Do Various Styles of Leadership Significantly Relate to a Subordinate's Perceived Relationship with his Leader?

David M. Setley
Chair and Assistant Professor
Department of Business and Economics
Lebanon Valley College
101 N. College Ave., Annville, PA 17003, USA.

Paul Dion
Associate Professor of Management
Susquahanna University, Selinsgrove, PA 17870, USA.

James Miller
Assistant Professor of Business
Alvernia University, Reading, PA 19607, USA.

Abstract

In all organizations from businesses to government to education, individuals are evaluated based upon their ability to lead others. The purpose of this study is to investigate if various styles of leadership are related to the leader-member exchange relationship (LMX) as perceived by the subordinate. The conclusions of this study suggests that leadership styles including a relatively high orientation toward relationship-oriented leadership styles do result in higher quality leader-member exchange relationships as perceived by the follower.

Key Words: Leader-member exchange (LMX), Situational Leadership, Structural equation modelling (SEM)

1. Introduction

Few management issues have received more attention in recent years than that of leadership effectiveness. The current knowledge-based economy has resulted in new, leaner organizational structures. Organizational designs such as matrix organizations and virtual corporations have placed greater emphasis on the responsibilities of leaders. In government, business, and education, individuals at all levels of organizations are evaluated by their ability to lead others. The information uncovered in this study should have value to academicians as well as mangers and business practitioners at all levels of organizations in determining how best to establish higher quality dyadic relationships with subordinates and thus maximize leadership effectiveness.

The focus of this research will be within the dyadic conceptualization of leadership. The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, originally referred to as the vertical dyad linkage theory (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975), describes the individual relationships a leader has with a subordinate as defined by the two parties over the life of the relationship. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2001) also address the dyadic conceptualization of leadership in situational leadership. The authors describe four styles of leadership, based on the relative presence or absence of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors, which can be utilized in response to four levels of follower readiness.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this investigation is to answer the following research question: Are various styles of leadership, as defined by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2001), related to the LMX relationship between the subordinate and his/her leader? Based on the research question presented above, this investigation will study and analyze the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis One

HO1: There is no significant positive relationship between the leadership style one (S1, high task, low relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

HA1: There is a significant positive relationship between the leadership style one (S1, high task, low relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

Hypotheses Two

HO2: There is no significant positive relationship between the leadership style two (S2, high task, high relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

HA2: There is a significant positive relationship between the leadership style two (S2, high task, high relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

Hypotheses Three

HO3: There is no significant positive relationship between the leadership style three (S3, low task, high relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

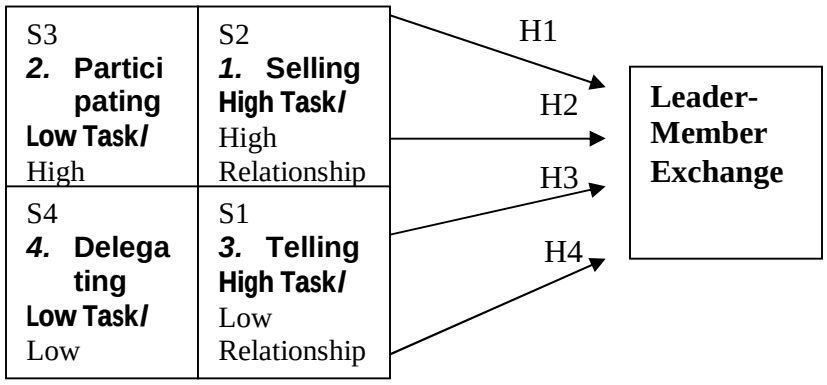
HA3: There is a significant positive relationship between the leadership style three (S3, low task, high relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

Hypotheses Four

HO4: There is no significant positive relationship between the leadership style four (S4, low task, low relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

HA4: There is a significant positive relationship between the leadership style four (S4, low task, low relationship behavior), as perceived by the follower, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship, as perceived by the follower, between the leader and the follower in the sample group investigated.

Figure 1: Proposed Research Design



House, et al. (1999) state that leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organization" (p.184). This definition emphasizes the significance of the dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower in an effective leadership experience.

Otherwise stated, the effectiveness of a leader is directly related to his/her ability to influence the actions and directions of subordinates.

Yukl (2002) claims that most of the theories that focus on the effectiveness of a leader are centered in the dyadic conceptualization. The author states that a key assumption of this approach to leadership study is that "leadership effectiveness can not be understood without examining how leaders and followers influence each other over time" (p. 15). The focus of this investigation will be within the dyadic conceptualization of leadership. The leader-member exchange theory is a representation of the dyadic approach to leadership studies. This investigation will examine the dyadic relationship utilizing the four leadership styles from the Situational Leadership Model (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001) as the independent variables and the LMX relationship as the dependent variables. As this relationship has not been extensively addressed in prior studies, this aspect of the study will provide new data toward the understanding of the potential effects of leadership attempts on leader-subordinate relationships.

The sample group in this study was full-time employed, non-traditional students. A total of seven institutions of higher learning, including community colleges and undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral universities and colleges were utilized in the study. The descriptive statistical analysis demonstrates a fairly diverse sample of dyadic relationships in which the participants are members. As a result of the relatively wide scope of the sample in this study the findings of the research should have implications to academicians and business leaders at different levels of organizations in both large and small public or private entities.

2. Leader-Member Exchange – The relationship between a leader and a follower

Leader-member exchange theory (LMX), formerly called the vertical dyad linkage theory, posits that each leader has a reciprocal relationship with each individual follower directly under his/her charge and that this relationship develops over time. At its core, LMX proposes that a leader and each subordinate establish a separate exchange relationship, which is a function of the parties' definition of the roles that each fills in the exchange (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Yukl, 2002). For example, a follower defining his/her role as a valued partner in the exchange will tend to percieve a more mature, higher LMX, relationship with the leader than one defining his/her relationship as a mere provider of labor.

The LMX theory suggests three phases in the life cycle of the relationship between the leader and the subordinate. The first stage is an initial testing phase. Each party monitors and evaluates the perspective and expectations of the other party and each determine what resources the parties bring into the relationship for possible exchange. The exchanges are relatively immediate and require a sense of exchange equity by both parties (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Yukl, 2002).

In a second possible stage in the LMX relationship the parties redefine the roles, motives and exchange potential of the other party. The relationship is identified by an increased level of trust, loyalty and mutual respect. The second level allows for a lower requirement for immediacy and short-term equity in the exchange (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Yukl, 2002).

In the mature stage of the LMX relationship, parties' motivations are based less on self-interest and more on group or organizational-interest. The high level of organizational mission commitment present in this stage of the LMX relationship further reduces the need for immediate reciprocity in the exchange. As well, the parties will have an even lower need to feel that the resources that he/she has exchanged have been equally reciprocated in the short or even in the long-term (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Yukl, 2002).

Generally, researchers of the leader-member exchange theory describe the three potential levels of the LMX relationship as in-group, middle-group, or out-group dyads. The relationship can be analyzed as a downward dyadic exchange or as an upward dyadic exchange. Positive downward exchange in LMX relationships has been related to higher levels of employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Scandura & Graen, 1984; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Investigations have also suggested that leaders who have high-quality upward exchange relationships with their supervisors tend to also have higher-quality downward exchange relationships with their subordinates (Cashman, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Graen, Cashman, Ginsburgh, & Schiemann, 1977). The most frequently utilized instrument in the evaluation of LMX relationship quality is the LMX-7 survey (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Yukl, 2002).

A significant number of investigations have suggested a positive relationship between the quality of LMX relationship and follower's levels of performance and satisfaction (Yukl, 2002).

One study found that supervisors trained to build high-LMX relationships experienced significant improvement in quantitative evaluation criteria as well as follower satisfaction (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982). In an investigation into the relationship between LMX and delegation, Schriesheim, Neider, and Scandura (1998) hypothesized that good quality leader-member exchange would be positively correlated to the level of leader delegation. They found that from the perspective of both the subordinate and the supervisor, the quality of the leader-member exchange was significantly related to delegation. As well, the researchers found that the resulting delegation resulted in increased performance and job satisfaction. This study will add to this body of research by investigating the relationship between the various styles of leadership as defined by the relative presence or absence of task and relationship-oriented behaviors and the quality of the relationship between the follower and the leader as perceived by the follower.

3. Situational Leadership- Various leadership styles

Situational Leadership, originally introduced by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) as the life-cycle theory of leadership, is a direct contrast to the average leadership style (ALS) approach to leadership research. Average leadership style is an example of a leader-oriented approach to leadership studies. ALS identifies the style of leadership in which the leader is most comfortable and finds most effective in most situations. Situational leadership, in contrast, is a more follower-oriented approach. The model is based on the leader's reading of the readiness level of the follower and his/her leadership response to that assessment (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001; Avery & Ryan, 2002; Yukl, 2002).

The styles of leadership identified in the Situational Leadership Model are similar to those identified in the Blake and Mouton (1964) Managerial Grid. Hersey, The Situational Leadership model employs the task-oriented and relations-oriented behaviors addressed above to establish four distinct leadership styles. The first style, labeled S1, involves relatively high levels of task-oriented behavior and relatively low levels of relationship behaviors. Style Two (S2) is demonstrated by relatively high levels of both leadership behaviors. The next style (S3) has high levels of relationship behaviors but lower levels of task behaviors. Finally, Style Four (S4) involves relatively low levels of both leadership behaviors (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). The authors posit that the effectiveness of leadership is a function of accurately reading the ability and willingness, or confidence, of the follower to complete the assigned task and responding with the appropriate leadership behavior.

Situational Leadership Style One (S1) is the model's identification for leadership behaviors that demonstrate a higher than average level of task-orientation and a lower than average level of relationship-orientation. The principal term utilized to identify this style of leadership is "telling." Other concepts that are expressed in style S1 are directing, commanding, guiding, or controlling. Leaders closely supervise subordinates and provide specific and unambiguous instructions. Decisions in S1 are made by the leader with little or no input from the subordinate (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Leadership Style Two (S2) is a representation of leadership behaviors that employ above-average levels of task and relationship behaviors. The model identifies this style of leadership as "selling." While task-oriented behaviors have not been significantly reduced, relationship-oriented behaviors have been increased. Ultimately leaders still make the decisions, but subordinates are given explanation and clarification for why the decisions have been made. A higher level of dialog is present in S2 as opposed to S1 (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001).

Style Three (S3) is featured by continued higher than average levels of relationship-oriented behaviors and reduced levels of task-oriented behavior. Appropriately, the model refers to this style of leadership as "participating." Decisions are made jointly by leaders and followers or by the followers with the support of the leader. Leader behavior is dominated by high-levels of dialog with the followers, active listening and supportive encouragement (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001).

Style Four (S4) in the model is referred to as "delegating," and demonstrates lower than average levels of both task and relationship-oriented behaviors by the leader. Other terms used to describe this style are "observing" and "monitoring." Followers make the decisions. Leaders provide monitoring and feedback, as needed (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001).

Allison, Armstrong, and Hayes (2001) investigated the relationship between the cognitive styles of leaders and members in dyadic relationships. The authors' study suggests that if the cognitive style of the leader is stable, as numerous studies have indicated (Messick, 1976; Kogan, 1980; Robertson, 1985; Kirton, 1989), consideration of the match or mismatch of cognitive styles is important in the allocation of leaders to subordinates.

Specifically, the study suggested that allocating analytical subordinates to intuitive leaders "may create relatively warm, amiable relationships" (p.215). An undesirable relationship may result from the assigning of intuitive subordinates to analytical leaders. The research question in the current investigation also seeks to determine if specific leader behaviors defined by the relative presence or absence of task and relationship-oriented behaviors result in greater or lesser perceived levels of resonance with the leader on the part of the follower.

The Allison, Armstrong, and Hayes (2001) study further discusses the implications of the authors' investigation of the changeability of cognitive styles as has been suggested in other research (Agor, 1989; Allison & Hayes, 1996). Based upon this assumption, if "cognitive style is malleable, it may be possible for leaders to learn flexibility of style through training, and adopt an approach appropriate to the subordinate with whom they are dealing" (Allison, Armstrong, & Hayes, p. 215). The findings of the study were actually contrary to the expectations of the authors. The study indicated that a mismatch of cognitive style in the dyad may actually be beneficial to the leader-member relationship. As well, the study also suggests that the nature of the subordinate's task may also be a factor in determining the most appropriate leader style to maximize management effectiveness. This study offers additional support to the concept of contingent leadership theory.

Bauer and Green (1996) studied the relationship between the LMX development and a number of situational variables over time, including personality similarity, member performance, leader delegation and gender. All of the above listed factors, save gender, were found to be related to the quality of the leader-member dyadic relationship. The factors most relevant to this current investigation are member performance and leader delegation. The Bauer and Green (1996) study suggested that in the early stages of the dyadic relationship, leaders might employ "increased levels of delegation as a reward for performance already delivered by the member. Delegation is more likely to occur after a leader is assured, or trusts, that the subordinate can perform at a high level" (p.1560). The study discovered that the magnitude of the relationships between member performance, leader delegation and the LMX relationship diminished over the term of the investigation.

Few investigations have studied the relationships between various leadership behaviors and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship between a leader and a follower. One study supported a direct relationship between the perceived LMX relationship and two leader behaviors. The study concluded that followers identifying the LMX relationship to be high also perceived the level of coordination and participative leadership behaviors of the leader to be high. The researchers further reported data suggesting that subordinates perceiving lower LMX relationships with their supervisors perceived significant levels of coordination behaviors but not participative behaviors (Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2003).

4. Research Design and Methodology

Save for the above mentioned study by Yrle, Hartman, and Galle (2003), few studies have addressed the relationship between leadership styles and the LMX relationship between a follower and a leader. This investigation will examine this relationship utilizing the four leadership styles from the Situational Leadership Model (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001) as the independent variables and the LMX relationship as the dependent variables. As this relationship has not been extensively addressed in prior studies, this aspect of the study will provide new data toward the understanding of the potential effects of leadership attempts on leader-subordinate relationships.

The Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) LEAD-Other instrument will be utilized to measure the four styles. Some investigations have questioned the robustness of the prescriptive aspects of the Situational Leadership model (Graeff, 1983). Other researchers have suggested varied levels of support for some aspects of the conclusions of the model (Goodson, McGee, & Cashman, 1989). For the purposes of this investigation, the prescriptive nature of the Situational Leadership model will not be utilized. Rather, the LEAD-Other survey instrument (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001) will be employed to describe the styles of leadership, as demonstrated in Figure 1, from the perspective of a subordinate or other person with a relationship to the leader.

The leader-member exchange, (LMX) relationship, investigated in this study is a representation of the dyadic relationship that exists between a leader and a subordinate. For this investigation, the LMX-7 (Scandura & Graen, 1984) scale will be utilized to measure the quality of the relationship from the perspective of the subordinate. The LMX relationship is most commonly identified as a low-quality, out-group relationship or a high-quality, in-group relationship. On occasion, a third, middle group has also been identified (Graen & Liden, 1980). In this study, the LMX relationship will be addressed as low or high quality.

4.1 Validity and Reliability

A measurement model was performed to test the discriminant validity and reliability of two of the scales employed in this investigation. The nature of the LEAD-Other scale does not allow for standard testing of validity and reliability. The Center has accumulated and analyzed LEAD data gathered from more than twenty thousand leadership dyads (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Upon evaluation of the initial measurement model representing the LMX-7 scale, it was determined that LMX question three should be eliminated. Removal of the item strengthened the validity of the model. Table one below presents the standardized loadings, the reliability, and the measurement error for each of the items retained in the final model. In addition, the composite construct reliability for the LMX-7 scale is presented.

Table 1: Measurement Scale Standardized Loading, Item Reliability, Measurement Errors and Composite Construct Reliability

Scale	Item	Standardized Loading	Item Reliability	Measurement Error	Composite Construct Reliability
LMX-7	LMX-Q1	0.67	0.4489	0.5511	
	LMX-Q2	0.73	0.5329	0.4671	
	LMX-Q4	0.79	0.6241	0.3759	
	LMX-Q5	0.74	0.5476	0.4524	
	LMX-Q6	0.82	0.6724	0.3276	
	LMX-Q7	0.85	0.7225	0.2775	
LMX Total					0.896169679

The measurement model reliability analysis revealed a composite construct reliability score for the six-item leader-member exchange scale of .896. The reliability is consistent with the Chronbach's Alpha computed for the seven-item scale used in the pilot study data of .8867 and the Chronbach's Alpha for the seven-item scale reported by Scandura and Graen (1984) of .86.

4.2 Sample

The sample group in this study will be full-time employed, non-traditional students. For the purposes of this investigation, a full-time employed non-traditional student is defined as a student in an accredited undergraduate or graduate degree program, on campus or online, who is also gainfully employed on a full-time basis for a for-profit, not-for-profit, or governmental institution or organization. Permission was acquired from a total of thirteen professors and/or administrators of colleges and universities in three states. A total of seven institutions of higher learning, including community colleges and undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral universities and colleges were utilized in the study. Of the two hundred valid surveys gathered in this study, forty-five (22.5%) samples were gathered from students in online classes. The remaining one-hundred fifty-five (78.5%) surveys were collected in traditional face-to-face classes by the researcher. The sample represents a relatively diverse sample of employees in a wide variety of dyadic-relationships. Demographic information regarding the individual participant and the participant's employer was obtained from the sample.

Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) recommend a sample size of one hundred to two hundred be used when structural equation modeling is utilized for data analysis. The authors propose that two hundred is the "critical sample size" for SEM analysis except in cases of abnormally large or complex models or when the data exhibits "nonnormal characteristics." As recommended, a sample size of two-hundred will be employed in this investigation. This sample should serve as a representative of leaders and subordinates in a diverse variety of leadership scenarios.

Table 2: Gender Data

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Female	84	42
Male	116	58
Total	200	100

Table 3: Education Data

Education	Frequency	Percent
High School	26	13
Associate Degree	33	16.5
Bachelor Degree	93	46.5
Master Degree	42	21
Doctoral Degree	6	3
Total	200	100

Table 4: Industry Data

Industry	Frequency	Percent
Manufacturing	44	21.5
Service	65	31.7
Information Technology	11	5.5
Agriculture	1	.5
Arts and Entertainment	3	1.5
Education	29	14.5
Healthcare	29	14.5
Government	11	5.5
Non-Profit	7	3.5
Total	200	100

Table 5: Job Level Data

Job Level	Frequency	Percent
Unskilled Labor	5	2.6
Skilled Labor	53	27.3
Low Management	61	31.4
Middle Management	48	24.7
Upper Management	16	8.2
Executive	11	5.7
Total	194	100

Table 6: Descriptive Data

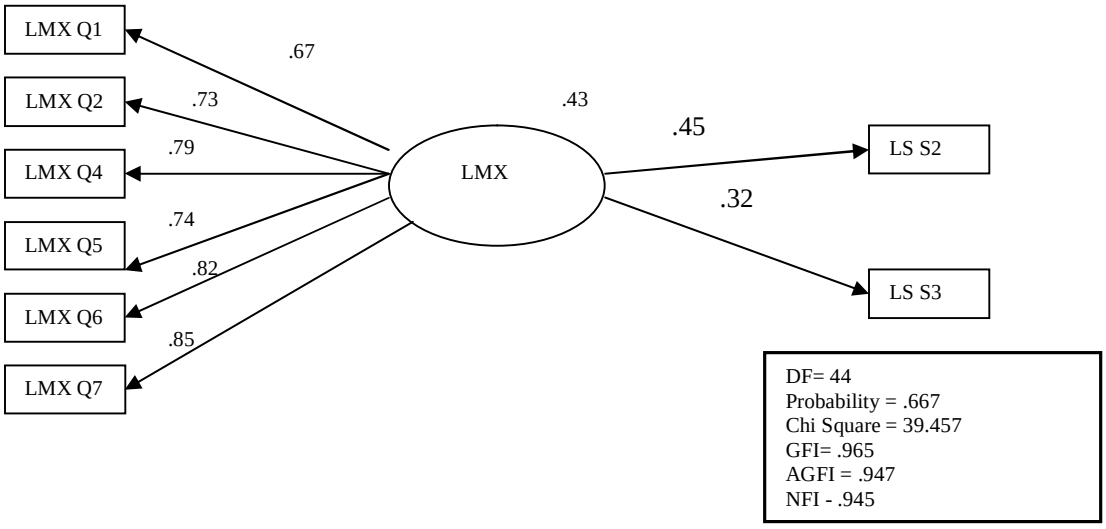
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	199	19	60	35.27	9.722
Job Tenure	199	1	30	5.45	5.269
Employee	195	4	500000	9795.33	43102.611

5. Data Analysis

AMOS structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to analyze the data in this investigation. An initial theoretical model based upon the posited relationships of the latent variables for LMX and the four leadership styles evaluated in this study was developed.

The model was evaluated utilizing SEM resulting in a final model which best fit the data gathered in this study. This final model is presented in Figure Two below. The model suggests that for the sample tested in this investigation, approximately 43% of the leader-member exchange variable is explained by the two leadership styles.

Figure 2: Final Model Based on Structural Equation Modeling Analyses with Standardized Regression Weights



5.1 Hypotheses Testing

The following is a presentation of the outcomes of the hypotheses testing resulting from the structural equation analyses of the data gathered in this investigation. Hypotheses one and four were eliminated from the final model during the goodness-of-fit analysis. Therefore, the null hypotheses are accepted. The data in this investigation give no support for a statistically significant relationship between the variables represented in these hypotheses. Therefore, this investigation gives no support to a significant relationship between leadership style S1, defined as a relatively high task-orientation and a relatively low relationship-orientation or leadership style S4, defined as a relatively low task-orientation and a relatively low relationship-orientation and the quality of the LMX relationship as perceived by the follower. The fact that both of the leadership styles rejected in the evaluation of the model (S1 and S4) represent a relatively low level of relationship-oriented behavior may account for the lack of a significant link to the LMX relationship. This will be further addressed in the conclusion of the study.

Table 7: Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Link	t-value	Estimate of p-value	Determination
H1	Leadership Styles S1 to LMX	n/a	n/a	Eliminated in model goodness-of-fit analysis, Accept Null
H2	Leadership Styles S2 to LMX	6.004	<.005**	Statistically significant Reject Null
H3	Leadership Styles S3 to LMX	6.758	<.005***	Statistically significant Reject Null
H4	Leadership Styles S4 to LMX	n/a	n/a	Eliminated in model goodness-of-fit analysis, Accept Null

Chi-square =39.457
Degrees of freedom = 44
Probability level = 0.667

Critical values, one-tailed test
t-value greater than 1.684, significant at .05 p-value level*
t-value greater than 2.423, significant at .01 p-value level**

The two remaining hypotheses were found to have significance in this investigation. The analysis of the data gives support for hypothesis two indicating a significant positive relationship between leadership style S2, representing a relatively high level of both relationship-oriented and task-oriented behavior, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship from the perspective of the subordinate. The support of this hypothesis is consistent with the hypothetical model proposed in this investigation and with the literature relevant to leader-member exchange and situational leadership. As well the analysis of the data gives support for hypothesis three suggesting a significant positive relationship between leadership style S3, representing a relatively high level of relationship-oriented behavior and a relatively low level of task-oriented behavior, and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship from the perspective of the subordinate.

The support of this hypothesis is consistent with the hypothetical model proposed in this investigation and with the literature relevant to leader-member exchange and situational leadership.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The analysis of the data gives support for the hypothesis of a significant positive relationship between leadership styles S2 (high task and high relationship-orientation) and S3 (low task and high-relationship-orientation) and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship from the perspective of the subordinate. The support of these hypotheses is consistent with the hypothetical model proposed in this investigation and with the literature relevant to leader-member exchange and situational leadership. As discussed earlier in this investigation, a study by Yrle, Hartman, and Galle (2003) addressed the relationship between two leadership behaviors, coordinating behavior and participative behavior, and the quality of the LMX relationship as perceived by the subordinate. The authors concluded that participative behaviors were positively related to the level of the LMX relationship. Participants reporting a high quality LMX relationship reported high perceived levels of participative behaviors and vice versa. The study's finding on the relationship of coordination behavior and LMX was more complex. Participants perceiving both low and high quality relationships perceived high levels of coordinating behavior.

In the current investigation, leadership styles S2 (high task, high relationship) and S3 (low task, high relationship) which represent relatively high levels of both relationship-oriented behavior (participative) and task-oriented behavior (coordinating) and high relationship, low task-orientation respectively, were found to have significant positive relationships with the subordinate's perceived quality of LMX. Leadership style S1, which represents a high task and low relationship-orientation, was found to not have a significant positive relationship with LMX. As well, leadership style S4, which represents a relatively low level of both behavior orientations, was not found to have a significant positive relationship with the quality of the LMX in the perception of the follower. This mixed result is similar to the Yrle, Hartman, and Galle (2003) finding. This investigation would suggest that relationship-oriented leadership practices only or evenly tempered with task-oriented behavior can have a significant positive direct effect on the quality of the LMX and indirect effect on subordinate goal commitment. On the other hand, this study suggests that task-oriented behavior, if not sufficiently balanced with relationship-oriented behavior, will not have a significant positive impact on the quality of the LMX or subordinate goal commitment.

Two limitations to this study were discovered in this investigation. First, in the structural equation modeling process of testing the theoretical model posited in this study, two of the leadership styles, S1 and S4, were eliminated from the model. The four leadership styles in the Situational Leadership Model (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001) each represent the presence and/or absence of task and relationship-oriented behaviors. This dual-behavior aspect of the four leadership styles appeared to result in multicollinearities between the leadership styles variable and limited the effectiveness of the variables in the SEM testing of the theoretical model.

Second, a primary limitation to this study relates to the nature of the LEAD-Other scale (Hersey & Blanchard, 1974) as applied in this analysis. Although the resulting model successfully achieved satisfactory levels of goodness-of-fit and probability, the forced response and categorical evaluative nature of the survey limited its usefulness in this investigation as the data collected from this survey did not present as clear a discrimination of four leadership styles as predicted. Future studies of these concepts could address the concept of leadership from a leadership behavior, rather than a leadership style perspective. The leadership styles addressed in this study were addressed as the combined presence and absence of task and relationship-oriented behaviors. The combination of behaviors in each style may have complicated the construct to a level that resulted in a less than optimal outcome.

A replication study utilizing an instrument that parses task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and possibly other behaviors into individual constructs, could provide for greater understanding of the influence of leadership activities on the other concepts addressed in this study. This investigation was able to provide support to the relationship between two styles of leadership, as identified by the presence or absence of task and/or relationship-oriented behaviors and the quality of the LMX relationship as perceived by the subordinate. As discussed in the hypotheses testing section above, leadership styles S2 and S3 were found to be positively linked to the quality of the LMX as reported by the follower. This finding gives further support to previous studies (Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2003; Dugan, Uhl-Bien, & Duchon, 2002) that have attempted to examine this relationship. Two implications can be inferred from this information.

First, both leadership style S2 (Selling) and S3 (Participating) represent a relatively high level of relationship-oriented leadership behavior. Therefore, this information could suggest, as did Yrle, Hartman, and Galle (2003), that leadership attempts that involve higher levels of participation and consideration are linked to higher quality LMX relationships, and those lacking these elements may lead to lower quality LMX dyads. As suggested above, this study would give support to the hypothesis that relationship-oriented behaviors alone or well-balanced with task-oriented behaviors can positively affect a subordinate's perception of the quality or maturity of the dyadic relationship between herself or himself and her/his leader. Secondly, this investigation suggests that task-oriented behavior, if not well tempered with relationship-oriented behavior, does not have the same positive result on the subordinate's perceived quality of LMX. This information provides further information to leadership practitioners regarding the effective use of task and relationship-oriented behavior in developing a high-quality relationship with subordinates.

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