\alpha$	N items
Extraversion	0.88	0.91	8
Agreeableness	0.85	0.85	8
Openness to experience	0.82	0.86	9
Core Self-Evaluations	0.8	0.92	12
Independence (Self-construal)	0.73	0.65	15
Interdependence (Self-construal)	0.69	0.76	15
Co-production Orientation	0.9	0.74	5
Passive Orientation	0.93	0.82	4
Voice	0.89	0.94	6
Upward delegation	0.92	0.91	4
Task Specific Self-Efficacy	-	0.81	5

## CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS

### Analysis

Pearson Correlation and descriptive statistics were run on study variables and reported in Table 2. Recent leadership experience was encoded as (1) yes and (0) no, with gender encoded as (1) male (0) female. While there was a large number of significant relationships observed, of particular note are the correlations between co-production orientation and passive orientation, as well as between voice behavior and upward delegation behavior. These significant results indicate that at each level (orientation and behavior) the dependent variables must be measured simultaneously. Additionally, age and recent leadership experience correlating significantly with at least one of the DVs at each level indicates that they should be included as controlling variables.

Table 2  
*Pearson Correlations*

	Mean	SD	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Leadership	0.62	0.49	410	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Age	38.49	10.93	410	-0.06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender	0.59	0.49	410	0.029	-.268**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extraversion	3.07	1.05	410	.369**	0.062	-0.028	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agreeableness	3.59	0.64	410	.151**	.190**	-0.053	.395**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Openness	3.68	0.76	410	0.093	.150**	-0.033	.369**	.352**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CSES	3.69	0.83	410	.234**	.131**	-0.019	.588**	.524**	.313**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent	5.19	0.84	410	.248**	0.029	0.019	.542**	.287**	.440**	.489**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interdependent	4.58	0.93	410	.216**	-0.09	0.052	.172**	.354**	0.07	.108*	.099*	-	-	-	-	-
Co-production	3.97	0.57	410	.159**	0.008	0.057	.158**	.198**	.321**	.223**	.380**	.146**	-	-	-	-
Passive	2.53	0.91	410	-0.046	-.173**	-0.022	-0.074	-.203**	-.267**	-.264**	-.103*	0.063	-.383**	-	-	-
Voice	4.07	1.11	410	.193**	.113*	0.043	.369**	.312**	.375**	.429**	.405**	0.047	.410**	-.305**	-	-
Upward Delegation	3.20	0.74	410	0.038	-0.062	0.057	0.029	-.101*	-.176**	-.106*	-0.087	.149**	-.202**	.250**	-.120*	-

In an attempt to see the unique variance contributed by each of the IVs, offering the most conservative approach to testing the presented hypotheses, a multivariate multiple regression was run in order to test hypotheses 1-3. Individual characteristics (Agreeableness, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Core self-evaluation, Self-construal Independence and Self-construal Interdependence) were entered as independent variables. Age and recent leadership experience demographics were included as controlling variables. Co-production role orientation and passive role orientation as dependent variables.

The results of the regression indicated that the predictors significantly explained 21% of the variance ( $R^2 = .21$ ,  $F(8,400) = 13.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of co-production role orientation and 16% of the variance ( $R^2 = .16$ ,  $F(8,400) = 9.30$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of passive role orientation. Cohen's  $f^2$  ( $r^2 / (1 - r^2)$ ) was calculated for each DV in order to examine effect size (interpreted as 0.02=small, 0.15=medium, 0.35=large). Both co-production orientation ( $f^2 = .27$ ), and passive role orientation ( $f^2 = .19$ ) had medium effect sizes.

As reported in Table 3 all personality related hypotheses (hypothesis 1a-1f) were not supported. Agreeableness was found to not be significantly related to either co-production ( $\beta = .03$ ,  $p > .05$ ) or passive ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p > .05$ ) role orientations (1a and 1b respectively). While extraversion ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and openness to experience ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were found to be significantly related to co-production role orientation, directionality was opposite of the predicted direction therefore the original hypothesis was not supported (1c and 1e). Similarly, extraversion ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and openness to experience ( $\beta = -.29$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were significantly related to passive orientation, albeit opposite the predicted direction (1d and 1f).

Hypothesis 2a predicted that core self-evaluations would be positively related with co-

production orientation. This was not supported ( $\beta = .05, p > .05$ ) as the observed relationship was found to be non-significant. Hypothesis 2b on the other hand predicted that core self-evaluations would be negatively associated with passive role orientation which was found to be supported with a moderate effect size ( $\beta = -.30, p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis 3a and 3b were both supported as interdependence ( $\beta = .10, p < .05$ ) was a positive predictor of passive role orientation and Independence ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ) was a positive predictor of co-production role orientation.

An additional multivariate multiple regression was run in order to test hypotheses 4. Age, recent leadership experience, and individual characteristics were entered as controlling variables with role orientations entered as independent variables, and voice and upward delegation behaviors as the dependent variables. The results indicated that the predictors significantly explained 35% of the variance ( $R^2 = .35, F(10,399) = 21.14, p < .05$ ) of voice behavior and 7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .13, F(10,399) = 5.87, p < .05$ ) of upward delegation behavior. Again, Cohen's  $f^2$  was calculated for each DV in order to examine effect size. Voice behavior ( $f^2 = .54$ ) had a large effect size while upward delegation behavior ( $f^2 = .15$ ) had a medium effect size.

In evaluating these results hypothesis 4a and 4b were supported as co-production role orientation co-production role orientation ( $\beta = .46, p < .05$ ), and passive role orientation ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ) were found to be significant predictors in the corresponding predicted directions. Hypothesis 4c and 4d however were also supported as co-production role orientation ( $\beta = -.16, p < .05$ ) and passive role orientation ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) were found to be non-significant predictors.

Variance inflation factors (VIF) and their corresponding tolerance statistics were observed among all predictor variables in an attempt to detect multicollinearity. VIF values larger than 10,

and tolerance statistics approaching zero are considered to be significant indicators that collinearity is occurring (Lattin, et al., 2003; Lapierre & Bremner, 2010). None of the predictor variables displayed a VIF greater than 2 (1.1 to 2.0) nor a tolerance statistic less than 0.5 (0.51 to 0.93) and therefore it is concluded that multicollinearity is unlikely. Residual P-P plots and residual scatter plots were generated and observed to examine assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity finding that these assumptions were consistently met throughout.

Table 3  
*Hypothesis 1-4 Results*

Hypothesis	IV	DV	direction predicted	$\beta$	p-value	Supported
1a	Agreeableness	passive	+	-0.11	0.21	FALSE
1b	Agreeableness	co-production	-	0.03	0.61	FALSE
1c	Extraversion	co-production	+	-0.11	0.00	FALSE
1d	Extraversion	passive	-	0.15	0.01	FALSE
1e	Openness to experience	passive	+	-0.29	0.00	FALSE
1f	Openness to experience	co-production	-	0.16	0.00	FALSE
2a	Core self-evaluation	co-production	+	0.05	0.26	FALSE
2b	Core self-evaluation	passive	-	-0.30	0.00	TRUE
3a	Interdependence	passive	+	0.10	0.04	TRUE
3b	Independence	co-production	+	0.22	0.00	TRUE
4a	Co-production	voice	+	0.46	0.00	TRUE
4b	Passive	voice	-	-0.12	0.04	TRUE
4c	Co-production	upward delegation	-	-0.16	0.03	TRUE
4d	Passive	upward delegation	+	0.11	0.01	TRUE

Simple moderator analyses were conducted in order to test hypothesis 5. Task-specific self-efficacy was found to be non-significant as a moderator variable between co-production orientation (hypothesis 5a) and both voice ( $p > .05$ ) and upward delegation ( $p > .05$ ) (5b). However, support was found for task specific self-efficacy as a significant moderator for the interaction between passive orientation (5c) and both voice ( $\beta = .30, p < .05$ ) and upward delegation ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ) (5d). Interaction plots were generated for hypothesis 5c and 5d, which are displayed in figures 2 and 3 respectively. The results of the moderator analysis showed that the relationship between voice behavior and passive role orientation was largely unaffected by task-

specific self-efficacy when individuals were low in passive role orientation. However, task-specific self-efficacy interacted with high levels of passive orientation resulting in higher levels of enacted voice behavior (Figure 2). The interaction between passive orientation and upward delegation was similar, but in the opposite direction. Individuals high in passive orientation were observed to be largely unaffected by task specific self-efficacy in regard to their likelihood to display upward delegation. However, task-specific self-efficacy interacted with low levels of passive orientation resulting in lower levels of enacted upward delegation (Figure 3).

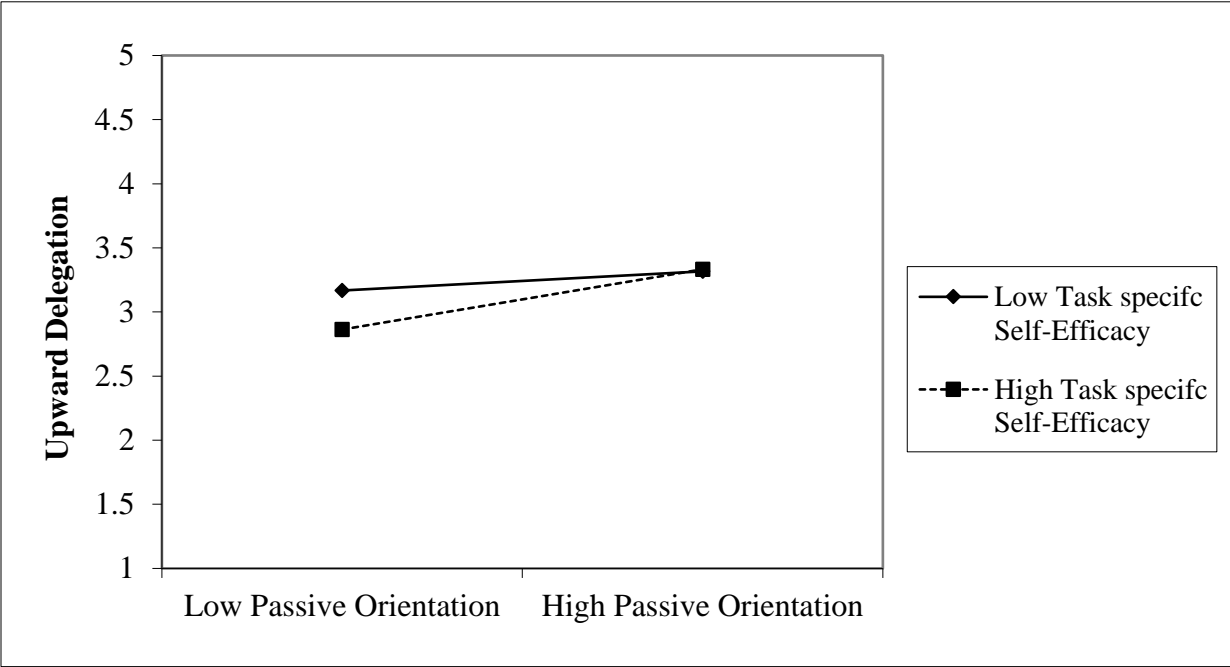


Figure 2: Interaction graph for Task-Specific Self-Efficacy as a moderator of the relationship between passive orientation and upward delegation

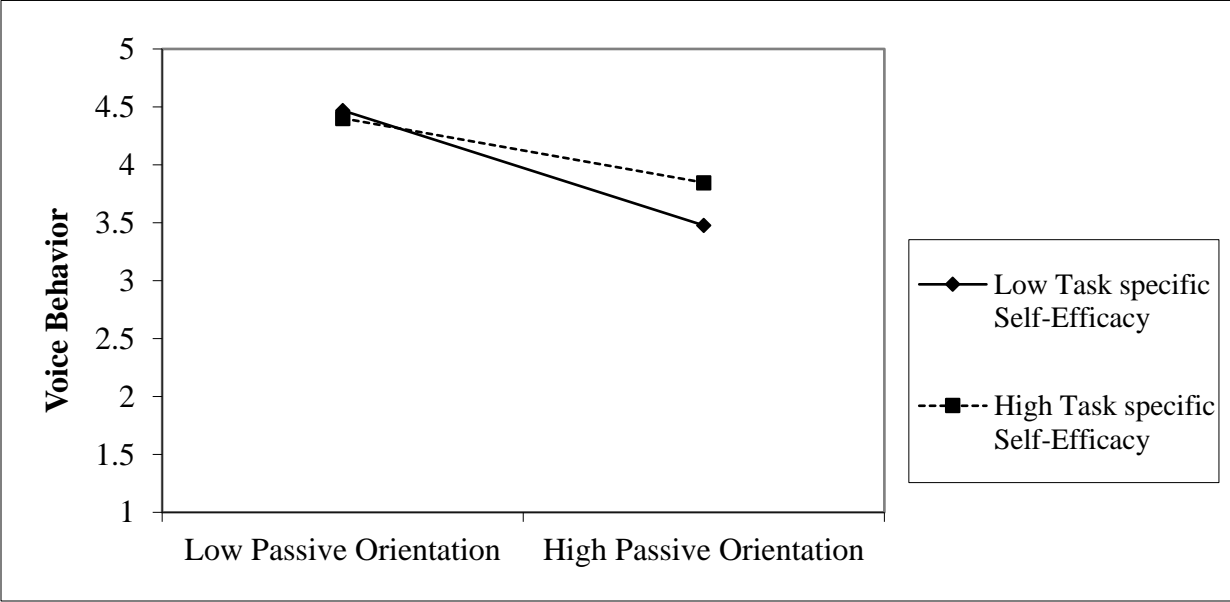


Figure 3: Interaction graph for Task-Specific Self-Efficacy as a moderator of the relationship between passive orientation and voice



## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine relationships between antecedents, role orientations and behavior in an attempt to begin developing the underpinnings of a predictive model of follower behavior towards their leaders. While a number of the specific hypothesized connections did not prove to be significant within the context of this study, the overarching model showed significant predictive capabilities for both role orientation and behavioral outcomes of role orientation with effect sizes ranging from medium to large.

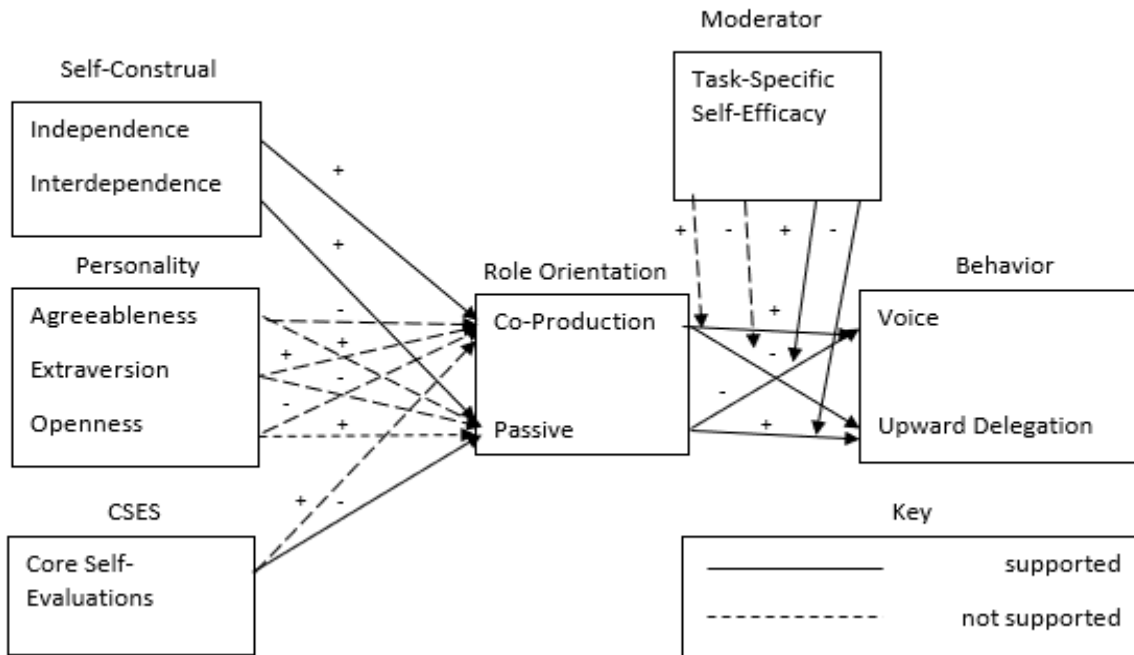


Figure 4: Observed Model

Results provided support for a number of antecedents (i.e., self-construal, personality, and core self-evaluation) which impacted the type of role orientation that was held by individuals.

When it came to self-construal, individuals scoring higher on interdependent self-construal were more likely to hold a passive role orientation. In contrast, those individuals who scored highly on independence self-construal were more likely to hold a co-production role orientation.

In other words, individuals who are independent were found to be more likely to view acting more as a partner than a subordinate to their leader favorably and vice versa for individuals that were more dependent (Interdependence). These relationships are only surprising in that they weren't as strong as anticipated. From a conceptual standpoint there is a degree of overlap between independence and co-production, as well as interdependence and passivity. It is possible some of this could be accounted for by individuals wanting things to be different than the way they actually are in practice. For instance, an individual scoring highly in interdependence may be passive for cultural reasons but, may internally wish followership was carried out as a more active process. This interaction could explain why this connection is only moderate.

Across the board personality did not manifest in the ways that were predicted. Agreeableness in particular did not have a significant predictive relationship with either role orientation. One possible explanation is that individuals high in agreeableness may just be willing to adapt to whatever their leader wants of them. Instead of having particularly solidified conceptualization of what they think a follower should do, these individuals may have a more open interpretation. Those low in agreeableness could potentially be looking to put their own interests before the team, which plausibly can manifest in either co-productive or passive ways depending on the individual. These two factors could contribute to muddying the waters of what otherwise appears to be a solid theoretical connection.

Results suggested individuals scoring high on openness to experience were less likely to hold a passive orientation. Individuals scoring low on openness were found to be less likely to hold a co-production role orientation. This was the opposite what was expected. While it was expected that individuals open to experience would likely comply with the way leaders want to do things, it appears likely that this is not the case. One possible explanation is that individuals who are open

to experience are more likely to view co-productive behavior, such as suggesting new approaches to ideas, positively. In a sense these individuals are not only open to new ideas but are more likely to think suggesting them is a positive thing as well. One possible explanation is that individuals who are open to experience are more likely to view co-productive behavior, such as suggesting new approaches to ideas, positively. In a sense these individuals are not only open to new ideas but are more likely to think suggesting them is a positive thing as well.

Extraversion on the other hand had a much more surprising result. Individuals high in extraversion were found to be more likely to hold a passive role orientation and less likely to hold a co-production orientation. Simply put this would suggest extraverts view submissiveness and deference more favorable than being a partner and speaking. This is basically at direct odds with traditional findings on extraverts and is very unlikely to be true. Adding to this, the result was even more surprising given the opposite direction found when investigating the correlation of the same variables (See Table 2). While it was initially suspected that multicollinearity was a plausible suspect, tests were run demonstrating this was not likely (See analysis section on VIF). Given the large number of variables being observed within this study, it may be wise to isolate this variable in future research before any conclusions are drawn from this finding.

While none of the personality variables played out as predicted, it appears that their may be support for personality's inclusion in the model, in a modified way (e.g., reversing openness). These variables should be observed further in the future to determine their usefulness in this context.

Core self-evaluations provided an interesting split result. Individuals with a high core self-evaluation were found to be more likely to hold a co-production role orientation. Similarly, individuals scoring low on core self-evaluation were found to be more likely to hold a passive role

orientation. The results of the relationships support the idea that individuals low in efficacy and self-esteem view themselves as incapable/unqualified and are more likely to believe it is best for people more qualified to make decisions. However, while it was anticipated those scoring highly in these qualities would view taking a more active role in the follower/ leader interaction, this was not supported by the findings. These individuals very well may view themselves as viable agents of change as predicted, but believing this about themselves, does not inherently mean they believe that being said active agent of change is the desired way for followers to behave.

Results of the secondary analysis suggest that individual mental models regarding followership are related to their own actions with respect to voice and upward delegation. More specifically, individuals who view followers in more of a passive role were shown to engage in less voice behavior. While in contrast, those individuals who viewed followers in a more active role engaged in greater amounts of upward delegation than what would be expected by chance. The above findings held true even when controlling for individual characteristics and the demographic variables. In seeing that both role orientations provide predictive capabilities above and beyond just the individual characteristics (antecedents) observed, both here and in a previous study, it demonstrates that orientation just might be worth measuring as a part of a tool for selecting followers. It should be noted that the similar predictive pattern found for co-production and voice behavior leads to a potential construct validity concern. Future research should begin to examine this possibility from both a conceptual and practical standpoint test as these two constructs may overlap (e.g., future work on the convergent and divergent validity of these two constructs).

Finally, Task specific self-efficacy's interaction with the relationships between each role orientation and both voice behaviors resulted in fairly straight forward results. Given that self-efficacy (as a sub dimension of CSES) had a non-significant relationship with co-production at the

orientation level, it is not particularly surprising that task specific self-efficacy did not significantly interact with it when predicting behavior. However, task specific self-efficacy interacted with the relationships between passive orientation and both behaviors predictably. These two interactions support that individuals scoring highly on the passive orientation scale are more likely to allow their personal evaluations of themselves effect their behavior (particularly in contrast with their mental model). Additionally, it may be possible that these individuals are more susceptible to behavioral modification in general, though more research is needed to address the veracity of this claim.

### **Implications**

Carsten (2017) stated that co-production and passive role orientations are in fact not a spectrum, which was reflected while constructing this studies hypotheses and methodology. Upon conducting exploratory analysis (See Table 2) this appears to be supported by the findings in this sample. While these variables were significantly negatively correlated ( $r(400) = -.383, p < .05$ ), if they were truly continuous it is expected that the correlation would be more extreme ( $\beta = \pm .80$  or greater). Further support can be found by the finding that task specific self-efficacy was a significant moderator for one passive role orientation interaction with both behavioral DV's, while being non-significant for co-production orientation.

Previous literature in this space has demonstrated that followership role orientations significantly predict upward delegation and voice behavior (Carsten et al. 2017). This connection was successfully replicated within this sample finding that both role orientations were found to be significant predictors. Future research should look at expanding observation to additional follower behaviors.

Additionally, further research into more predictor variables at the orientation level is

recommended. While it has been shown that stable individual characteristics do in fact explain a significant percentage of the variance of role orientations, it is clear that a number of other factors contribute to their development. As Carsten (2017) and Parker (2007) assess role orientations are likely shaped by environmental factors over time. This study has advanced the need to investigate this area by supporting that there is significant room in the predictive model for these factors.

The model observed demonstrates that the IV's measured, and in particular role orientations, contribute to a substantial amount of the variance in follower voice behavior ( $R^2 = .35, F(11,398) = 19.39, p < .05$ ). It is possible this model could be used practically to aid in follower selection where particular voice behavior is of importance. It should be reiterated that this is a replication of another strong observation of this predictive capability (Passive orientation ( $\beta = -.44, p < .05$ ) co-production ( $\beta = .33, p < .05$ )) (Carsten et al., 2017). However, further observation and testing of this interaction in more practical settings before use in anything with real implications (e.g. selection) is recommended.

Carsten et al. (2017) suggests that focus on leadership development be shifted from leadership simply the responsibility of the leader themselves, to include leaders and followers engaging in effective ways. The results of this study further support this notion and demonstrate a potential use for role orientation during leader and subordinate training. Much of leadership training focuses on how leaders can enact their will onto their followers. In educating leaders on how follower orientation affects followership behavior, they can better understand why their subordinates act in certain ways beyond their (leaders) influence.

## **Limitations**

One of the main limitations of this study is the sampling strategy employed. Individuals self-selected to participate and were enticed to do so via monetary reward. Also, of particular note is

in an attempt to increase reliability and reduce the number of responses that would need to be thrown out, individuals were required to meet Amazon MTurk Masters qualifications. These individuals are inherently top performing individuals (high HIT acceptance rate) and could be introducing bias to the sample by excluding individuals who aren't as highly lauded. Consequently, it should be acknowledged that this research may not fully generalize to the general population. Prior research has shown that MTurk samples using a similar sampling strategy showed slightly lower reliability than a normative sample. However, the utility gained from access to a more diverse set of people than typical, with a streamlined/ cost-effective way of gather larger sample sizes than would have otherwise been possible, is quite valuable to this type of research (Rouse, 2015). With that possibility in mind, it is still expected that the findings in this study are generalizable within organizational context given the questions were predominately framed from this perspective.

Another potential limitation is the use of self-reported data. Individuals responses have to be taken at face value without being verified allowing for bias to be introduced from issues such as, selective memory, exaggeration or attribution error. While steps were taken to mitigate some of these effects (e.g. outlier analysis, quality check), these limitations should still be taken into consideration. A final limitation is that while outside the scope of this master's thesis, a structural equation model would likely provide more conclusive findings by accounting for error that could have gone unaccounted for by running two separate multivariate multiple regressions.

A final thing to consider for all of the relationships observed is the framing of the followership role orientations scales. The framing potentially leaves too much up for interpretation by the participant. Individuals were asked to "Think about your beliefs regarding how a follower should behave relative to that of leaders in organizations". It is certainly possible that individuals could

approach this line of questioning from a number of perspectives. To name a few: As a leader, as a follower or as both. While some individuals may have internal consistency, having similar beliefs about followers (broadly speaking) regardless of reference point (leading vs being led themselves), in reality some subset of the population will have different beliefs depending on this framing. Controlling for this may cause significant differences from the findings throughout this paper.



**APPENDIX: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
 Office of Research & Commercialization  
 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Human Research

**From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
 FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

**To: Douglas Monsky**

**Date: September 05, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On 09/05/2018 the IRB approved the following human participant research until 09/04/2019 inclusive:

Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form  
 Expedited Review Category #7

Project Title: Exploring follower role orientation

Investigator: Douglas Monsky

IRB Number: SBE-18-14291

Funding Agency:  
 Grant Title:  
 Research ID: N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 09/04/2019, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

This letter is signed by:

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