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Effects of Task Evaluation Knowledge and Leadership Style on Employee Attitude Toward a Task

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Effects of Task Evaluation Knowledge and Leadership Style on Employee

Attitude Toward a Task

by

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Abstract

Ideally, an employee will attempt to perform a task at his or her best ability in order to complete a work task appropriately. However, there are several factors that affect how an employee approaches a task. Two such factors are the understanding an employee has on how his or her supervisor may evaluate performance of the task and the supervisor's leadership style. This study focuses on the effect task evaluation knowledge (TEK) and different leadership styles have on an employee's attitude toward performing a task. By using a 2x2 (transformational/transactional leadership by limited/increased amount of information communicated) experiment, participants were tested on the degree to which their attitude changes based on TEK and leadership style. Results, based on ANOVA testing and regression analysis, indicated that leadership styles had the most direct effects on a participant's attitude toward a task. Specifically, transformational leadership styles had a positive effect on all attitude measures toward a task while transactional leadership styles had a negative effect on the attitude measures. Also, TEK did not show any significance toward attitudes. Implications of these results for future research on measuring attitudes toward a task in the workplace are provided.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There are many factors that determine how an employee performs a job task. Scholars have long recognized that how employees perceive their jobs determines job performance (Grant, 2008). One way that employees understand what their job is and how they should perform it is through the communication of a supervisor's expectations. Typically, the employee is working within a system in which he or she is following the supervisor's lead. But, the manner in which the supervisor expects a task to be done may affect the way employees approach the task, especially if they try to align their work with the expectations of the supervisor.

In order for an employee to ensure he or she is working in line with the supervisor's expectations, the employee can use the knowledge he or she gains on how the supervisor expects a specific task to be performed through previous work experience. Employees who know that a supervisor expects work to be done a certain way may change the way a task is approached in order to be seen favorable by the supervisor. Therefore, by having the knowledge of how a supervisor prefers a task to be performed— labeled task evaluation knowledge (TEK) for this study—the employee may attempt to work in accord with the criteria provided by the supervisor in order to receive a more favorable assessment, even if it may affect or even differ from the typical way the employee approaches and views a task.

Another factor that may go into the task performance process is the leadership style of the supervisor. There are two types of leadership styles: transformational and transactional (Bass, 1985). According to Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999), the main components of transactional leadership include constructive transactions, contingent reward, and management-by-exception. In other words, a subordinate will receive a reward for meeting expectations or aversive reinforcement for poor performance. On the other hand, transformational leaders use their own actions to influence others and change and adapt based on the situation (Eisenberg, Goodall, & Tretheway, 2009). These leaders attempt to motivate by encouraging creativity, inspiration, and individualized consideration (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999). Therefore, the way the evaluation of a task is conducted, and the way an employee is appraised, will vary based on the type of leadership style of the supervisor and the overall environment of the organization.

This study advances the notion that task evaluation knowledge and the supervisor's leadership style may affect the employee's attitudes toward a specific task. The theory of reasoned action provides a theoretical framework for analyzing whether or not an employee's attitude toward a specific job task will be affected based on the knowledge gained from the supervisor's communication and the impact the employee's beliefs have on the attitudes formed toward a specific job task. This study will provide further understanding and justification of what affects an employee's attitude toward a task.

Through the theoretical framework presented by the theory of reasoned action, this study examines relevant literature on different aspects of performance evaluations

including an examination of its effectiveness as an assessment tool, and the effect task evaluation knowledge and the role of different leadership style plays on an employee's attitude toward a task. Using an experimental design, this study tested the effect of task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on an employee's attitudes, thus furthering the understanding of what communication factors influence attitude change toward task performance.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature and Theory

Task performance is the driver in the development and validation of predictors for whether an employee can be a good fit with an organization (Motowildo, Borman & Schmit, 1997). But, what drives an employee to perform a task in a particular way? Although there are external factors that can influence how an employee performs a task, there are two methods that depict the deep-rooted reasons behind why an employee performs a task one way versus another: the need-satisfaction model and the social information processing approach.

According to Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), "the need-satisfaction paradigm is a model that asserts people have needs, jobs have characteristics and job attitudes result from their conjunction" (p. 234). In this model, individual dispositions are emphasized to explain behavior rather than situational factors. Individuals use need and attitude concepts to describe and make sense of their own and others' behaviors (Kelly, 1955). Therefore, according to this model, employees in a work setting will cultivate their task performance attitudes and behaviors based on the needs they personally have as individuals.

The need-satisfaction model provides understanding of why an employee acts a certain way when performing a task. The concept, though, does not consider external factors enough. In other words, the need-satisfaction model offers insight into individual

intentions, but when it comes to performing a task in a work setting, outside factors must be evaluated as well. Unless an employee works alone and not as part of a larger organization, the influence of others plays a vital role in shaping how an employee performs a task for an organization. In order to better explain this possible external influence, the social information processing approach was introduced.

The social information processing approach expands on the need-satisfaction model by taking the fundamental premise that individuals adapt beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to their social reality based on past and present behaviors and situations (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). According to Salanick and Pfeffer (1978), one important source of information is the individual's immediate social environment. In a work setting, this can include not only colleagues, but management as well. The social environment provides cues that individuals use to construct and interpret events. It also provides cues about what the individual's attitudes and behavior should be. The social context has two general effects on attitude: 1) It provides guides and meaning to socially acceptable beliefs, attitudes, and needs, as well as acceptable reasons for action; and 2) It focuses an individual's attention and provides expectations concerning the individual's behavior and the consequences of such behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

According to the social information processing model, characteristics of a task are not communicated, but constructed. Therefore, employees will learn more about how they should perform a task based on the social cues they pick up from their social environment compared to what they are told. Based on this model, an employee will rely on fellow employees for information about norms and standards for behavior, including

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impressions of the workplace, the organization, and the specific job (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

When approaching a task in a job setting, it is important to understand not only what the task is and how to approach it, but what type of performance is specifically needed. Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) argue that distinguishing between task performance and contextual performance is important in understanding how to behave appropriately to succeed in a job setting. Task performance includes two classes of behavior. One class consists of activities that directly transform raw materials into consumable goods and services. The other class consists of activities that help plan, coordinate, and supervise the creation of these services in order to enable it to function effectively and efficiently. Therefore, task performance behaviors bear a direct relation to the organization's bottom line (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994).

On the other hand, the contextual performance concept captures many of the behaviors associated with helping and cooperating within an organization. This includes elements in written and oral communication, supervision and leadership, and management and administration (Campbell, 1990). Contextual performance looks at behaviors that associate with cooperating with others in a team and complying with instructions from a supervisor (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994).

Knowing the difference between task and contextual performance provides a label for the thought process taken on by the employee when approaching a task. If the task is serving the greater good of the company, it can be classified as performing a task, but if

the task is rooted in other factors, such as complying with others or following rules from the supervisor, it can be classified as contextual performance.

Regardless of the type of performance the employee faces, the key to having a positive attitude when performing the task is having high job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is essentially the attitude toward one's job. And, because people's evaluations of, or attitudes toward, a task are determined by their beliefs about the task, the level of satisfaction the individual experiences can be developed through many influences (Ajzen, 2011). There are several factors to cultivate positive job satisfaction. These include: supervisory assessments of job performance, opportunities for promotion, pay, and organization performance records (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Ajzen, 2011). However, job satisfaction can be expected to influence performance only by the amount the behavior is deemed favorable. But, employees' performance on the job is arguably determined by their behaviors and by factors in the work environment that facilitate or interfere with productivity (Ajzen, 2011). Generally speaking, when an employee raises his or her level of productivity, he or she will have to exert more effort, which may— depending on the particular job—involve acquiring new skills, working longer hours, opening up new channels of communication, working faster, and providing better feedback. Attitudes can be assessed with respect to each of these specific behaviors or with respect to effort. The beliefs that determine the employee's attitude toward a particular task are beliefs about its likely consequences (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Many researchers have cited benefits of self-evaluations to include assured due process, enhanced employee work motivation, and an increased knowledge on the

evaluation dimension (Eden & Fedor, 1989). On the other hand, negative evaluations may result in aggression and a perception of inaccuracy and unfairness on the rater's part (Geddes & Baron, 1997).

The employee, though, may also judge the effectiveness of the evaluation process of the task he or she just performed based on the subjective nature of the questions and criteria that the supervisor uses to rate the employee. The employee may perceive the relationship he or she has with his or her supervisor as an influencer in the performance of a task. The way he or she acts with the supervisor in an office setting may cause the employee to act in a certain way when performing a task (Ilgen & Feldman, 1983). According to Ilgen and Feldman (1983), "the supervisor-employee disparity in employee performance evaluation may, in part, be a function of differential social cueing by each party during the information retrieval and judgment formation process" (p. 167).

The judgment the employee has of his or her own performance and the possible disparity of how he or she is evaluated may also affect the task performance. Supervisors may have a fixed idea of how a certain task should be performed. Thus, when an employee approaches the task differently—despite the fact that he or she is still effective in the activity—the supervisor may rate the employee unfairly regardless of the accomplishments (Eden & Fedor, 1989). During a task review, the supervisor is the ultimate authority in how an employee is evaluated. The type of leader the supervisor is also plays an important role in cultivating the employee's attitude toward a task.

According to most organizational management literature, there are generally two types of leadership styles a supervisor may adopt: transactional and transformational.

Transactional leadership has been classified as an exchange or contractual process between leaders and employees (Jung & Avolio, 2000). These leaders identify specific expectations from employees and provide rewards in exchange for their performance (Bass, 1985). Transactional leaders use organizational bureaucracy, culture, standards, policy, power, and authority to maintain control (Davidhizer & Shearer, 1997). Under transactional leadership, it is typically in the best interest of the employee to do what the leader wants. According to Bass (1985), the transactional leader and his or her employees will agree on what the employee will need to do to get rewards or to avoid punishment. These leaders make no effort to change personal values, nor necessarily develop a deep sense of trust and commitment from their employees. Instead, the transactional leader works with the employee's current needs (i.e., performing a specific task) and tries to satisfy those needs with desired outcomes once the employee meets the agreed-upon performance levels (Podsakoff, Makenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). According to Hater and Bass (1988), transactional leaders demonstrate two specific characteristics: contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent reward is present when the leader provides rewards if subordinates perform in accordance with contracts or expend the necessary effort. Management-by-exception is present when the leader avoids giving directions if the old ways are working for the subordinate and allows subordinates to continue doing their jobs as usual if performance goals are met.

In contrast to transactional leaders, transformational leaders have a clear vision for the future, are good policy makers, inspire others through communication, and motivate change (Werder & Holtzhausen, 2009). According to Bass (2000), effective transformational leadership requires competent communication, which consists of careful

transmission of messages, openness, dialogue, frankness, careful listening, and informality. The transformational leader enhances the employee's self-concept and encourages the employee's personal and collective identification with both the goals and objectives of the leader and the organization (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). According to Bass and Riggio (2005), leaders who show commitment to a cause or organization, are inspirational, challenge their employees to think and provide input, and show genuine concern are to be believed to generate more employees who are more satisfied with their jobs and the tasks they perform. The strongest effects of transformational leadership seem to be on the employee's attitude and his or her commitment to both the leader and the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2005).

The transformational leader is determined through three characteristics: charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Hater & Bass, 1988). According to Hater and Bass (1988), charisma is characterized when the leader instills pride, faith, and respect from his or her subordinates by understanding what is really important to the subordinate and transmitting a sense of mission. The individualized consideration element is present when the leader stimulates learning experiences, provides coaching, and treats each subordinate as an individual. The intellectual stimulation element is present when the leader arouses subordinates to think in a new way and emphasizes problem solving and the use of reasoning before taking action. The transformational leader motivates employees to do more than originally expected, which is accomplished by raising awareness of the importance and value of designated outcomes, by getting employees to transcend their own self-interests, and/or by altering or expanding the employees' personal needs (Bass, 1985).

The biggest difference between the two leadership styles is the process by which the leader motivates subordinates. As stated previously, transactional leaders initiate structure and reward based on the employee meeting expectations that are determined by the leader beforehand. In contrast, transformational leaders use symbolism or imaging to elevate the importance of increased effort for an organizational mission and motivates by encouraging personal development and enhancement (Hater & Bass, 1988).

Gaining trust among subordinates is another factor that differentiates transactional from transformational leadership styles. According to Bass and Riggio (2005), trust is gained by maintaining integrity and dedication, by being fair in treatment of subordinates, and by demonstrating faith in subordinates through empowerment. Transformational leaders engage the emotional involvement of their subordinates to build higher levels of commitment, identification, and trust in the leader and the organization's mission. These leaders express the importance and values associated with desired outcomes in ways that subordinates can easily understand (Jung & Avolio, 2000). Transformational leaders tend to lead by example, and even though they sometimes ask their employees to make compromises for the greater good of the organization, because the leaders typically make the same sacrifices, employees want to identify with them, and demonstrate a higher degree of trust toward the leader in part for the commitment they personally demonstrate to achieving the organization's mission (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Gardner & Avolio, 1998).

Transactional leaders elicit trust from employees as well, but in a different way. According to Bass (1985), transactional leaders acquire "conditional" trust from

employees through reliable execution of contracts and exchanges. As long as the transactional leader consistently recognizes the employee's performance and rewards them appropriately, he or she will conditionally be trusted by the employee for being consistent.

As stated previously, employees may change their attitude toward a task based on factors and behaviors exhibited by their supervisors. Therefore, if an employee works for a transactional leader, the employee may approach the task exactly how his or her supervisor would to make sure his or her attitude matches with the boss's attitude. The transactional leader will communicate to the employee exactly what he or she expects in a task and what the employee will receive as a reward as long as the employee meets the leader's expectations. On the other hand, in a transformational workplace, the employee may feel more flexibility in his or her approach, which may lead to a different attitude when compared to an employee in a transactional setting.

However, it can be inferred that in a transformational workplace, although expectations should be communicated throughout the year, the actual review process of the performance of a specific task may be less structured, which may mean that the exact criteria the employee needs in order to change his or her attitude toward a task may be less clear and more arbitrary. On the other hand, in a transactional workplace, the exact criteria to improve performance should be clearly stated. Although the criteria most likely means the employee will have to align his or her beliefs to make the expectations of his or her supervisor, regardless of how in tune these beliefs are with the employee's own original beliefs, at least the expectations and criteria are clearly stated. Add the fact that

the supervisor is viewed as an authority figure, many times the employee may change his or her perception of a task and even change the way he or she approaches an activity specifically based on the supervisor's comments throughout the workplace (Eden & Fedor, 1989).

Based on this literature review, this study seeks to examine and explain how employee attitude can change based on task evaluation knowledge and leadership style. To better understand how attitudes are cultivated, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) will be used to provide theoretical framework for this study. The TRA assumes that people rationally calculate the costs and benefits of engaging in a particular action and think carefully about how important others will view the behavior under consideration (Perloff, 2010). In other words, the stronger that people believe a certain response will lead to a certain outcome (based on the beliefs and attitudes of others), the stronger their intention to produce the response in question will be (Ajzen, 2012). The TRA focuses on the motivational factors of an individual as determinates of the likelihood of performing a behavior (Montana & Kasprzyk, 2008). Therefore, in a job setting, the attitudes an employee has toward the job should be related to behaviors related to the job, (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001). In the case of approaching a task, the benefits of changing attitude toward a specific task based on how an employee is evaluated by a supervisor may result in benefits for the employee, such as a promotion or a raise. This perspective assumes that the more an employee matches his or her attitude with the supervisor's attitude and expectations, the more positive reinforcement will occur. Of course, by adjusting the attitude toward a task, the employee may not find the same

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amount of satisfaction in his or her job due to the fact that the change in attitude may result in thinking about a job or task in a completely different light.

The TRA has three general constructs: behavioral intention, attitude, and subjective norm. The TRA posits that a person's behavioral intention depends on a person's attitude toward a behavior and their subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). Behavioral intention examines the relationship between intention and performance, while attitude consists of beliefs about the outcomes of performing a behavior compared to the evaluation of these outcomes. Subjective norm is seen as a combination of perceived expectations with intention to comply with these expectations (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1974), attitude has two subcomponents: beliefs and outcome evaluations. Subjective norm has two subcomponents: normative beliefs and motivation to comply. And, behavioral intention is defined as the intention to perform a particular behavior. See Figure 1.
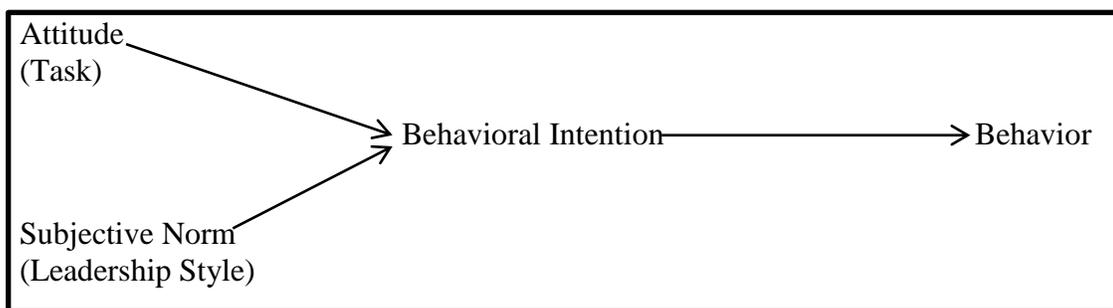
Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action

In order for an individual to have the intention to perform a particular behavior, he or she must have either a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior and the person must have a perception of the extent to which others believe he or she should go through with the behavior (Freidkin, 2010). Specifically, the theory stipulates that the

intention to perform a particular behavior is a united function of an attitude (favorable or unfavorable) toward the behavior and of a subjective norm that encourages or discourages its performance, and that intention is the direct precursor of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 2012). And, when performing a behavior that is seen as significant by a larger group (i.e., a workplace), the individual's attitude about the behavior is likely to be influenced by the attitudes of the other people in the group (Freidkin, 2010). Freidkin (2010) takes Fishbein and Ajzen's (1974) TRA model even further by stating that the voluntary action of the individual is a strong linkage between attitude and behavior. If the individual does not feel as if he or she can make a voluntary choice, the behavior exhibited by that individual may not be consistent with his or her attitudes because of conditions that may be perceived to disallow the behavior (Freikin, 2010).

In relating Freikin's addition of voluntary action to the workplace, the influence the supervisor has on how the task being performed by the employee is significant in understanding how an employee will approach the task. Depending on whether the supervisor uses clear and distinct language of his or her expectations (i.e. the attributes associated with a transactional leader), the employee may believe that he or she has no choice in their attitude toward a task based on how the task is being evaluated. Knowing that the influence of a supervisor is significant for the entire workplace, the attitude an employee may have will most likely result in behavior that is exemplified by other employees of the organization.

Attitudes alone do not dictate an individual's behavioral intention. Four other dimensions of specificity – action, target, context, and time – play a role with how the

intention to perform a behavior is developed (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). According to

Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), "a high level of specificity arises when the object of the

attitude is specified as a particular object-related action, a particular target is specified as

the object of the action, a particular context is specified for the object-related action and a

particular time range is specified" (p. 194). In other words, an attitude is formulated when

an individual faces a specific action (approaching a specific task) that is targeted (the

specific task that is being approached) in the appropriate context (the workplace) within a

given time frame (between the start of the task and the deadline given by the supervisor).

By working in these parameters, an individual can develop a specific attitude toward a

specific task, without that attitude interfering with the individual's attitude toward other

tasks or behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). However, due to this specificity of the

activity, subjective norms play a larger role in the development of behavioral intention.

The subject norm construct is an integration of the attitudes of others in a group

based on the focal individual's "motivation to comply" with the perceived attitude of

each member of the group (Freidkin, 2010). In most cases, the others in a group, also

known as referents, are typically those close to the individual such as an individual's

spouse or partner, close family and friends, and even coworkers and supervisors (Ajzen,

2012). The normative construct in the TRA refers to perceptions of what important

referent individuals or groups think a person should do. The theory's normative

component accounts for the fact that individuals form beliefs as to what is expected of

them not only by inferring what referents want the individuals to do, but also on the basis

of the observed actions of those referents (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). According to Jaccard

(2012), individuals are more motivated to perform a behavior if they have positive

intentions. In other words, individuals who have one belief tend to have more positive attitudes toward performing the behavior associated with that belief than people who do not endorse that belief.

By following the TRA model when approaching a specific task, an employee may have specific beliefs and assume an outcome will occur a particular way. However, based on subjective norms, such as supervisor expectations or the employee's past performance of a task, the employee may be motivated to change the way he or she approaches a task in order to be perceived as doing the task in the appropriate way, according to how a supervisor judges the task. In a work environment, the perceived expectations and behaviors of supervisors and coworkers are likely to be major influences on an employee's own behavior (Ajzen, 2011). And, because of the possible change in attitude toward the task and the perceived expectations of the supervisor, the employee may change the way he or she intended to accomplish the task. In other words, once the employee understands how a supervisor wants a specific task to be accomplished, the employee may adjust his or her attitude toward a task to fit that of the supervisor's. The TRA provides a structured guide in understanding how an employee's attitude toward a task may develop based on the amount of task evaluation knowledge he or she has and the style of leadership the supervisor uses to communicate his or her expectations.

<u>Hypotheses</u>

Previous research has covered the elements that make up and constitute task performance, the various factors on how job satisfaction affects task performance and attitude toward performing a specific task. Additionally, researchers have explored the

impact leadership style has on organizational culture and workplace settings. Specifically, previous research suggests that how a leader communicates expectations to employees affects employee's attitudes toward the job. But, no one has explored how task evaluation knowledge affects the employee's attitude toward a specific job task. In other words, most employees have an idea of how to perform a specific task either based on past tasks performed or through the observation of colleagues or supervisors. However, this study explores the effect of knowing how a supervisor will evaluate an employee's task performance on the employee's attitude toward the task. And, due to the fact that how the supervisor evaluates task performance from an employee can determine merit increases or promotions, this learned information may help the employee advance in his or her career.

Based on this review of the theory of reasoned action and the factors that may affect attitude toward a specific task, this study attempts to measure the factors that influence an individual's attitudes toward a task. Specifically, this study posits that two factors—task evaluation knowledge and leadership style—influence job-related attitudes. And, job-related attitudes are categorized in two categories—task-related attitudes and person-related attitudes. Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested in this study.

H1: Task evaluation knowledge influences task-related attitudes.

P1.1: Task evaluation knowledge positively influences attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions, and attitude toward instructions.

Hypothesis 1 asserts that the attitudes an employee has toward task-related behaviors are influenced by the independent variable of task evaluation knowledge. More specifically, task-related elements include the task itself, evaluation information, directions given about the task, and instructions on how the leader will evaluate the task. Hypothesis 1 posits that TEK will positively influence these task-related attitudes.

H2: Task evaluation knowledge influences person-related attitudes.

P2.1: Task evaluation knowledge positively influences attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality

Hypothesis 2 asserts that attitudes an employee has toward person-related elements are influenced by the independent variable of task evaluation knowledge. More specifically, person-related elements include the leader and the leader's personality. Hypothesis 2 posits that TEK will positively influence person-related attitudes.

H3: Leadership style influences task-related attitudes

P3.1: Transactional leadership style negatively influences attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions, and attitude toward instructions.

P3.2: Transformational leadership style positively influences attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions, and attitude toward instructions.

This study posits that an employee's task-related attitudes will be influenced by the employer's leadership style. According to previous research, under transactional

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leadership, employees must meet specific organizational criteria, which may limit an employee's creativity (Bass, 1985), while transformational leaders will encourage the employee to identify with the goals and objectives of the tasks at hand and the organization (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Hypothesis 3 is a relational statement positing that a transactional leadership style will negatively influence an employee's task-related attitudes while a transformational leader will have a positive influence on these same attitudes.

> H4: Leadership style influences person-related attitudes.

>> P4.1:   Transactional leadership style negatively influences attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality.

>> P4.2:   Transformational leadership style positively influences attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality.

Hypothesis 4 posits that an employee's person-related attitudes will be influenced by the employer's leadership style. This is a relational statement positing that a transactional leader will negatively influence the attitude of the employee toward the leader and leader's personality. On the other hand, the leader using a transformational style will positively influence the employee's attitude toward the leader and the leader's personality.

> H5:   There is an interaction effect between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on task-related attitudes.

P5.1: There is an interaction effect between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions, and attitude toward instructions.

As this study explores the effect evaluation knowledge and leadership style have on task-related measures, Hypothesis 5 posits that there is an interaction effect between the two independent variables on attitude toward the task, evaluation information, directions about the task, and instructions on how the leader will evaluate the task.

H6: There is an interaction effect between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on person-related attitudes.

P6.1: There is an interaction effect between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality.

Hypothesis 6 is a relational statement exploring the interaction effect between the two independent variables—task evaluation knowledge and leadership style—on person-related attitudes that consist of the employee's attitude toward the leader and the leader's personality.

H7: Job-related beliefs influence task-related attitudes.

Hypothesis 7 is a relational statement that attempts to provide support for the propositions of the theory of reasoned action. It asserts that a person's job-related beliefs influence their task-related attitudes.

H8: Job-related beliefs influence person-related attitudes.

Similarly, Hypothesis 8 is a relational statement that attempts to provide support for the theory of reasoned action. It asserts that a person's job-related beliefs influence their person-related attitudes.

The next chapter outlines the methods and procedures use to test the hypotheses posited by this study. It details the 2x2 factorial design used to test the influence task evaluation knowledge and leadership style has on attitudes toward a task. And, it highlights the instrumentation used to measure task-related attitudes, person-related attitudes and job-related beliefs.

Chapter 3: Method

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which task evaluation knowledge and leadership style influence task-related and person-related attitudes toward a job task. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 posit task evaluation knowledge influences task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 posit leadership style influences task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 posit an interaction effect exists between task evaluation knowledge and leadership styles on task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 posit job-related beliefs influence task-related and person-related attitudes.

To test the hypotheses, an experiment using a 2x2 (transformational/transactional leadership style by low/high task evaluation knowledge) factorial design was conducted.

Experimental Procedures

The experiment tested participants, who were undergraduate students enrolled in mass communication courses at a large southeast university, on their job-related attitudes based on task evaluation knowledge and leadership style. This study used 110 participants (N=110), split into four treatment groups. Leadership style was manipulated by having groups led by either an individual exhibiting transactional leadership qualities or an individual exhibiting transformational leadership qualities. Task evaluation knowledge was manipulated by having half of the participants receive minimal

information about how the leader prefers the task to be performed and how the leader will evaluate the activity. The other half of the participants were provided with extensive information on exactly what the leader was looking for when performing the activity. One group with a transactional leader and one group with a transformational leader were provided more knowledge of the situation and what the leader was expecting in terms of how to approach and perform the task at hand.

The participants were selected from four separate mass communications courses. The selection pool was not random, but the participants who chose to participate did so strictly on a volunteer basis. The participants were told that a task will be provided for them to perform, no task was actually given.

Once the participants entered the room and were seated, the leader of the exercise delivered an introduction and then provided instruction on how to proceed with the exercise. For the participants who received high task evaluation knowledge, the leader provided additional information on how to complete the exercise and how performance of the exercise would be evaluated. For the participants who did not receive additional information, once the introductory script was delivered, the questionnaire was given (to see copies of the scripts, please see appendix 1). It should be noted that the scripts were not just read out loud. The leader memorized the script, and mimicked characteristics of a transformational or transactional leader respectively, based on previous studies.

Leadership style was manipulated by using the same person as the leader to ensure that no external factors (i.e., race, sex, etc.) would influence the way the participants approached the exercise. The transactional and transformational leadership

scripts cited identical work experience but provided enough difference that it was clear

what type of leader the actor exuded for the particular group. During the introduction

phase, the leader gave verbal cues associated with either transformational or transactional

leadership using scripts that were adapted from a training program developed by Bass

and Avolio (1997). For example, the transformational leader emphasized the task and its

broader importance on succeeding in the degree program. This leader also encouraged

participants to show that they took the exercise seriously, but that exact answers were not

as important as showing effort. For the transactional leadership condition, the instructor

emphasized what needed to be done to accomplish the task and assured participants

tangible outcomes would be derived from accomplishing their work.

After the introductory scripts were concluded, each participant was asked to

complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 2) in order for the researcher to fully analyze if

attitude toward the exercise was affected by task evaluation knowledge and/or leadership

style.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire contained 22 items developed to measure the variables of

interest, as well as several demographic characteristics of the participants. Specifically,

six attitudes were measured in this study using items adapted from measures traditionally

used to test the theory of reasoned action. Specifically, 7-point semantic differential

measures anchored by the following adjectives were used: *good/bad*, *positive/negative*,

and *favorable/unfavorable*.

To measure attitude toward task, the following item was used: "After the instruction, my attitude toward doing a task was." To measure attitude toward evaluation knowledge, the following item was used: "Having information about how the leader was going to evaluate the task made my attitude." To measure attitude toward directions, the following item was used: "The directions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task caused by attitude to be." To measure attitude toward leader, the following item was used: "My attitude toward the leader was." To measure attitude toward instructions, the following item was used: "The instructions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task caused by attitude to be." To measure attitude toward personality, the following item was used: "My attitude toward the leader's personality was."

To measure participants job-related beliefs, 11 items were developed by the researcher. All belief measures used a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Those items were:

1) I believe I could have performed the task well knowing how the leader was going to evaluate it.

2) When it comes to how I would feel about the task, the leader's expectations mattered.

3) I believe it is important to follow the leader's instructions exactly when performing a task.

4) The directions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task were clear.

5) I believe the leader would have rewarded my efforts.

6) I believe the leader is clear with what he expects.

7) I believe this leader is strict with his expectations.

8) I believe the leader is controlling.

9) I believe this leader would encourage creativity.

10) I believe this leader would create personal connections with employees.

11) I believe this leader would encourage innovation.

Finally, five nominal-level items were included on the questionnaire to measure participants' gender, age, nationality, academic level and whether they have taken a communications-related course before.

The results of the questionnaire provided further insight into what extent task evaluation knowledge and leadership styles affect an employee's attitude toward performing a specific task.

The next chapter details the results generated by the participant's answers on the questionnaire. Using mean and standard deviation testing on items measuring attitudes and beliefs, Cronbach's Alpha scores testing for multi-item attitude-based and belief-based measures, factor analysis testing of six composite attitude measures, factor analysis testing of 11 composite belief measures and regression analysis testing, the hypotheses were tested for significance.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which task evaluation knowledge and leadership style influence task-related and person-related attitudes toward a job task. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 posit task evaluation knowledge influences task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 posit leadership style influences task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 posit an interaction effect exists between task evaluation knowledge and leadership styles on task-related and person-related attitudes. Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 posit job-related beliefs influence task-related and person-related attitudes.

Data analysis began with assessment of the characteristics of the participants. There were a total of 110 participants with 75 (68%) of the participants being female. The average age of the participants was 21 with 18 being the age of the youngest participant and 32 being the age of the oldest. Of the 110 participants, 67 (61%) were white, 18 (16%) were Hispanic, 13 (12%) were black and eight (seven percent) were Asian. Two participants marked "other" for their nationality. The majority of the participants were juniors and seniors, with 52 (47%) being juniors and 48 (44%) being seniors. Nine participants (8%) were sophomores. One participant did not record his or her academic level.

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items used to measure attitudes of interest in this study. The first of the six attitude measures was participants' attitude toward task. The mean of the three-item measure was 4.82 with an average standard deviation score of 1.711. The second of the attitude variables measured the participants' attitude toward evaluation knowledge. The mean of the three-item measure was 4.82 with an average standard deviation score of 1.913. The third of the attitude variables measured the participants' attitude toward the type of direction they received. The mean of the three-item measure was 4.77 with an average standard deviation score of 1.757. The fourth of the attitude variables measured the participants' attitude toward the leader. The mean of the three-item measure was 5.227 with an average standard deviation score of 1.731. The fifth of the attitude variables measured the participants' attitude toward the instructions they received. The mean of the three-item measure was 4.777 with an average standard deviation of 5.329. The last of the six attitude variables measured the participants' attitude toward the leader's personality. The mean of the three-item measure was 5.103 with an average standard deviation score of 1.802.

Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation scores for the 11 items used to measure beliefs in this study.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the internal consistency of the multi-item scales used to measure the variables of interest was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha scores for the six three-item attitude measures, shown in Table 3, were all above .97, indicating strong internal consistency for the attitude measures. Therefore, the multi-item

scales were collapsed to create composite measures for each of the six attitudes examined in this study.

Next, the dimensionality of the six attitude measures was assessed using maximum likelihood factor analysis. First, the factorability of the correlation matrix was assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .885, indicating an adequate sample. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (p=.000).

The analysis was conducted in two stages, according to the procedures outlined by Green, Salkind, and Akey (2000). Factor extraction in stage one was conducted using principal components analysis. Four criteria were used to determine the appropriate number of factors to extract: 1) a priori conceptual beliefs about the number of underlying dimensions of the attitude constructs; 2) the latent root criterion; 3) the scree test; and 4) the interpretability of the factor solution. Both the latent root criterion and the scree test suggested a two factor solution, rather than the six factor structure hypothesized. Consequently, two factors were rotated using a Varimax procedure. The rotated solution, shown in Table 4, yielded two interpretable factors labeled task-related attitudes and person-related attitudes.

Four items loaded on the task-related attitude factor, attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation knowledge, attitude toward instructions and attitude toward directions, which accounted for 81.4% of the item variance (eigenvalue=4.886). Two items, attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality, loaded on the person-related attitude factor, which accounted for 7.5% of the item variance (eigenvalue= .454). The two factors together accounted for 89% of the variance.

Based on the factor analysis, the decision was made to collapse the six attitude measures that loaded on the two attitude factors into two composite variables named *task-related attitudes* and *person-related attitudes*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients, as shown in Table 3, for these three items were all above .97, suggesting strong consistency for the attitude measures.

Next, the dimensionality of the 11 belief measures was assessed using maximum likelihood factor analysis. First, the factorability of the correlation matrix was assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .831, indicating an adequate sample. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p=.000$).

A factor analysis was conducted using the 11 belief items to determine if scale reduction was necessary. The analysis for the 11 belief items was conducted in two stages, according to the procedures outlined by Green, Salkind, and Akey (2000). Factor extraction in stage one was conducted using principal components analysis. Four criteria were used to determine the appropriate number of factors to extract: 1) a priori conceptual beliefs about the number of underlying dimensions of the attitude constructs; 2) the latent root criterion; 3) the scree test; and 4) the interpretability of the factor solution. Both the latent root criterion and the scree test suggested a three factor solution. Consequently, three factors were rotated using a Varimax procedure. The rotated solution, shown in Table 6, yielded three interpretable factors, which were named *transformational leadership characteristics*, *expectations*, and *transactional leadership characteristics*. Five items loaded on the transformational leadership characteristics factor, which accounted for 42.7% of the item variance (eigenvalue=4.706). Four items

loaded on the expectations factor, which accounted for 15.3% of the item variance

(eigenvalue= 1.687). Two items loaded cleanly on the transactional leadership

characteristics factor, which accounted for 9% of the item variance (eigenvalue=.985).

Based on the factor analysis, the decision was made to collapse the 11 items that

loaded on the three factors into three composite variable named transformational

leadership characteristics, expectation and transactional leadership characteristics. The

Cronbach's alpha coefficients, as shown in Table 5, for these three items were all above

.50, suggesting relative consistency for the belief measures.

<u>Tests of Hypotheses</u>

Hypothesis 1 posited that task evaluation knowledge influences task-related

attitudes, which include attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information,

attitude toward directions and attitude toward instructions (P1.1). Hypothesis 2 posited

that task evaluation knowledge influences person-related attitudes, which include attitude

toward leader and attitude toward personality (P2.1). The mean and standard deviation

scores for the six attitude measures across the two task evaluation knowledge treatments

are shown in Table 7. Multivariate tests of within-subjects effects revealed no statistically

significant differences in task evaluation knowledge across the six attitude measures,

Wilks' Λ =.905, F(6, 98)=1.715, p=.125. Thus, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are not

supported.

Hypothesis 3 posited that leadership style influences task-related attitudes, which

include attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward

directions and attitude toward instructions (P3.1). Hypothesis 4 posited that leadership

style influences person-related attitudes, which include attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality (P4.1). Results of ANOVA indicated that there is a large proportion of the variance within the dependent variables (task-related and person-related attitudes) related to leadership style. Table 8 provides the mean and standard deviation scores for the six attitude measures across the two leadership style treatments. Multivariate tests of within-subjects effects revealed statistically significant differences for attitudes across leadership style, Wilks' $\Lambda = .585$, $F(6, 98)=11.582$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.415$. Specifically, nearly 42% of the variance in attitudes is due to leadership style.

Tests of between-subject effects indicated significant differences in all six attitude measures based on the two leadership style treatments. These results are shown in Table 9. P3.1 and P3.2 posited that transactional leadership style will negatively influence task-related attitudes and that transformational leadership styles will positively influence task-related attitudes. An examination of Table 9 indicates support for the propositions. Similarly, P4.1 and P4.2 posited that transactional leadership style will negatively influence person-related attitudes and the transformational leadership styles will positively influence person-related attitudes. An examination of Table 9 indicates support for the propositions. These results indicate support for H3 and H4.

Hypothesis 5 posited that an interaction effect exists between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on task-related attitudes, which include attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions and attitude toward instructions (P5.1). Hypothesis 6 posited that an interaction effect exists between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on person-related attitudes, which include

attitude toward leader and attitude toward personality (P6.1). The mean and standard

deviation of attitudes across the four treatment conditions are shown in Table 10. Results

of multivariate tests of within-subject effects indicate no significant interaction effect of

task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on any of the attitude measures, Wilks' Λ

$=.935$, $F(6,96)=1.120$, $p=.357$. Thus, H5 and H6 are not supported.

Hypothesis 7 posited that participant beliefs influence task-related attitudes and

Hypothesis 8 posited that beliefs influence person-related attitudes. To test the influence

of beliefs on attitudes, a series of regression analyses were performed. For attitude toward

task, results indicated that approximately 46% of the variance in attitude toward task was

accounted for by its linear relationship with the three belief measures, $R = .688$, $R^2 =$

.473, Adj. $R^2 = .457$, $F(3,102) = 30.492$, $p = .000$. However, the results indicate that only

transformational leadership characteristics, $\beta = .703$, $t = 7.203$, $p = .000$, was significant

as a unique predictor of beliefs influencing attitude toward task.

For attitude toward evaluation knowledge, results indicated that approximately

59% of the variance in attitude toward knowledge was accounted for by its linear

relationship with the three belief factors, $R = .774$, $R^2 = .599$, $Adj. R^2 = .587$, $F(3,102) =$

50.823, $p = .000$. However, the results indicate that only transformational leadership

characteristics, $\beta = .691$, $t = 8.109$, $p = .000$, was significant as a unique predictor of beliefs

influencing person-related attitudes.

For attitude toward directions, results indicated that approximately 63% of the

variance in attitude toward directions was accounted for by its linear relationship with the

three belief factors. $R = .802$, $R^2 = .643$, Adj. $R^2 = .632$, $F(3,102) = 68.714$, $p = .000$. The

results indicate that only transformational leadership characteristics, β= .785, t= 9.767, p= .000 was significant as a unique predictors of beliefs influencing attitudes toward directions.

For attitude toward leader results indicated that approximately 50% of the variance in attitude toward leader was accounted for by its linear relationship with the three belief factors. R= .719, R^2= .517, Adj. R^2= .503, $F(3,102) = 36,418$, p= .000. The results indicate that both transformational leadership characteristics, β= .524, t= 5.607, p= .000, and transactional leadership characteristics β= -.215, t= -2.548, p= .012 were significant as unique predictors of beliefs influencing attitudes toward leader. An examination of the Betas indicates that transformational leadership characteristics are positively related to attitude toward leader. Conversely, transactional leadership characteristics are negatively related to attitude toward leader.

For attitude toward instructions, results indicated that approximately 67% of the variance in attitude toward directions was accounted for by its linear relationship with the three belief factors. R= .817, R^2= .668, Adj. R^2= .658, $F(3,102) = 69.096$, p= .000. The results indicate that transformational leadership characteristics, β= .702, t= 9.020, p= .000, was significant as a unique predictor of beliefs influencing attitude toward instruction. However, transactional leadership characteristics, β= -.131, t= -1.858, p= .006, approached significance as a unique predictor of beliefs influencing attitudes toward the leader's instructions.

For attitude toward personality, results indicated that approximately 41% of the variance in attitude toward knowledge was accounted for by its linear relationship with

the three belief factors, $R= .656$, $R^2= .431$, *Adj. R^2= .414*, $F(3,102) = 47.073$, $p= .000$. The results indicate that transformational leadership characteristics, $\beta= .537$, $t= 5.273$, $p= .000$, was significant as a unique predictors of beliefs influencing person-related attitudes. However, expectations, $\beta= .151$, $t= 1.780$, $p= .078$, approached significance as a unique predictor of beliefs influencing person-related attitudes. Thus, Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 are partially supported.

The next chapter details the outcomes of this study. Specifically, the Discussion chapter reveals whether task evaluation knowledge or leadership style influences attitudes toward a job task, explores the limitations of this study and provides a final analysis of the results and a recommendation of how these results benefit organizational management.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Items Measuring Attitudes

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Att. Toward task (neg/pos)	110	4.88	1.744
Att. Toward task (bad/good)	107	4.88	1.675
Att. Toward task (unfavorable/favorable)	108	4.70	1.714
Att. Toward TEK (neg/pos)	109	4.86	1.922
Att. Toward TEK (unfavorable/favorable)	107	4.83	1.930
Att. Toward TEK (bad/good)	107	4.77	1.886
Att. Toward type of direction (neg/pos)	109	4.83	1.761
Att. Toward type of direction (bad/good)	106	4.75	1.750
Att. Toward type of direction (unfav/favorable)	107	4.73	1.841
Att. Toward leader (bad/good)	106	5.26	1.664
Att. Toward leader (neg/pos)	109	5.21	1.764
Att. Toward leader (unfavorable/favorable)	107	5.21	1.765
Att. Toward instructions (bad/good)	106	4.84	1.680
Att. Toward instructions (unfavorable/favorable)	105	4.79	1.801
Att. Toward instructions (neg/pos)	109	4.70	1.848
Att. Toward personality (bad/good)	105	5.14	1.729
Att. Toward personality (neg/pos)	109	5.10	1.846
Att. Toward personality (unfavorable/favorable)	105	5.07	1.831

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of Items Measuring Beliefs

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Belief importance of following instructions	110	6.32	0.777
Belief leader clear in what was expected	109	5.97	1.182
Belief that evaluation criteria was clear	109	5.89	1.377
Belief that leader's expectations mattered	110	5.56	1.193
Belief efforts would be rewarded	109	5.28	1.563
Belief in TEK	110	5.21	1.580
Belief leader is strict with expectations	109	5.17	1.539
Belief leader creates personal connections	109	4.52	1.874
Belief leader encourages innovation	109	4.45	1.988
Belief leader encourages creativity	109	4.40	2.220
Belief leader is controlling	109	4.17	1.799

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha Scores for Multi-item Attitude-based Measures

Variable	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude toward task	3	.972
Attitude toward evaluation knowledge	3	.982
Attitude toward type of direction	3	.980
Attitude toward leader	3	.977
Attitude toward directions	3	.978
Attitude toward leader's personality	3	.988

Table 4

Factor Analysis of Six Composite Attitude Measures

	Factor	
	1	2
ATTdirections	.876	.419
ATTinstructions	.814	.503
ATTtek	.774	.522
ATTtask	.678	.419
ATTleader	.451	.892
ATTpersonality	.470	.686

Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha Scores for Belief Measures

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha/Pearson's r
Transformational leadership characteristics	5	$\alpha = .881$
Expectations	4	$\alpha = .681$
Transactional leadership characteristics	2	$r = .501$

Table 6

Factor Analysis of Three Composite Belief Measures

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Belief leader encourage innovation	.831	.210-	-.332
Belief leader encouraged creativity	.828	.221	-.391
Belief leader create personal connection	.761	.319	-.238
Belief TEK	.532	.142	-.100
Belief efforts rewarded	.516	.365	-.011
Belief of expectations	.170	.817	.047
Clear evaluation criteria	.153	.688	-.116
Leader Expectation	.306	.419	.036
Belief in following instruction	.104	.337	-.180
Belief leader controlling	-.239	-.278	.930
Belief leader strict	-.401	.206	.497

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitudes for High and Low TEK

	TEK	Mean	St. Dev.	N
ATTtask	Low	4.7586	1.52407	58
	High	4.8511	1.80821	47
	Total	4.8000	1.64966	105
ATTtek	Low	4.9368	1.71390	58
	High	4.6099	2.04694	47
	Total	4.7905	1.86812	105
ATTdirections	Low	4.8966	1.56123	58
	High	4.6312	1.97721	47
	Total	4.7778	1.75574	105
ATTleader	Low	5.1437	1.62115	58
	High	5.3688	1.78187	47
	Total	5.2444	1.69039	105
ATTinstructions	Low	4.8161	1.54991	58
	High	4.7801	1.94151	47
	Total	4.8000	1.72748	105
ATTpersonality	Low	4.9655	1.67389	58
	High	5.2837	1.89581	47
	Total	5.1079	1.77500	105

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviation for Attitudes Across Leadership Style

	Leadership	Mean	St. Dev.	N
ATTtask	TransA	4.0172	1.59852	58
	TransF	5.7660	1.12270	47
	Total	4.8000	1.64966	105
ATTtek	TransA	3.8621	1.78475	58
	TransF	5.9362	1.23092	47
	Total	4.7905	1.86812	105
ATTdirections	TransA	3.8103	1.57727	58
	TransF	5.9716	1.11821	47
	Total	4.7778	1.75574	105
ATTleader	TransA	4.5977	1.78881	58
	TransF	6.0426	1.14760	47
	Total	5.2444	1.69039	105
ATTinstructions	TransA	3.8563	1.63432	58
	TransF	5.9645	.96367	47
	Total	4.8000	1.72748	105
ATTpersonality	TransA	4.4655	1.85953	58
	TransF	5.9007	1.29457	47
	Total	5.1079	1.77500	105

Table 9

Analysis of Leadership Style on Task-related and Person-related Attitudes

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Leadership	ATTtask	79.392	1	79.392	40.158	.000	.281
	ATTtek	111.685	1	111.685	45.784	.000	.308
	ATTdirections	121.272	1	121.272	62.668	.000	.378
	ATTleader	54.198	1	54.198	22.975	.000	.182
	ATTinstructions	115.390	1	115.390	60.960	.000	.372
	ATTpersonality	53.476	1	53.476	20.088	.000	.163

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviation for Attitudes Across TEK and Leadership Styles

	TEK	Leadership	Mean	St. Dev.	N
ATTtask	High	TransA	3.7356	1.23243	29
		TransF	5.7816	1.02072	29
		Total	4.7586	1.52407	58
	Low	TransA	4.2989	1.87580	29
		TransF	5.7407	1.30136	18
		Total	4.8511	1.80821	47
	Total	TransA	4.0172	1.59852	58
		TransF	5.7660	1.12270	47
		Total	4.8000	1.64966	105
ATTtek	High	TransA	3.9195	1.71051	29
		TransF	5.9540	.95421	29
		Total	4.9368	1.71390	58
	Low	TransA	3.8046	1.88460	29
		TransF	5.9074	1.61207	18
		Total	4.6099	2.04694	47
	Total	TransA	3.8621	1.78475	58
		TransF	5.9362	1.23092	47
		Total	4.7905	1.86812	105

Table 10 (Continued)

	TEK	Leadership	Mean	St. Dev.	N
ATTdirections	Low	TransA	3.8736	1.37267	29
		TransF	5.9195	.95392	29
		Total	4.8966	1.56123	58
	High	TransA	3.7471	1.78097	29
		TransF	6.0556	1.36841	18
		Total	4.6312	1.97721	47
	Total	TransA	3.8103	1.57727	58
		TransF	5.9716	1.11821	47
		Total	4.7778	1.75574	105
ATTleader	Low	TransA	4.2989	1.78028	29
		TransF	5.9885	.83800	29
		Total	5.1437	1.62115	58
	High	TransA	4.8966	1.77751	29
		TransF	6.1296	1.54725	18
		Total	5.3688	1.78187	47
	Total	TransA	4.5977	1.78881	58
		TransF	6.0426	1.14760	47
		Total	5.2444	1.69039	105

Table 10 (Continued)

	TEK	Leadership	Mean	St. Dev.	N
ATTinstructions	Low	TransA	3.8046	1.46525	29
		TransF	5.8276	.78992	29
		Total	4.8161	1.54991	58
	High	TransA	3.9080	1.81243	29
		TransF	6.1852	1.18389	18
		Total	4.7801	1.94151	47
	Total	TransA	3.8563	1.63432	58
		TransF	5.9645	.96367	47
		Total	4.8000	1.72748	105
ATTpersonality	Low	TransA	4.1954	1.80281	29
		TransF	5.7356	1.10690	29
		Total	4.9655	1.67389	58
	High	TransA	4.7356	1.90734	29
		TransF	6.1667	1.54772	18
		Total	5.2837	1.89581	47
	Total	TransA	4.4655	1.85953	58
		TransF	5.9007	1.29457	47
		Total	5.1079	1.77500	105

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study examined the effect task evaluation knowledge and leadership styles had on attitudes toward performing a task. Specifically, attitude measures were examined using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1974) theory of reasoned action. This study set out to determine the significance of influence the two independent variables had on an individual's attitude when performing a task in a job setting. The analysis of the hypotheses resulted in several interesting patterns.

Eight hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 1 tested the influence task evaluation knowledge had on task-related attitudes, which include attitude toward task, attitude toward evaluation information, attitude toward directions given for the exercise and the instructions given about how the task will be evaluated. Hypothesis 2 tested the influence that task evaluation knowledge had on person-related attitudes, which include attitude the leader and attitude the leader's personality. The results of this study do not provide support for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. In a controlled setting, based on the results of this study, having knowledge of how a leader will evaluate the task does not affect the attitude an individual has toward the task. Although, this study was an extension of existing task-related literature, examining the effects task evaluation knowledge has on attitudes in a controlled setting is strictly exploratory. It is possible if other variables were tested or if participants, who have been exposed to evaluation criteria throughout their performance of a task, were pooled, the results would be different. As this study tested

task evaluation knowledge in a snapshot, by looking at prolonged effects of task evaluation knowledge on attitude, the results may have been different. Therefore, the results of this study illustrate the need to conduct future research, especially in other settings, aimed at further expanding the concept of task evaluation knowledge to determine its influence on attitude.

Hypothesis 3 tested the influence leadership style had on task-related attitudes. Hypothesis 4 tested the influence leadership style had on person-related attitudes. Results indicated that leadership style does influences attitudes. Specifically, the results of ANOVA indicated that leadership style had a significant influence on items measuring both task-related and person-related attitudes. In this study, participants universally had positive attitudes toward the leader who demonstrated a transformational leadership style, especially with person-related attitudes, which supports proposition P3.2. Conversely, the leader exhibiting transactional leadership qualities produced negative attitudes, especially with task-related attitudes, which supports proposition P4.1. This is an interesting finding because it may suggest that individuals develop perceptions of the leader in a snapshot and their attitudes are affected by their initial perceptions. Therefore, these results may indicate that an individual's initial reaction to a person's leadership style has a greater influence on their attitudes toward a task than other variables.

Past studies (Werder & Holtzhausen, 2009; Hater & Bass, 1988) have indicated that leadership styles are cultivated, changed, and are noticed by employees over a long period of time. This study, on the other hand, proved that attitudes can be influenced by initial perceptions as well. It is possible that attitudes may change as the employee is

exposed to the leader's style for a long period of time, but, this study proves that initial perceptions are as important as ones that are sustained for a long period of time. This study could be expanded for future research to determine if the attitudes that are influenced by leadership styles in a snapshot change or are affected when an individual is exposed to a specific leadership style over a long period time.

Also, literature suggests that the hybrid leadership model (the use of transformational and transactional qualities throughout the process of a task or job) is the most effective (Bass, 2000). However, this study proves that, in an experimental setting, specific leadership styles influence attitudes negatively or positively.

Hypothesis 5 explored whether an interaction effect existed between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on task-related attitudes. Hypothesis 6 explored whether an interaction effect exhibited between task evaluation knowledge and leadership style on person-related attitudes. The results of this study did not provide support for Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6. There appears to be no interaction effect between task evaluation knowledge and leadership styles on individual's attitudes toward a task. Specifically, this study explored if the combination of task evaluation knowledge and leadership style, together, influenced job-related attitudes, which it did not. However, this study did not test what specific qualities of the independent variables interacted with each other. Therefore, future testing should focus on attributes of each variable and test to see if there is a link between these attributes.

In addition, it would be beneficial to expand research on what other factors paired with leadership styles will affect attitudes toward job task. This is because leadership

styles showed to have an influence on attitudes when tested independently, so looking at specific attributes and pairing it with attributes of other variables would be beneficial.

Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 tested the theory of reasoned action, which asserts that beliefs influence attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). For this study, Hypothesis 7 posited that the participant's beliefs influence task-related attitudes, and Hypothesis 8 posited that participant's beliefs influence person-related attitudes. Results indicate that there is partial support for beliefs influencing attitudes. Specifically, the results of a series of regression analyses indicated that items measuring transformational leadership characteristic beliefs have a significant influence on all task-related and person-related attitudes. While transactional leadership characteristic beliefs only have a significant influence on participant attitudes toward leader.

Although all three belief measures did not show unique significance in their influence toward attitudes, transformational leadership characteristics exhibited the strongest prediction of the belief measures to influence attitude, which supports the theory of reasoned action. Through experimental methods, researchers get closer to demonstrating cause and effect relationships, although these relationships are only valid in the controlled situation in which the variables were tested.

The regression analyses testing beliefs on attitude toward leader showed two belief measures influencing an attitude measure. The results of this test showed that transformational leadership characteristics are positively related to attitude toward leader while transactional leadership characteristics are negatively related to attitude toward leader. This result is an important finding as it expands on previous research examining

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leadership styles (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999; Bass, 2000) that not only do different styles affect employee attitudes, but specifically, when approaching a task, transformational leadership styles positively influence employee attitude and transactional leadership styles negatively influence employee attitude. In order for an employee to have a positive attitude when approaching a task, the results in this study suggest that the manager must exhibit transformational leadership qualities in order to get better task performance outcomes.

Lastly, it is important to note that transactional leadership characteristic beliefs approached significance as a predictor of attitude toward instructions, and expectation beliefs approached significance as a predictor of attitude toward leader's personality. Although these results were not significant, these findings suggest directions for future research.

The findings in this study provide support for the TRA in another context: the workplace. Although every job-related belief did not influence job-related attitudes, the outcome of leadership beliefs influencing job-related attitudes adds the workplace context as another setting in which the TRA is supported. This study provides framework to further test the behavioral intention construct of the TRA in a work setting. The results of this study provide support that beliefs influence attitudes. The next step to fully support the TRA will be to test the influence attitudes in a job setting have on behavioral intentions.

In addition, this study contributes to the understanding of task performance. The social information processing approach to task performance posits an employee's work

setting environment provides cues for employees to construct attitudes that positively

contribute to the organization (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The results of this study show

that an employee's attitude toward task performance is significantly influenced by a

leader's leadership style. Based on these results, this study provides understanding that

one of the main influences on an employee's attitude from outside factors is the leader

and the leadership style he or she uses.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

Despite the contributions of this study, it has limitations that must be addressed.

Specific limitations include selection bias, the instrumentation used to test the variables

of interest, and the measures that were tested.

Selection bias exists if assigning subjects to comparison groups resulted in

unequal distribution of subject-related variables. In this study, there may have been

attitudes toward receiving directions by a non-affiliated instructor. As the participants

were all college students, there is a possible bias in their skill sets being evaluated by an

outsider.

In addition, participants of this study may have not been the most appropriate

because the interaction with the leader was brief and the instructions given were only

provided during a quick monologue. Although the study proved that brief interactions

with a leader's style can produce significant results in influencing attitudes, past studies

that explored the affects leadership styles had on attitudes pooled participants that

interacted with the leaders on a daily basis (Werder & Holtzhausen, 2009). These types of

participants would also be familiar with how their manager or boss evaluates their work compared to college students who are meeting a leader for a first time.

Also, the fact that the majority of the participants were female, by having a male leader could have played a role in the results. The study was set up specifically to avoid external factors from influencing results, which it did. But, the use of another type of leader (i.e., female, different ethnicity, etc.) could influence the results as well.

The second limitation of this study stems from the instrumentation used to test the variables of interest. The study's leader provided the participants with instructions to complete an exercise, but no exercise was given. Therefore, the fact that no exercise was provided to complete based on the instructions given, the participants' attitudes toward the instructions given and the overall experiment may have been affected. If time allowed for an exercise to be given, and the participants had to complete an exercise based on the leader's directions, the results may have been different.

Also, the evaluation knowledge aspect of this study was completely exploratory. Although there is extensive literature on task performance, there is no prior literature or guides that could have been used in creating the evaluation knowledge manipulations. Because of this factor, the measures tested in this study may have been flawed. The measures testing evaluation knowledge were not supported by any previous literature and it is quite possible that if other variables were tested, the results would be completely different. Therefore, it is possible a different treatment scenario testing evaluation knowledge could have produced different results.

Finally, the wording of some of the items used in this study may also present limitations. Rewording the items used to measure the independent variables of the different leadership styles may have influenced the results of this study. Despite the fact that the theory was supported, rewording the items may have compromised the validity and reliability of the results.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations, the results of this study constitute an important preliminary step in understanding the influence leadership style has on attitudes of an employee when approaching a task. This research is significant because it furthers understanding of the importance the characteristics of a leader has on attitudes. This study proved that leadership styles significantly influences all types of attitudes associated with a work task. Specifically, this study also revealed that transformational leadership characteristic beliefs positively influence attitudes toward leader while transactional leadership characteristic beliefs negatively influence attitudes toward leader.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that, in an organizational management setting, managers use a transformational leadership style if they hope to positively influence an employee's attitude toward a task. This recommendation is especially important as organizations have competing priorities and limited resources, therefore by using the most appropriate leadership style, the manager can influence his or her employees to have positive attitudes toward a task, which leads to better commitment to the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2005). As the literature points out, leadership style is typically cultivated and understood by employees over a long period of time. But, this

study proves that the initial interaction is as important as prolonged interactions. And, as discussed in the social information processing model, an employee's attitude is influenced by outside factors, which includes the leader and the leader's management style. Hence, it is important for a leader to use the appropriate style when trying to influence attitude toward performing a job task.

As this was an exploratory study testing the effects of task evaluation knowledge, this study provides a useful framework for the examination of other factors that may influence an employee's attitudes toward a job task. Although, this study did not reveal any significance with evaluation knowledge influencing attitudes, further research may build upon this notion and produce different results. In addition, the results of this study provide strong causal support for the variables of the theory of reasoned action and create a foundation for extension of the theory into the workplace.

Future research should examine evaluation knowledge and its effectiveness in a multitude of settings using a variety of methodologies to gain a fuller understanding if task evaluation influences attitude in a work setting. Also, future research should explore if the initial influences leadership style has on attitudes is sustained over a longer period of time. This can be done through examining the effects a new leader has on his or her employees and then follow progress through the course of the work year. The use of the experiment setting provided results that leadership style has an initial influence on attitudes, but exploring this finding in other settings will further the understanding of leadership styles on task-related attitudes.

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Appendix 1: Leadership Scripts

Transactional/limited knowledge

Welcome students. My name is (x) and I will be leading you in a quick exercise. Shortly, I will hand a worksheet testing your knowledge about two important disciplines in the communication field: advertising and public relations. As future communicators, knowing how to use these two disciplines is very important. I will be the one who will grade this assignment and pass on the results to (Instructor). (Instructor) has agreed to allow the points earned on this exercise to be counted toward your final grade. There are four total questions, so you have a chance to add four extra points.

When approaching this task, I am looking for exact answers. For every wrong answer, you will not get the extra points, but for every right answer you will be rewarded. This assignment was taken from an existing lesson plan, and has been tested for years. Therefore the answers that are specific to these questions are exact.

As I am the one grading this assignment, I want to give you some information on how I will evaluate the task. Answers should be exact, but not to exceed two sentences each. I am very strict in what I am looking for and I expect all of you to perform the same. If your answers are radically different from what I am looking for, you will not get full credit.

I have ten years of experience in communications, with five years in advertising and five years in public relations. Therefore I will know a right answer when I see one. This is why (Instructor) asked me to lead this assignment.

(hand out questionnaires) – as you will see, there is no exercise – This was an experiment (then go into consent form). I would like for you to take the information that was given and answer the questions accurately, honestly and to your best ability.

Transactional/increased knowledge

Welcome students. My name is (x) and I will be leading you in a quick exercise. Shortly, I will hand a worksheet testing your knowledge about two important disciplines in the communication field: advertising and public relations. As future communicators, knowing how to use these two disciplines is very important. I will be the one who will

grade this assignment and pass on the results to (Instructor). (Instructor) has agreed to allow the points earned on this exercise to be counted toward your final grade. There are four total questions, so you have a chance to add four extra points.

When approaching this task, I am looking for exact answers. For every wrong answer, you will not get the extra points, but for every right answer you will be rewarded. This assignment was taken from an existing lesson plan, and has been tested for years. Therefore the answers that are specific to these questions are exact.

As I am the one grading this assignment, I want to give you some information on how I will evaluate the task. The first two questions are going to ask for you to define advertising and public relations respectively, I expect specific "dictionary-sounding" definitions for both subjects showing that you have ample knowledge of both disciplines. The closer the answers are to the exact the definition the better change you will receive full credit. For question three, I want to see that you can fully illustrate the difference between the two subjects by being as descriptive as possible, using key words. For the fourth question, the question will ask for examples of the disciplines, I want to see three distinct examples for each subject. These examples must be recent (i.e. within the last three years). If the answers are not vastly different from each other or are older than three years, you will not get full credit.

I have ten years of experience in communications, with five years in advertising and five years in public relations. Therefore I will know a right answer when I see one. This is why (Instructor) asked me to lead this assignment.

(hand out questionnaires) – as you will see, there is no exercise – This was an experiment (then go into consent form). I would like for you to take the information that was given and answer the questions accurately, honestly and to your best ability.

Transformational/limited knowledge

Welcome students. My name is (x) and I will be leading you in a quick exercise. Shortly, I will hand a worksheet testing your knowledge about two important disciplines in the communication field: advertising and public relations. As future communicators, knowing how to use these two disciplines is very important. I will be the one who will grade this assignment and pass on the results to (Instructor). (Instructor) has agreed to allow the points earned on this exercise to be counted toward your final grade. There are four total questions, so you have a chance to add four extra points.

When approaching this task, I am mainly looking to get an idea of how much you know about each subject. I understand that most of you have not had any personal experience with either public relations or advertising, so I just want to see your passion, creativity and enthusiasm for the subjects. I remember when I was in your seat, just learning about communications, so I know what you all are thinking. This is just a task that will optimize your communications performance in the future.

As I am the one grading this assignment, I want to give you some information on how I will evaluate the task. Basically, I want you to show inspiration motivation for all your answers. There are no specifically wrong answers, so as long as you provide a creative and fun answer, I will let (Instructor) know and she will add points to your final grade.

I have ten years of experience in communications, with five years in advertising and five years in public relations. Therefore I will know a right answer when I see one. This is why (Instructor) asked me to lead this assignment.

(hand out questionnaires) – as you will see, there is no exercise – This was an experiment (then go into consent form). I would like for you to take the information that was given and answer the questions accurately, honestly and to your best ability.

<u>Transformational/increased knowledge</u>

Welcome students. My name is (x) and I will be leading you in a quick exercise. Shortly, I will hand a worksheet testing your knowledge about two important disciplines in the communication field: advertising and public relations. As future communicators, knowing how to use these two disciplines is very important. I will be the one who will grade this assignment and pass on the results to (instructor). (Instructor) has agreed to allow the points earned on this exercise to be counted toward your final grade. There are four total questions, so you have a chance to add four extra points.

When approaching this task, I am mainly looking to get an idea of how much you know about each subject. I understand that most of you have not had any personal experience with either public relations or advertising, so I just want to see your passion, creativity and enthusiasm for the subjects. I remember when I was in your seat, just learning about communications, so I know what you all are thinking. This is just a task that will optimize your communications performance in the future.

As I am the one grading this assignment, I want to give you some information on how I will evaluate the task. For instance, the first two questions are going to ask you to define advertising and public relations. I want to see you all provide descriptive and imaginative answers. Feel free to include examples to demonstrate your point. Your answer does not have to be a "dictionary definition" as long as I can easily determine that you have a firm grasp of the concept of each subject. The third question will ask you to differentiate the two disciplines. Please be as descriptive as possible, but what I really want to see is a complete illustration of what you think the difference is between the two subjects. The fourth question will ask you to cite examples. You can provide any examples that come to your mind. But what would be really great is if you can include different types of examples for each subject.

I have ten years of experience in communications, with five years in advertising and five years in public relations. Therefore, I have plenty of experience in understanding both fields and know creative answers when I see one. This is why (instructor) asked me to lead this assignment.

(hand out questionnaires) – as you will see, there is no exercise – This was an experiment (then go into consent form). I would like for you to take the information that was given and answer the questions accurately, honestly and to your best ability.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number that best describes your opinion. Some of the questions may appear to be similar, but they do address somewhat different issues. Please read each question carefully.

<u>Attitude toward the task</u>

This section asks participants about how they felt about the task specifically.

1) After the instruction, my attitude toward doing a task was

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

2) Having more information about how the leader was going to evaluate the task made my attitude

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

3) The directions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task caused my attitude

to be

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

Beliefs

4) I believe I could have performed the task well knowing how the leader was going to

evaluate it.

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Strongly Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree |

5) When it comes to how I would feel about the task, the leader's expectations mattered.

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Strongly Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree |

6) I believe it is important to follow the leader's instructions exactly when performing a

task.

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Strongly Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree |

7) The directions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task were clear.

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| Strongly | Slightly | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Slightly | Strongly |
| Disagree | Disagree | | | | Agree | Agree |

Attitude toward the leader

8) My attitude toward the leader was

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

9) The instructions the leader provided on how he will evaluate the task caused my attitude to be

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

10) My attitude toward the leader's personality was

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

Transactional Leadership Style

11) I believe the leader will reward my efforts.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly	Slightly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly	Strongly
Disagree	Disagree				Agree	Agree

12) I believe the leader is clear with what he expects.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly	Slightly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly	Strongly
Disagree	Disagree				Agree	Agree

13) I believe this leader is strict with his expectations.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly	Slightly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly	Strongly
Disagree	Disagree				Agree	Agree

14) I believe this leader is controlling.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly	Slightly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly	Strongly
Disagree	Disagree				Agree	Agree

<u>Transformational Leadership Style</u>

15) I believe this leader would encourage creativity.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

16) I believe this leader would create personal connections with employees.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

17) I believe this leader would encourage innovation.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

18) What is your sex?

Male   Female

19) What is your age?

20) What is your nationality?

White   Hispanic   Black   Asian   American Indian   Pacific Islander   Other

21) What is your academic level?

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Graduate

22) Is this your first communications related course?

Yes   No