

THE EFFECTS OF STEREOTYPICAL COMMUNICATION ON THE PERCEPTION
OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR FOR MALE AND FEMALE LEADERS

A THESIS

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By

Toni L. Willis

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the present study was to investigate how affiliative and agentic styles of communication affect the perception of leadership behavior (initiating structure and consideration) for male and female leaders. One hundred and thirty students from SUNY New Paltz participated in this study. Four scenarios, each containing the description of either a male or female leader using an affiliative or an agentic style of communication were developed for this study. The Initiating Structure and Consideration subscales from the LBDQ XII were administered to measure perception of leadership behavior. A 2x2 MANOVA was used to analyze the effects of gender and communication styles on the perception of consideration and initiating structure behaviors for described leaders. There was a main effect found for both gender and communication style on the perception of initiating structure behaviors. Additionally, a main effect for communication style and an interaction between communication and leader gender was found for consideration behaviors. These results demonstrate the way in which implicit prototypes and stereotypes generate expectancies that contribute to the overestimation and underestimation of leadership behavior for both male and female leaders.

THE EFFECTS OF STEREOTYPICAL COMMUNICATION ON THE PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR FOR MALE AND FEMALE LEADERS

While there has been little evidence found for male superiority in leadership, perceptual biases still affect female leaders (Forsyth, Heiney, & Wright; 1997; Heilman, Block, & Martel, 1995). Social role theory and Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) suggest that such biases in perception originate from a discrepancy between stereotypes surrounding women and implicit prototypes of leaders (Forsyth et al., 1997). Derived from Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT), implicit prototypes are schematic templates developed from an individual's past experience that influences the perception and expectations of a leader (Lord & Maher, 1990; Phillips & Lord, 1986). As such, it has been found that leaders who display characteristics that match observer implicit prototypes are evaluated more favorably than leaders who violate observers' prototypes (Nye & Forsyth, 1991). It has also been purported that implicit leadership prototypes are influenced by the perceived roles that men traditionally occupy (Eagly, 1987; Heilman et al, 1995). Such masculine influenced roles and expectations for leaders are nevertheless incongruent with role expectancies for women (Eagly & Karau, 2002). While the incongruence of implicit prototypes and role expectancies appear to generate a discrepancy between actual and perceived behaviors exhibited by female leaders, congruence of these components may also affect the perception of male leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Forsyth et al, 1997; Heilman, 1991).

Furthermore, since communication is integral to leadership, one of the most powerful stereotypes for both male and female leaders may be the expectation of them to use certain styles of communication (Baker, 1991). Essentially, women are expected to

use relational or affiliative styles of communication (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman, 1991). Men, in contrast are expected to express themselves in a more independent or agentic manner (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman, 1991). As research on social roles suggests, agentic styles of communication are not only perceived as masculine, but are also congruent with leadership prototypes (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman, 1991). Implicit prototypes and role expectancies in essence affect the perception of communication style for male and female leaders. Therefore, the goal of the present study is to investigate how stereotypical communication, specifically affiliative and agentic styles, affect the perception of leadership behavior (particularly employee relations and task-orientation) for male and female leaders.

Perception of Leadership Behavior

Forsyth, Heiney, and Wright (1997) suggest that it is observer perception, not actual behavior that creates biased evaluations for leaders. In this manner, the Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) posits that the evaluation of leadership behavior is not an objective process (Rush, Thomas, & Lord, 1977). Regardless of a leader's actual behavior, the observers constructed perception influences how a leader will be evaluated (Rush et al, 1977). For example, Rush et al (1977) found that limited information of a leader yielded the same results on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire Form XII (LBDQ XII) as studies that used full descriptions of leaders (e.g. Schriesheim & Stogdill, 1975). Rush et al (1977) found that observers essentially projected attributes onto the managers about whom they were given limited information. In limited information scenarios, effects of actual behaviors are reduced, thus allowing individual

perceptions of leaders to emerge (Lord & Maher, 1990; Rush et al 1977). These results demonstrate that observer perception significantly affects the evaluation of a leader's actual behavior. Since perception is not necessarily congruent with actual behavior, leaders are vulnerable to biased evaluations.

Influences on the Perception of Leadership Behavior

Leadership Prototypes

As components of perception, implicit leadership prototypes affect the way leader behavior is perceived. Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) asserts that prototypes are schematic templates developed from observers past experience and socialization, which in turn influences the perception of a leader (Lord & Maher, 1990; Phillips & Lord, 1986). This theory suggests that observers have their own Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT's) that are individual prototypes used to characterize leaders through perceived traits and abilities (Lord & Maher, 1990; Phillips & Lord, 1986). In the basic cognitive process, observers develop general traits to distinguish and categorize leaders in various contexts (Lord & Maher, 1990). Observers, in turn, encode these traits and give them personal meaning (Lord & Maher, 1990). Common attributes and traits are then grouped together to form leadership prototypes (Lord, DeVader, Alliger, 1986). The prototypes that emerge from the encoding process then influence future expectations of leader behavior (Phillips & Lord, 1986). Observers' cognitive categories are then used as templates, which are compared to the characteristics and traits expressed or exhibited by a leader (Lord et al., 1986). Thus, the evaluation of leadership stems from the traits and characteristics that an observer believes a leader should possess, rather than the actual behaviors that a leader exhibits.

The masculine influence of leadership prototypes.

Since men have historically held leadership positions, prototype development is inherently influenced by masculine characteristics (Forsyth et al., 1997). This influence leads one to believe that the traits and characteristics necessary for successful leaders are masculine in nature (Brenner & Greenhaus, 1979; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). Indeed, research suggests that leadership is positively related to the masculine traits of being unemotional, definitive and aggressive (Lord et al, 1986). Because Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT's) are essentially categorization schemas that help individuals simplify complex behaviors, the basic traits and characteristics used to classify leaders are generally masculine (Nye & Forsyth, 1991; Lord, Foti, & DeVader, 1984; Phillips & Lord, 1986). Fundamentally, this supports the belief that leaders are typically male and should exhibit masculine typed behaviors. The masculine nature of leadership prototypes therefore may play a decisive role in the formation of impressions for leaders (Forsyth et al, 1997; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). Impressions of leaders are then generated through an automatic analysis of a match between leadership prototypes and the expressed characteristics of a specific leader (Lord & Maher, 1990; Lord et al, 1984; Lord et al, 1986). It is this automatic analysis of prototypes, using masculine characteristics that may be distorting the perception of behavior for both male and female leaders (Lord & Maher, 1990; Lord et al, 1984; Lord et al, 1986).

During the automatic analysis, if a leader's behavior matches an individual's prototype or cognitive schema of an ideal leader, which is most often masculine, congruence occurs between perception of behavior and actual leadership behavior (Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Forsyth et al., 1997; Lord et al, 1984; Phillips & Lord, 1986). For

example, if a male leader exhibits dominance, which is considered both a typical masculine and leadership characteristic, there will most likely be congruence between the implicit prototype and perception of behavior (Lord & Maher, 1990; Lord et al, 1986). When constructed prototypes and actual leader behavior are discrepant, however, incongruence occurs between perceptions of behavior and actual behavior (Phillips & Lord, 1986; Lord et al, 1984). The discrepancy between implicit prototypes and actual leader behavior may lead observers to underestimate such behaviors for female leaders (Forsyth et al, 1997; Phillips & Lord, 1986). As such, the masculine influence on implicit prototypes often generates a greater discrepancy between how female leaders are perceived and their actual behavior (Forsyth et al, 1997; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). Therefore, regardless of the actual behavior female leaders' exhibit, the perception of such behavior is often based on these historically masculine influenced prototypes (Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Forsyth et al. 1997). It is apparent that these constructed prototypes, along with other expectancies, may skew the perception of actual leadership behavior for both male and female leaders.

Social Role Expectancies

A second component that substantially influences the perception of leadership behavior is the social role expectancies that arise from gender stereotypes (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, 1987; Forsyth et al, 1997; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). Research suggests that biased perceptions for female leaders result from the discrepancy between what is expected of them as leaders (implicit prototypes) and their ascribed roles as women (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, 1987; Forsyth et al, 1997). The expectancy of stereotyped behaviors has been defined as gender role spillover or the

way in which people expect others to behave in traditionally stereotypical ways (Baker 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003)). For example, professional women are expected to reflect behaviors of traditional feminine stereotypes (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heliman et al., 1995; Heilman, 2001). Unlike the perception of masculinity, traditional feminine stereotypes are in contrast to the constructed prototypes for leaders (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Heilman et al, 1995; Heilman, 2001). These stereotypical expectations essentially create double binds for females in the workplace. On one hand, professional women are expected to possess the masculine characteristics of leaders, yet on the other they are expected to maintain their traditional feminine qualities.

Social role expectancies in the workplace.

What are the social role behaviors expected of males and females in the workplace? Common stereotypical “masculine” and “feminine” styles in the workplace were investigated by Holmes and Stubbe (2003). Through extensive research, Holmes and Stubbe (2003) generated a list of widely cited perceived stereotypes and role expectancies of men and women in the workplace. Similar to other findings, predominant expectancies for men were perceived to be direct, confrontational, competitive, autonomous, interruptive, task or goal oriented and publicly dominant (Cecil, Paul, & Olins, 1973; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). Such expectancies for men are comparable to the masculine influenced prototypes ascribed to leaders (Baker, 1991; Heilman et al, 1995). In contrast, perceived expectancies for women were found to be indirect, conciliatory, facilitative, collaborative, relational, emotional, and publicly submissive (Cecil et al, 1973; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). Additional pertinent stereotypes for women that have been cited by other researchers include the

expectation of females to be warm, supportive, and friendly (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman et al., 1995; Heilman, 2001). Such stereotypical characteristics for women are again incongruent with the masculine expectancies of implicit leadership prototypes. Consequently, like leadership prototypes, role expectancies may be contributing to the discrepancy between the perception of behaviors and actual behaviors for both male and female leaders.

Consequences of Leadership Perception

How Perception Inhibits Female Leaders

As explained above, the discrepancy between implicit prototypes (characteristics that an observer believes a leader should possess) and social role expectancies affect the perception of behavior for female leaders. It has been found that when leadership behavior and performance information is held constant, women receive lower ratings and fewer promotions than men (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman et al, 1995). Thus, even when women are behaving and performing at the same level as their male counterparts they are not being perceived as equally competent. Again, this supports the idea that perception of behavior supersedes how female leaders are actually behaving or performing. Research by Heilman et al (1995) found that female managers are perceived as deficient in exhibiting a need for power, self-confidence, expressing dominance, being aggressive, displaying competitiveness, and in overall leadership ability. Because these characteristics are typically attributed to males and male leaders, when women display them, observers underestimate their actual behavior (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman et al, 1995). This suggests that perception of behavior intertwines with and at times supersedes actual leadership behavior that is exhibited by female leaders (Lord &

Maher, 1990; Lord et al, 1986). Consequently, the masculine influence of implicit prototypes, along with role expectancies for women may lead to an underestimation of leadership behaviors for females. This relationship is demonstrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Underestimation of leadership behavior for female leaders. Past research suggests a positive (+) relationship between these variables. Past research suggests a negative (-) relationship between these variables (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Forsyth et al., 1997; Heilman et al, 1995).

What about Male Leaders?

While research suggests that stereotypes and social role expectancies influence the perception of behavior for female leaders, how do these components affect male leaders? Perhaps if observers are underestimating actual behaviors for female leaders, they are overestimating behaviors exhibited by male leaders. Supporting this assertion, research performed by Forsyth et al (1997) found that when men and women convey equally dominant behaviors, males are consistently perceived as more dominant than females. Additional research suggests that task-orientation is another leadership characteristic that is often overestimated for male leaders (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Tannen, 1994; Thimme et al, 2003). Although men are frequently viewed as being more task-driven than women, it has been found that such behavior does not actually differ between the sexes (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). In other words, while female leaders equally emphasize tasks, they are not perceived as exhibiting this quality as frequently as men are (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Thus, it is the perception and expectations of task-orientation for both

men and women, not their actual behavior that fuels such evaluations. With such research findings it is important to ask the question, are these behaviors actually being exhibited by male leaders or are they just gender expectancies that observers' project onto them? The mere fact that males have historically and overwhelmingly held leadership positions may be influencing the perception of behavior for men, even when such behavior is not being exhibited (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Therefore, similar to female leaders, perception of behavior as compared to actual behavior for males could be misjudged by observers (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990; Nye & Forsyth, 1991; Rush et al 1977). As the incongruence between role expectancies and implicit prototypes for women may promote a perception of behavior that is underestimated, the congruency of these components (implicit prototypes and role expectancies) could be generating an overestimation or exaggeration of the perception of such behaviors for male leaders (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990; Nye & Forsyth, 1991; Rush et al 1977). The relationship between these variables is illustrated in Figure 2.

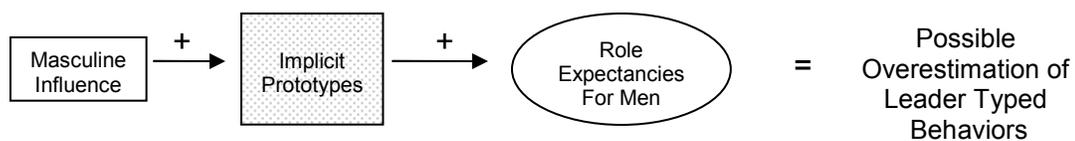


Figure 2. Overestimation of leadership behavior for male leaders. Past research suggests a positive (+) relationship between these variables (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Forsyth et al., 1997; Heilman et al, 1995).

Stereotyped Communication and Perception of Leader Behaviors

The underestimation and overestimation of perception for leadership behaviors may be augmented by the style of communication that a leader employs (See Figure 3). Thus, one of the most inhibiting stereotypes for male and female leaders may be the

expectation of them to use certain styles of communication (Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 1994). In essence, constructed leadership prototypes and stereotypes contribute to the perception and expectancy of gendered types of communication for male and female leaders (Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 1994). Accordingly, gender research indicates that men and women in the workplace are perceived as employing different styles of communication (Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 2003, Koch, & Schey, 2003; Tannen, 1994). As discussed earlier, perceived stereotypical feminine styles of communication are frequently described as affiliative and masculine styles viewed as agentic. Like other aspects of leadership behavior, masculine styles of communication are influenced by constructed leadership prototypes (Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 2003). Although communication is an important element of leadership, past research has failed to address how beliefs about stereotypical communication, specifically agentic and affiliative styles, influence the perception of leadership. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to understand how affiliative and agentic communication affects the perception of leadership behavior, in particular, task orientation and employee relations, for male and female leaders. Figure 3 illustrates the possible effects of implicit prototypes and stereotyped communication on the perception of leadership behavior.

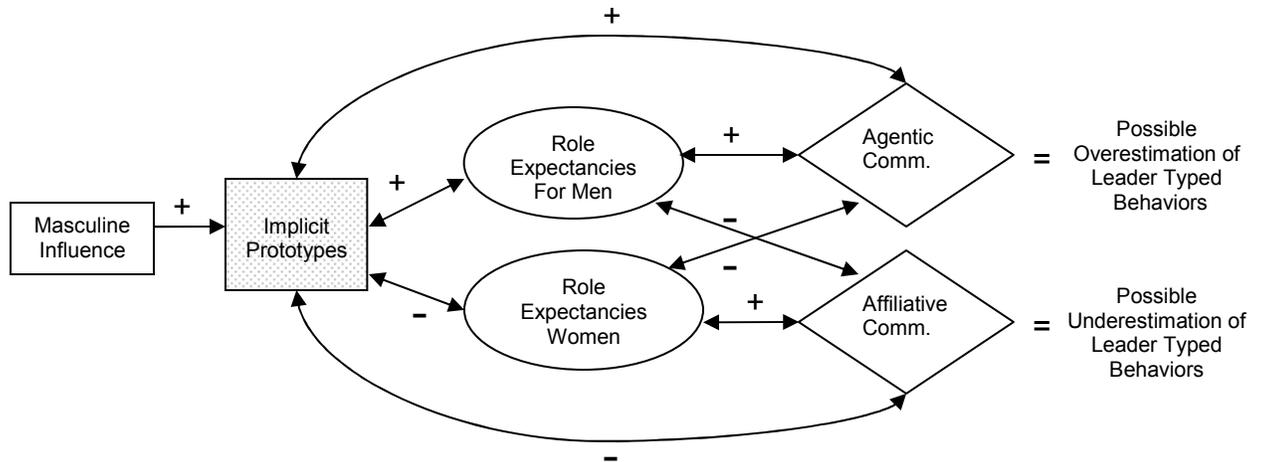


Figure 3. The effects of implicit prototypes and stereotyped communication on leader typed behavior. Past research suggests a positive (+) relationship between these variables. As the number of positive (+) relationships increase, research suggests an increase in the perception of leadership behavior. Past research also suggests a negative (-) relationship between these variables. Increase in negative (-) relationships appears to result in a decrease or underestimation of perceived leader typed behavior (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Forsyth et al., 1997; Heilman et al, 1995).

Affiliative Communication

Characteristics of Affiliative Communication

Affiliative styles of communication are often described as analogous with feminine rhetoric or women’s talk (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003). As deemed appropriate for women, affiliative communication supports interpersonal connections and a sense of collaboration (Carli, 2001; Tannen, 1995).

Affiliative styles of communication are also seen as indirect, polite, and supportive forms of expression (Baker, 1991; Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman, 2001; Thimm et al, 2003). Emerging from its relational nature, one aspect of affiliative communication is the frequent use of the word “we” when addressing others (Carli, 2001; Tannen, 1995).

The use of “we” in affiliative communication reflects the collaborative and egalitarian nature of this type of communication (Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Tannen, 1995). While the use of “we” demonstrates employee support, it is also perceived as exhibiting a lack of

confidence (Tannen, 1995). Using “we” reduces self-promotion and therefore defers ideas and credit to others. Thus, individuals who frequently use “we” instead of “I” are often perceived as not taking credit or responsibility for ideas (Tannen, 1995).

Another component of affiliative communication is indirectness. Prompting input from others, instead of specifically providing directions for tasks is a prominent non-directive characteristic of this style of communication (Tannen, 1994). Indirectness has been defined as a face-saving strategy (Thimm et al, 2003). Face saving strategies are described as exhibiting an inhibition to take sole ownership or responsibility for an expression of communication (Thimm et al, 2003). Face saving strategies include the use of verbal softeners, politeness, and conditional phrases (Thimm et al, 2003).

Interestingly, although such face saving strategies are perceived as being representative of powerlessness and a lack of confidence, they are fundamental and necessary components of human communication (Tannen 1994, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003).

Essentially, the indirectness of affiliative communication reduces the perception of status differences between an individual and a group (Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Tannen, 1995).

Such a reduction in status between a leader and his or her subordinates creates a more cohesive work environment, which in turn increases team orientation and employee satisfaction (Fisher & Neslon, 1996; Petty & Miles, 1976).

A third component of affiliative communication is the use of questions and hedges. Although asking pertinent questions is a practice often used by effective leaders, it may affect the perception of power and confidence (Tannen, 1994; 1995; Thimm et al, 2003). A leader who asks too many questions may be viewed as uninformed or ignorant (Tannen, 1994; 1995; Thimm et al, 2003). Furthermore, tag questions, a specific style of

questioning, are frequently used in affiliative communication (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). Tag questions are questions that elicit the input of others after a statement has been made (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). An example of a tag question would be, “It is a beautiful day, isn’t it?” Due to the indecisive nature of tag questions, they tend to reduce the perception of power and competence for leaders (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). Similarly, hedges are often used in affiliative styles of expression, and are viewed as being indecisive and unsure (Baker, 1991; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). Hedges are verbal softeners in which tentative speech is used. “Perhaps” and “somehow” are illustrations of hedges (Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 2003). Again, hedges promote a perception of uncertainty that is viewed less favorably than more dominant forms of speech (Thimm et al, 2003). In sum, although affiliative communication is team oriented, leaders using such a style are perceived as less powerful than those who express themselves in a more agentic manner (Baker, 1991; Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003).

Affiliativeness and Female Leaders

The perceived communal and relational nature of affiliative communication makes it an acceptable form of expression for professional women (Baker, 1991; Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003; Ridgeway, 2001). An alignment between feminine traits and affiliativeness creates an expectancy of this style of communication for women in the workplace (Baker, 1991; Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003; Ridgeway, 2001). As such, affiliative styles have been found to increase the likeability for women who otherwise employ agentic and/or instrumental leadership styles (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Female leaders, nevertheless, are often rejected for being overly “feminine” when they use

excessive affiliative communication (Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003). While the characteristics of assertive or agentic forms of communication violate social expectations for women, females leaders who employ affiliative styles are often perceived as being too soft or incompetent (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996). In essence, when professional women are overly affiliative, they are perceived as failing to exhibit enough agentic characteristics to be successful leaders (Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003). Unlike women, it has been found that men can essentially employ any style of communication without penalty, including the use of the more “feminine” or affiliative styles (Carli, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Thimm et al., 2003). Therefore, even though women leaders must monitor how “affiliative” they are in the workplace, men are able to speak freely without any repercussions.

Women’s preference for affiliative communication

Baker’s (1991) meta analysis suggests that women are more likely than men to employ affiliative styles of communication in the workplace. Research shows that professional women prefer to be indirect, and thus commonly use more hedges and tag questions than men do (Baker, 1991 Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). Women utilize such face saving tactics to preserve relationships and promote equality through communication (Baker, 1991; Tannen, 1995; Thimme et al, 2003). Because it is an acceptable expressive style for their perceived social roles and status positions, women are more comfortable than men using an indirect or affiliative style of communication (Tannen, 1994; 1995; Eagly, 1987). Men, on the other hand, often perceive indirectness as a sign of weakness, which places them in a lower status position and then forces them to relinquish power to their peers (Carli & Eagly, 2003; Tannen, 1995). While the

affiliative communication commonly employed by women promotes team building, it unfortunately tends to reduce the perception of power and competence for female leaders engaging in such practice (Thimm et al, 2003). Thus, professional women may be hindering themselves through this preferred style of communication.

The effects of affiliative communication

Fundamentally, when indirect styles of expression are used, such as affiliative communication, it reduces the ability to “hold the floor” (Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). By holding the floor, an individual commands the attention of others in a group without interruption (Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). The egalitarian nature of affiliative communication, nonetheless, with tactics such as tag questions and hedges allow for frequent interruptions and thus loss of floor holding. Because of the time allotted to speak, leaders who are able to hold the floor are also given increased recognition and credit for their ideas (Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003).

Perception of competence is then directly related to the amount of time a leader speaks within a group (Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). Consequently, there is a fine line between the essential communal and relational aspects of affiliative communication and its detrimental effects on leadership perception. In comparison to the agentic styles that support self-promotion and task orientation, the relational nature of affiliative styles tends to reduce the image of power, self-confidence, and assuredness for leaders (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Agentic Communication

Characteristics of agentic communication

As affiliativeness has been deemed a characteristic of feminine rhetoric, agentic communication has been perceived as a stereotypical male form of expression (Baker, 1991; Heilman, 2001). Similar to other gender stereotypes, agentic communication is an expected style of communication for men. Agentic styles of communication are defined as direct, authoritative, self-promoting, instrumental and interpersonally dominant (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996). The characteristics that contribute to agentic communication have also been found to be super-ordinate traits that influence leadership prototypes, and thus the perception of leadership behavior (Lord et al, 1986). Therefore, stereotypes and leadership prototypes make agentic communication an acceptable and expected form of communication for male, but not female leaders.

Two of the most prominent characteristics of agentic communication are independence and self-promotion. Independence and self-promotion are often reflected in agentic communication through the frequent use of the word “I” (Tannen, 1995). Using “I” essentially promotes a sense of confidence and authority, which are characteristics often ascribed to leaders (Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003). Credit and responsibility for ideas are also frequently given to individuals who use “I” (Tannen, 1995). Thus, a leader who uses “I” as compared to “we” will more likely receive credit for his or her ideas. When leaders express themselves in “I” versus “we”, it also promotes a level of knowledge, skill, and ability. The use of “I”, consequently, elicits the perception of dominance and decisiveness, characteristics often interrelated with masculinity and leadership (Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003).

Another component of agentic communication is directness. Being direct is exhibiting authority and dominance, in which communication is presented in a straightforward and commanding manner (Mathison, 2001; Tannen, 1994). This characteristic is often referred to as a power strategy used to demonstrate leadership competence (Carli, 2001; Mathison, 2001; Thimm et al, 2003). As a power strategy, directness encompasses task-orientation, which is an aspect integral to agentic communication (Tannen, 1994; Baker, 1991; Thimm et al, 2003). Task-orientation is expressed through an emphasis on rule regulation and production (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996). Placing an importance on job completion and assigning employees to specific tasks are characteristics often exhibited by leaders who emphasize task-orientation. Verbally, a leader who is task-oriented will provide subordinates with precise and detailed instructions on how to complete an assignment. Leaders who communicate in a task-oriented manner ultimately give little leeway for employee suggestions or feedback.

The Perception of Agentic women.

Assertiveness has historically been coupled with the perception of leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). As described, agency is viewed as a behavior often used by males and male leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Heilman, 2001). Agentic types of communication, alternately, contradict role expectancies for women (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fisher & Nelson, 1996; Heilman, 2001). When women use agentic types of behavior, it increases the discrepancy between leadership prototypes and social role expectancies (Nicotera & Rancer, 1994; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). As a result, of this discrepancy,

women are often perceived negatively (not likeable) when they use more direct styles of communication (Geller & Hobfoll, 1993; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). Research has found that women who use direct or agentic styles of communication are continuously perceived in a more negative manner than men who use the same style of communication (Baker, 1991; Geller & Hobfoll, 1993; Mathison, 2001; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). In fact, research has found that assertive women are often seen as being verbally aggressive (Geller & Hobfoll, 1993; Mathison, 2001). As a result, unlike men, women must use a carefully blended style of communication, one that is agentic enough to be perceived as a competent leader, yet not too dominant as to deviate from their stereotypical feminine image. It is thus apparent that the expectancy of gender typed communication for male and female leaders may precipitate incongruence between actual communication and the perception of leadership behavior.

Congruency between Leadership Communication and Behavior

Like social role expectancies, the congruency between implicit leadership prototypes and stereotyped communication affect how leaders are perceived. In other words, when leadership prototypes match the style of communication expressed it increases the congruency between actual and perceived behaviors for a leader (Forsyth et al, 1997). Incongruence of implicit leadership prototypes and communication styles, on the other hand, generates a discrepancy between perceived and actual behavior (Forsyth et al, 1997). Congruency, however, is dependent on the behavior exhibited by a leader and its similarity to the communication expressed. What are commonly expected behaviors for leaders? It has been suggested that employee relations and task orientation are two of the most essential behaviors for successful leadership (Forsyth et al, 1997;

Yukl, 1989). These behaviors have often been described in leadership research as corresponding with consideration and initiating structure behaviors (Lord et al, 1986).

Consideration and Initiating Structure Behaviors

The Ohio Leadership studies divided leadership behavior into two major dimensions, initiating structure and consideration (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1989). Leaders who are high in initiate structure behaviors tend to focus primarily on productivity and task orientation (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Stogdill, 1974; Schriesheim & Stogdill, 1975). Characteristics of initiating structure behaviors include criticizing poor work, emphasizing deadlines, assigning tasks, measuring definite standards of performance, enforcing standard procedures, directing activities for employees, and measuring subordinate work capacity (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Yukl, 1989). Initiating structure behavior has also been positively related to the perception of leadership status (Fleishman & Harris, 1962). Consideration leadership behaviors, on the other hand, embraces support, comfort, and a concern for the well-being of subordinates (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Schriesheim & Stogdill, 1975; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1989). Specifically, leaders strong in consideration behaviors generally welcome, respect, and support subordinate ideas (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Stogdill, 1975; Yukl, 1989). Consideration leaders also build a strong rapport with subordinates, back-up their decisions, and treat them as equals (Stogdill, 1975; Yukl, 1989). Not only are initiating structure and consideration essential behaviors exhibited and expected by leaders, their alignment with masculinity and femininity have made them the focal point of past research (Yukl, 1989).

Gender Differences in Consideration and Initiating Structure Behaviors

The leadership behaviors of consideration and initiating structure can be viewed as analogous to the affiliative and agentic styles of communication often attributed to male and female leaders. Thus, the relational nature of consideration behaviors supports an affiliative style of communication. The communal characteristics of consideration behaviors also align with gender roles for women (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Studies investigating the evaluation of gender and stereotypical differences in consideration and initiating structure found that women leaders are perceived as exhibiting much higher levels of consideration than male leaders are (Day & Stogdill, 1972; Petty & Miles, 1976). Accordingly, female managers in leadership positions are perceived as exhibiting consideration behaviors significantly more than male managers are (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Hall, Workman, & Marchioro, 1998). Female managers who exhibit greater amounts of consideration behaviors are also viewed as more likeable by subordinates (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Hall, Workman, & Marchioro, 1998; Kenis, 1978). The likeability for females who exhibit consideration behaviors can be seen as a result of the perceptual congruence between actual behaviors and role expectancies for female leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This congruence may actually increase the perception of consideration behaviors for female leaders when they use affiliative communication.

Moreover, the direct and task-oriented nature of initiating structure behaviors reflects an agentic style of communication. Initiating structure behaviors are also analogous with the dominant aspects of leadership prototypes and perceived gender role expectancies for men. The characteristics that make up initiating structure behaviors have been largely perceived as qualities associated with masculinity (Forsyth et al, 1997; Nye

& Forsyth, 1991; Lord et al, 1986). Resembling the relationship between women and consideration, male leaders are perceived as exhibiting significantly higher levels of initiating structure behaviors than female leaders are (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972). Research also suggests that subordinates favor initiating structure behaviors for male as compared to female leaders (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Hall et al, 1998; Kenis, 1978). In this way, employees prefer male leaders to exhibit initiating structure over consideration behaviors (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Hall et al, 1998). Essentially, the alignment of implicit leadership prototypes and communicative expectancies for male leaders generates a congruency between agentic communication and the perception of initiating structure behaviors. This congruency may lead to an increase in perceived initiating structure behaviors for male leaders when they use an agentic style of communication.

Past research also suggests that leader gender along with subordinate perception of initiating structure and consideration behaviors affect workplace evaluations. Specifically, the sex of a leader in conjunction with his or her perceived level of consideration and/or initiating structure behaviors have been found to influence subordinate satisfaction (Bartol & Wortman, 1995; Petty & Miles, 1976). Research performed by Petty and Miles (1976) found that female leader consideration has a greater positive effect on subordinate satisfaction than male leader consideration. Employees in Petty and Miles (1976) study were more satisfied with their job when they had a female supervisor who exhibited greater levels of consideration behaviors. In contrast, male leaders exhibiting higher levels of initiating structure behaviors elicited greater subordinate satisfaction over female leaders who were perceived high in this behavior

(Petty & Miles, 1976). Again, congruence between perception of expectancies and behavior yielded increased levels of employee satisfaction. Thus, masculine and feminine role expectancies that match consideration and initiating structure behavior, respectively, influenced subordinate perception of overall employee satisfaction (Bartol & Wortman, 1995). As a result, subordinates are more satisfied with their work environment when their supervisor displays behavior consistent with their gender role expectations.

The Goal of the Present Study

It is the goal of the present study is to investigate whether the perception of leadership behavior (consideration and initiating structure) for male and female leaders is affected by stereotypical (affiliative and agentic) communication. Particularly, how does stereotypical and non-stereotypical communication employed by male and female leaders affect the perception of initiating structure or consideration behavior? As discussed earlier, implicit prototypes and gender role expectancies may have a significant influence on the perception of leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman, 2001). Therefore, perhaps the congruence or incongruence between implicit leadership prototypes, role expectancies, and communication increases or decreases the perceived levels of gender typed behavior for male and female leaders. It is expected that stereotypical masculine (agentic) and feminine (affiliative) communication will essentially affect the perception of consideration and initiating structure behaviors for male and female leaders.

Research Questions

Initiating Structure Subscale

1. Does agentic as compared to affiliative communication increase the perception of initiating structure behaviors for leaders?

2. Does gender affect the perception of initiating structure behaviors?
3. Does stereotyped communication (affiliative and agentic) affect the perception of initiating structure behaviors differently for male and female leaders?

Consideration Subscale

1. Does affiliative as compared to agentic communication increase the perception of consideration behaviors for leaders?
2. Does gender affect the perception of consideration behaviors?
3. Does stereotyped communication (affiliative and agentic) affect the perception of the likelihood of consideration behaviors differently for male and female leaders?

METHOD

Subjects and Procedure

One hundred and thirty students and professional staff, 103 female and 27 male, from the State University of New York at New Paltz participated in this study. Of the subjects who took part in this research 93 were Caucasian, six were Latino, three were Jewish, three were Asian, two were African American, 12 were of other descent and 11 did not state their ethnicity. The age of subjects ranged from 18 to 54, with an average age of 23. Subjects were recruited through a campus wide e-mail. The e-mail contained information about the purpose of the study and a link to, PsychData, an on-line data collection website. PsychData is an encrypted site, which is designed for research purposes that protects the anonymity of subjects' data. Conditions were randomly assigned as part of the survey design set up.

Once at the web page, subjects were presented with an informed consent, brief overview of the study, and instructions on how to proceed. Next, one of the four randomized scenarios appeared. After reading the assigned scenarios, subjects completed the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire XII (LBDQ XII) Initiating Structure and Consideration subscales. As a manipulation check, individuals were also asked to rate the level of affiliativeness and agency for leaders described in each scenario. Additional questions regarding perceived competence, likelihood of promotion, and estimated yearly salary were also asked.

Scenarios

Four short scenarios, describing an interaction between a leader and his or her subordinates and supervisor were developed for this study (see Appendix A). The target individual in each scenario was described as employing either an agentic or an affiliative style of communication. One male leader and one female leader were described as using an affiliative style of communication and the other male and female leader were described as using an agentic style of communication. Besides differences in communication styles, the only other variation in scenarios was the gender of the leader (Goldberg, 1968). Overall and as previously described, affiliative and agentic styles of communication have been purposely chosen to reflect communicative issues that affect the perception of female leaders today.

Measures

LBDQ XII: Consideration and Initiating Structure Subscales

The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire Form XII (LBDQ XII) was used to measure the perception of leadership in this study (Stogdill, 1963). The Leadership

Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) is a measure that emerged from the original Ohio State leadership studies performed in the 1950's (Yukl, 1989). While the LBDQ was originally thought to measure behavior, Rush et al's (1977) study revealed that evaluations of leaders are strongly related to individual prototypes constructed from the perception of traits. Thus, the LBDQ essentially measures the perception of leadership behavior, not the actual behavior exhibited by a leader (Rush et al, 1977).

While the LBDQ XII contains 12 subscales, only the Initiating Structure and the Consideration scales were used in this study (see Appendix B). The subscales of Initiating Structure and Consideration in the LBDQ XII both contain 10 questions each. On each of these subscales, behavior is assessed on a 5-point scale regarding the perception of frequency for behavior. Frequency of behavior ranges from a high of five the leader "always" displays this behavior to a low of 1 the leader "never" exhibits the described behavior. Additionally, even though Initiating Structure and Consideration are often perceived as dichotomous bi-polar dimensions, leadership behavior can independently range on continuums of high to low on each scale (Yukl, 1989). As a result, a leader could be evaluated as either high or low in both Consideration and Initiating Structure or rated high on one dimension and low on the other.

Furthermore, the LBDQ XII has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of leadership behavior. In research performed by Stogdill (1969), scenarios were created reflecting each subscale description in the LBDQ XII. Stogdill (1969) found the descriptions of leader behaviors were congruent with the coordinating subscales. These results support the validity of the LBDQ XII subscales for measuring their correspondent leadership behaviors. In addition, Schriesheim and Stogdill (1975) factor analyzed three

of the most frequently used leader behavior questionnaires. The questionnaires analyzed in Schriesheim and Stogdill (1975) study included the Supervisor Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ), Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), and the LBDQ XII. Schriesheim and Stogdill (1975) performed this study to identify and extrapolate any possible extraneous variables and questions from these specific leadership questionnaires. Results of this research concluded that the LBDQ and the LBDQ XII are valid and contain significantly less arbitrary questions than the SBDQ (Schriesheim & Stogdill, 1975). Because the LBDQ XII is 50% shorter than the LBDQ, it was the scale chosen to measure leadership behavior for this study.

Leadership Competence, Promotion, and Salary

Questions based on research performed by Koch (2004) regarding perception of competence, likelihood of promotion (and why), and perceived level of yearly salary was also utilized in this study for exploratory purposes. Five-point Likert scales were used to assess the first two items. The last two items were open format. The questions asked were as follows:

1. How likely will the leader be evaluated as a competent person in his or her organization?
2. How likely will the leader be promoted in his or her organization?
3. Why would that be the case?
4. What would you estimate the yearly salary is for this supervisor?

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

To check the validity of communication styles in scenarios, a question regarding subjects' perception of the degree of agency and affiliativeness was included in this study. There was a significant negative correlation observed between agentic and affiliative styles of communication ($r(128) = -.48, p < .01$). A one-way ANOVA performed revealed an overall one-way effect ($F(1,126) = 38.06, p < .01$) in which agentic leaders were perceived significantly higher in agency ($M = 4.37, SD = .79$) than in affiliativeness ($M = 3.09, SD = .92$). There was also a one-way effect for leaders described as using affiliative communication ($F(1,126) = 23.60, p < .01$) in that they were rated significantly higher in affiliativeness ($M = 4.02, SD = .87$) as compared to agency ($M = 2.59, SD = .78$). (Figure 4)

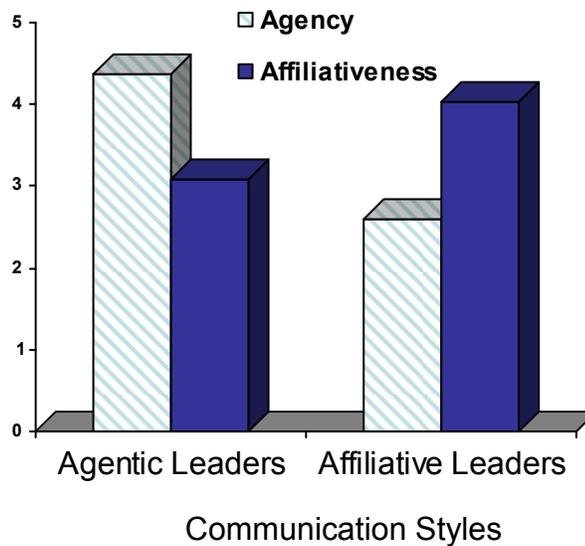


Figure 4: Manipulation check for affiliative and agentic leaders in the perception of affiliativeness and agency.

Initiating Structure Behavior and Consideration Behaviors

The analyses for this study were designed to assess the effects of both gender of a leader and communication style on subject perception of leadership behavior, using the Consideration and Initiating Structure subscales on the LBDQ XII. The multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was comprised of a 2(gender of leader: male vs. female) x 2(communication type: affiliative vs. agentic) between-participants design with the dependent variables being subjects perception of consideration and initiating structure behaviors. Other variables analyzed in this study included perception of competence, promotion, yearly salary, and level of affiliativeness and agency.

Initiating Structure Behavior

Scores were calculated by adding up the answers from the ten questions on the Initiating Structure subscale of the LBDQ XII. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for gender ($F(1,126) = 6.15, p < .05$) and for communication style ($F(1,126) = 86.83, p < .01$) on the Initiating Structure subscale of the LBDQ XII. No interaction, however, was found between these variables ($F(1,126) = .03, ns$). These results are represented in Figure 5.

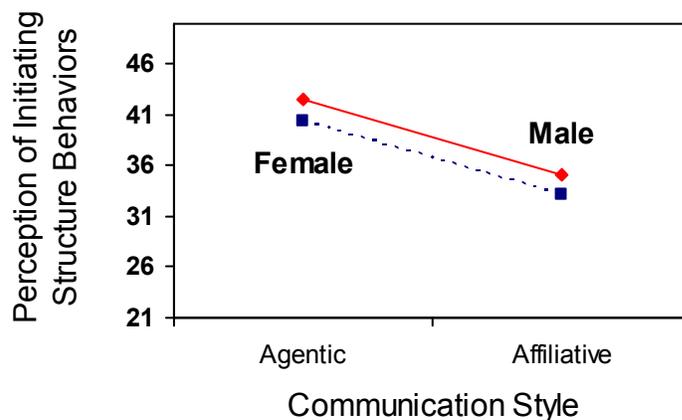


Figure 2. Initiating Structure behaviors for male and female leaders using agentic and affiliative styles of communication.

A post-hoc Tukey test was performed using a one-way ANOVA to assess whether the means across the groups differed. The groups were created as follows: 1. Agentic males, 2. Affiliative males, 3. Agentic females, 4. Affiliative females. The analysis revealed a significant overall one-way effect ($F(1,126) = 30.77, p < .01$) between groups. The Tukey test also revealed that agentic males ($M = 42.47, SD = 3.53$) and agentic females ($M = 40.38, SD = 3.83$) were significantly higher than affiliative males ($M = 35.03, SD = 4.53$) and affiliative females ($M = 33.23, SD = 5.56$) in initiating structure behaviors (See Table 1).

Gender differences

A *t*-test for independent samples was used to analyze gender differences in initiating structure behavior. Overall, Male leaders ($M = 38.63, SD = 5.51$) were perceived as exhibiting significantly higher levels of initiating structure behavior than female leaders ($M = 36.8, SD = 5.95; t(130) = 1.80, p < .05$) were. Agentic male leaders were significantly higher than agentic female leaders ($t(130) = 2.53, p < .05$) in initiating structure behaviors. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Initiating Structure Behaviors

Communication		Gender			<i>t</i>
		Males	Females	Total	
Styles					
Agentic	M	42.47 _a	40.38 _a	41.36	2.25*
	SD	3.53	3.83	3.81	
Affiliative	M	35.03 _b	33.24 _b	34.11	1.43
	SD	4.52	5.56	5.80	
Total	M	38.63	36.80		
	SD	5.51	5.95		

Means with different subscripts are significantly different (based on the Tukey test) at $p < .05$

** $p < .05$*

Consideration Behavior

As with initiating structure, scores were calculated by adding up the answers from the ten questions on the Consideration subscale of the LBDQ XII. Questions 12, 18, and 20 were reversed scored for this subscale. The ANOVA revealed no significant main effect for gender ($F(1,126) = .16, ns$). There was, nevertheless, a main effect for communication style ($F(1,126) = 233.57, p < .01$) and an interaction between gender and communication style ($F(1,126) = 10.06, p < .05$) found on the Consideration subscale of the LBDQ XII. See Figure 6 for results.

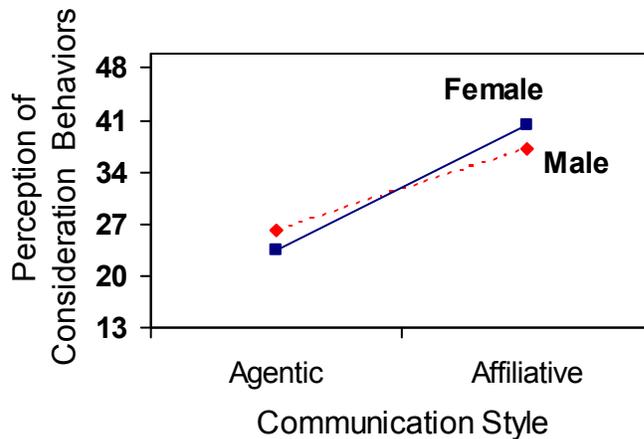


Figure 6. Consideration behaviors for male and female leaders using agentic and affiliative styles of communication.

A post-hoc Tukey test was also performed using a one-way ANOVA to evaluate whether the means across the groups differed for consideration behaviors. The groups were the same as described above. The analysis revealed a significant overall one-way effect ($F(1,126) = 82.91, p < .01$) between groups. The Tukey test showed that affiliative males ($M = 37.09, SD = 7.42$) and affiliative females ($M = 40.35, SD = 4.18$) were significantly higher than agentic males ($M = 26.03, SD = 4.57$) and agentic females ($M = 23.50, SD = 3.96$) in consideration behaviors (See Table 2).

Gender differences

A *t*-test for independent samples was used to analyze gender differences in consideration behavior. Affiliative female leaders were perceived as exhibiting significantly higher levels of consideration behaviors than affiliative male leaders ($t(130) = -2.22, p < .05$) were. In contrast, agentic male leaders were rated significantly higher than agentic female leaders ($t(130) = 2.38, p < .01$) in consideration behaviors. (See Table 2)

Table 2

Consideration Behaviors

Communication		Gender			<i>t</i>
		Males	Females	Total	
Agentic	M	26.03 _a	23.50 _a	24.69	2.38**
	SD	4.57	3.96	4.41	
Affiliative	M	37.09 _b	40.35 _b	38.77	2.22*
	SD	7.41	4.18	6.15	
Total	M	31.74	31.92		
	SD	8.31	9.40		

Means with different subscripts are significantly different (based on the Tukey test) at $p < .05$

*** $p < .01$*

** $p < .05$*

Competence and Promotion

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to assess the relationship between the leadership competence, likelihood of promotion, initiating structure, consideration, yearly salary, and affiliative and agentic communication (Table 3).

Competence

A significant positive correlation was found between leadership competence and initiating structure behaviors ($r(130) = .32, p < .01$). Thus, as the perception of initiating structure behaviors increased for leaders so did the perception of competence. A significant positive correlation was also found between competence and likelihood of promotion ($r(130) = .35, p < .01$). (Table 3)

Promotion

Like competence, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive correlation between the likelihood of promotion and initiating structure behaviors ($r(130) = .26, p < .01$). Essentially initiating structure behaviors are positively related to the perception of the likelihood of being promoted. Furthermore, while the likelihood of promotion was significantly positively correlated with perceived agentic communication ($r(130) = .31, p < .01$) it was negatively correlated with perceived affiliative communication ($r(130) = -.17, p < .05$). As a result, the likelihood of promotion increases when the perception of agentic communication increases, but decreases when perceived affiliative communication increases. (Table 3).

Yearly Salary

Perceived yearly salary for described leaders ranged from \$23,000.00 to \$200,000.00. While not significant, estimated yearly salary for described male leaders ($M = \$69,890.95, SD = \$31,935.69$) was higher than for female leaders ($M = \$64,696.72, SD = \$21,161.54$). Agentic leaders ($M = \$68,836.21, SD = \$22,139.39$) were also seen as making more money than affiliative leaders ($M = \$65,482.80, SD = \$30,909.64$). A significant negative correlation was found between yearly salary ($M = \$67,159.50, SD = \$26,820.33$) and consideration behaviors ($r(130) = -.25, p < .01$). (Table 3)

Table 3

Intercorrelations Between Dependent Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Initiating Structure	---	.47**	.32**	.26*	.54**	-.44**	.11
2. Consideration		---	.13	-.13	-.53**	.71**	-.25**
3. Competence			---	.35**	.12	.04	-.01
4. Likelihood of Promotion				---	.31**	-.17*	.13
5. Agency					---	-.48**	.17
6. Affiliativeness						---	-.16
7. Salary							---

Subjects ($n=130$) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

The Perception of Initiating Structure Behaviors

Male Leaders

The current results suggest that agentic and affiliative communication influences the perception of initiating structure behaviors for male leaders. As such, descriptions of agentic male leaders in this study were perceived as exhibiting the greatest likelihood for initiating structure behaviors. This outcome supports the postulation that implicit leadership prototypes and role expectancies affect the perception of leadership behavior for men (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990) (Figure 7). Because there are role expectations for male leaders to use agentic communication and act in directive ways, the perception of initiating structured behaviors may actually be anticipated by observers (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990). Anticipation of initiating structure behaviors for male leaders then increases the perception of likelihood for such behaviors. These results are in line with research performed by Ritter and Yoder (2004) in which dominant behaviors were found to be projected onto male leaders, even when such behaviors were

not being exhibited. Due to the projection of behaviors, less dominant males in Ritter and Yoder's (2004) study were actually chosen as leaders over females that were more dominant. Thus, attributions of leadership behaviors were granted to male over female leaders, regardless of the behavior that they exhibited. In accordance with Ritter and Yoder's (2004) study, the present research shows how the possible influence of implicit leadership prototypes along with agentic communication increases the expectancy of initiating structure behaviors for male leaders. An illustration of this relationship is represented in figure 7.

Female Leaders

When holding communication constant, female leaders in this study were perceived as exhibiting significantly less initiating structure behaviors than male leaders. This outcome may be the result of a discrepancy between leadership prototypes and social role expectancies for women (See Figure 7). Thus, the direct and task-oriented nature of initiating structure behavior is inconsistent with social role expectancies for women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Because initiating structure behaviors are not expected, observers may actually have underestimated these behaviors for female leaders in this study. This outcome is consistent with Heilman et al's (1995) research in which leadership characteristics for female leaders were consistently and significantly underestimated. As with the current results, Heilman et al found (1995) that even when all other variables are held constant, women are perceived as being deficient in prominent leadership behaviors. Since initiating structure behaviors are also deemed parallel to leadership status, the underestimation of these behaviors for women may inhibit them in certain occupational environments (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Furthermore, although agentic female leaders were perceived as exhibiting significantly less initiating structure behaviors than agentic male leaders, they were also significantly higher than both male and female affiliative leaders in these behaviors. While implicit leadership prototypes are generally incongruent with role expectancies for women, when female leaders use agentic communication it appears to close the gap between perception of behavior and actual behavior. In other words, role expectancies for women potentially decrease when they use communication that is congruent with leadership expectancies (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003). In this manner, Heilman et al (1995) found that the use of directive and dominant behaviors become more acceptable for females when they are depicted or described as leaders. Hence, the use of more directive behaviors, such as agentic styles communication, increases the perception of leadership status for women. Therefore, even though the perception of task-orientation (initiating structure) behavior is significantly underestimated when female leaders as compared to male leaders use agentic styles of communication, role expectancies seem to decrease for women when they use this form of expression (See Figure 7).

Tannen, 1995; Thimm et al, 2003). The association between agentic communication and leadership status appears to increase observer expectations for initiating structure behavior. Alternately and in contrast to agentic styles, affiliative forms of communication appear to be incongruent with both implicit leadership prototypes and initiating structure behaviors. The relational nature of affiliative styles of expression essentially causes a larger gap between leadership communication and the perception of these task-oriented behaviors. Such indirect and communal characteristics that encompass affiliative communication do not coincide with the direct and decisive aspects of initiating structure behaviors. Therefore, when leaders use affiliative communication the perception of likelihood for initiating structure behaviors are reduced.

Perceived Consideration Behaviors

Female Leaders

Affiliative communication.

As with the perception of initiating structure behaviors for agentic males, affiliative female leaders were perceived as possessing the highest frequency of consideration behaviors in this study. This finding can be explained through the possible unification of role expectancies and consideration behaviors, which in turn may generate congruence between actual and perceived behaviors for female leaders. This outcome supports Eagly's (1986) social role theory that women are overwhelmingly expected to express themselves in a communal and relational manner. Primarily the connection between role expectancies and affiliative communication augments perception of consideration behaviors for women (See Figure 8). The increased likelihood of consideration behaviors for affiliative female leaders as compared to male leaders reflects

the strong relationship between role expectancies and perceived behavior for women. In conjunction with the expectancy of such expression, it has also been found that female leaders who exhibit consideration behaviors are evaluated more favorably by their subordinates and co-workers (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Hall, Workman, & Marchioro, 1998; Kenis, 1978). Thus, when female leaders use a style of communication that is congruent with consideration behaviors, they are evaluated in a more positive manner than when they use more dominant styles of communication (Baker, 1991; Heilman et al, 1995). Such favorable evaluations then precipitate increased anticipation for consideration behaviors. These results in effect suggest that consideration behaviors are being overestimated in female leaders who use affiliative styles of communication.

Agentic communication.

An interaction between gender and communication style was additionally found for consideration behaviors in the present study. In particular, there was a significant difference found between agentic female and agentic male leaders in the perception of consideration behaviors. Female leaders in this study described as using agentic communication were perceived as significantly lower in the likelihood of consideration behaviors than agentic males were. Although also significant, the incongruence between agentic and affiliative male leaders was much less than the perceptual gap for females. Therefore, male leaders who express themselves in an agentic manner are seen as being much more relational than female leaders who do. It appears that the influence of role expectancies for women to express themselves in a warm and caring manner, is so ingrained in observer perception that it distorts actual behaviors for female leaders who

use more direct or agentic communication in situations that relational behaviors are expected.

Essentially, the discrepancy between agentic female and male leaders in the perception of consideration behaviors found in this study may be a result of the incongruence between social roles and implicit prototypes (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman et al, 1995). It has been found that stereotypes automatically activate social role expectancies and are amplified by situational cues (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003). Thus, when female leaders use agentic communication (a cue) the perceptions of relational behaviors are greatly reduced (Eagly & Karau, 2000). Supporting these results Heilman et al (1995) found that female leaders who were described as dominant were seen as more hostile than their male counterparts. Therefore, when women use more dominant forms of communication, such as the agentic styles described in this study, they incur labels such as “Dragon lady” or “Battle axe” (Eagly & Karau, 2000). These labels are also inline with Mathison’s (2001) findings in which assertive females were actually perceived as being verbally aggressive. With such strong communal expectancies for women, these labels emerge for female leaders when they express themselves in a more agentic manner. It is this incongruence that may be inhibiting the perception of female leaders in the workplace. Women are essentially placed into an either or situation with the style of communication they use. Female leaders who use agentic communication are seen as being cold and not relational. Alternately when women use affiliative forms of expression they are not seen as decisive or as task orientated as male leaders are.

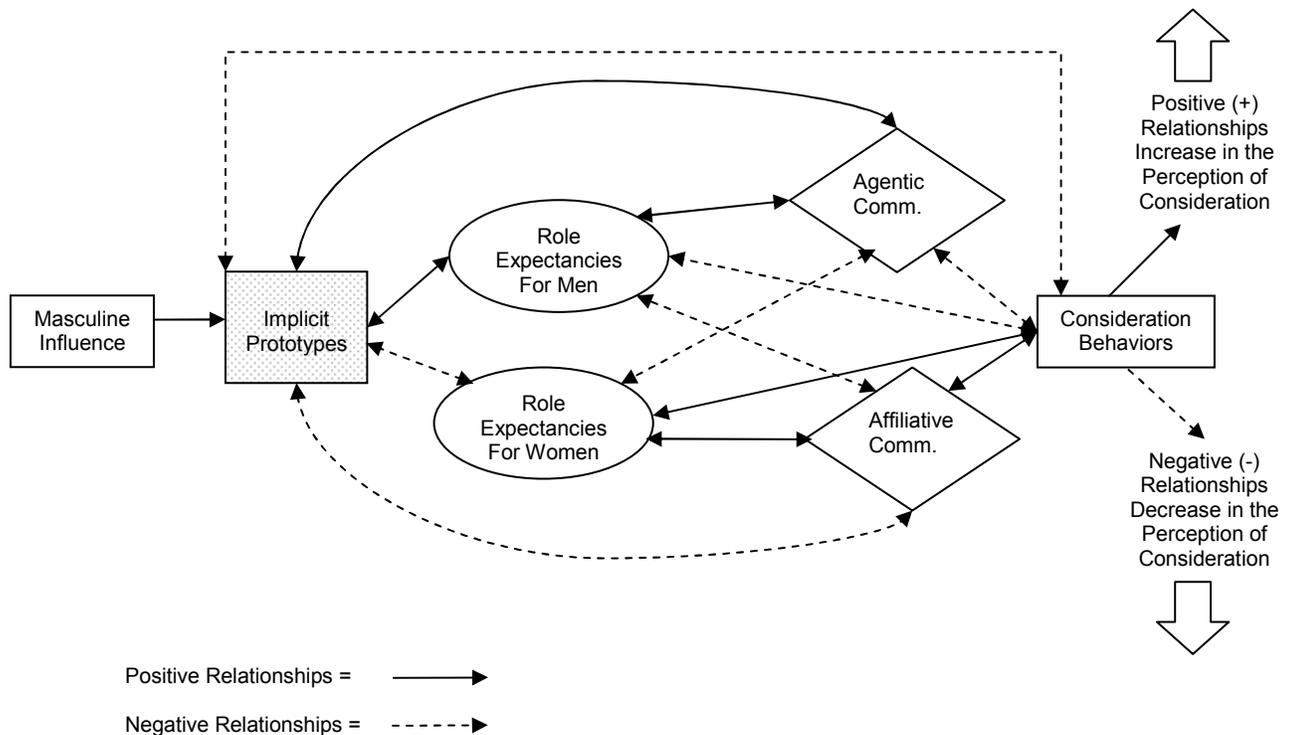


Figure 8. The possible relationships that increase and decrease the perception of consideration behaviors for male and female leaders. Past research suggests that the positive relationship between illustrated variables may increase the perception of consideration behavior. Thus, as the number of positive relationships increase, the perception of consideration behavior appears to increase. A negative relationship between variables, on the other hand, appears to decrease the perception of consideration behavior. When negative relationships increase, it seems to result in a decrease or underestimation of perceived consideration behavior (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Forsyth et al., 1997; Heilman et al, 1995).

Agentic Versus Affiliative Communication Style

In addition to the interaction between gender and communication, there was an overall main effect found for communication in consideration behaviors for this study. Leaders described as using agentic communication were significantly lower in the perception of consideration behaviors than affiliative leaders were. Thus, not only are women affected by the use of agentic communication in the perception of consideration behaviors, but so are male leaders. It appears that the impact of using agentic communication is much more debilitating to the perception of consideration behaviors than the way in which affiliative communication affects initiating structure behaviors.

Consequently, when a leader uses agentic communication, the perceptions of relational or consideration behaviors are significantly reduced.

Why does agentic communication decrease the perception of consideration or relational behaviors? Perhaps, agentic leaders in this study were evaluated lowest in consideration behaviors because this style of communication may automatically activate implicit leadership prototypes. Implicit leadership prototypes in effect could potentially increase the expectancy of leaders to display more task-oriented as opposed to relational behaviors. It has been suggested that the directness and task-orientation of initiating structure behaviors are analogous with the perception of leadership status (Brenner & Greenhaus, 1979; Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990). Therefore, the closer the communication style is to one's implicit prototypes of a leader the increased congruency between the perception of communication and behavior. Agentic communication could essentially activate implicit leadership prototypes that contribute to the increased perception of likelihood for initiating structure, but not for consideration behaviors. As such, when leaders use agentic communication, observers are expecting them to exhibit initiating structure not consideration behavior. These expectations may then lead to a significant underestimation of consideration behaviors for agentic leaders.

The Perception of Competence and Promotion

Initiating Structure

Being closely related to masculine typed expectancies, initiating structure behaviors were also found to be positively correlated with leadership competence and the likelihood of promotion in this study. Leaders higher in initiating structure behaviors were seen as more competent and more likely to be promoted. Initiating structure

behaviors have been found to be characteristics often ascribed to successful leaders (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990). This outcome supports past research that has found that leadership behavior such as task-orientation, dominance, and decisiveness increases the perception of competence and ability for leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Heilman et al, 1995). As a result, initiating structure behaviors appears to be more congruent with implicit leadership prototypes and therefore lead to more favorable evaluations for leaders who are perceived as using such behaviors.

Agentic Communication

As with initiating structure behaviors, agentic leaders in this study were also seen as being more likely to be promoted than affiliative leaders. Similar to initiating structure behaviors, agentic expression is seen as a prominently masculine style of communication, which is also parallel with the perception of successful leaders (Forsyth et al, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1990). Yet again, the influence of implicit leadership prototypes, masculine influenced expectancies, and agentic communication may have actually generated a greater likelihood of perceived achievement for leaders in this study. Therefore, such communication is not only an expected style of expression for leaders, but also constructs a perception of ability to progress within an organization. In this way, agentic styles of communication have often been described as power and influencing strategies used by leaders (Carli, 2001; Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). These styles of communication allow for floor holding, in which leaders receive recognition and credit for their ideas (Bradac & Mulic, 1984; Thimm et al, 2003). The direct and self-focused nature of agentic communication essentially generates a perception of the likelihood for promotion and advancement within an organization.

Affiliative Communication

In contrast to agentic communication, a negative correlation was found between affiliative communication and the likelihood of promotion in this study. These results support the assertion that affiliative communication is a depowering strategy (Baker, 1991). A depowering strategy is defined as a behavior that conveys powerlessness and an inability to self-promote, which in turn decreases the perception of effectiveness for a leader (Baker, 1991). As explained earlier, even though the egalitarian nature of affiliative communication supports a cohesive work environment, it lessens the perception of authority and assuredness for leaders (Baker, 1991). Supported by the current research, the indirectness of affiliative communication leads to the perception of indecisiveness, lack of confidence, and powerlessness that ultimately reduces leadership status and thus the likelihood for promotion (Baker 1991; Tannen, 1994). Although research in the field endorses an increased immersion and importance of this style of communication, it may actually be inhibiting the perception of skills and abilities necessary for leaders to advance within their organization (Fisher & Nelson, 1996).

Applying this Research

How does the outcome of this study contribute to the understanding of the way in which female leaders encounter discrimination in the workplace? Depending on the occupation, expectancies of either initiating structure or consideration behaviors are emphasized for leaders in particular fields. For example, it has been found that initiating structure behaviors are expected from leaders who are employed in more masculine typed occupations (Forsyth et al, 1997; Stogdill, 1963). Amongst many others, professions dominated by males include law enforcement, politics, and the military. According to the

outcome of this study, male leaders may have an advantage over female leaders in these types of professions. Regardless of style of communication, male leaders were found to be consistently higher than female leaders in the perception of initiating structure behaviors. Since women are perceived as exhibiting less initiating structure behavior than men, female leaders are not receiving the same amount of credit for these behaviors as their male colleagues are within these types of organizations. Recognition for initiating structure behaviors, consequently, may be giving male leaders an advantage over female leaders for upward mobility within masculine types of professions or organizations.

Unlike masculine occupations, affiliative female leaders have an advantage over affiliative male leaders in feminine professions. As with initiating structure, consideration behaviors are expected from leaders who work in feminine typed occupations. Leaders who are employed in such professions as early childhood education, nursing, and social work have been found to use higher levels of consideration behaviors (Forsyth et al, 1997; Stogdill, 1963). Expectancies of affiliative women to exhibit greater levels of consideration behaviors produce a possible advantage for them over affiliative male leaders in these types of professions. This finding supports the increased number of female supervisors and administrators in more feminine as compared to masculine occupations (Baker, 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2003). In contrast to affiliative communication, when female leaders use agentic styles of expression they may be considerably disadvantaged in feminine types of professions. The results of the current research suggest that perceptions of relational behavior for female leaders significantly diminish when they use agentic styles of communication. Thus, the reduced perception of relational behaviors for a female leader who expresses herself in a direct or agentic

manner may actually hinder opportunities for advancement within a more feminine type of occupation. Paradoxically, male leaders in feminine professions who use agentic styles of communication are seen as being more relational than agentic female leaders. In effect, male leaders are able to use agentic styles communication and still be perceived as somewhat relational in feminine types of occupations. This finding reveals how styles of communication perpetuate the double standards that women, even in feminine occupations, encounter as leaders.

Future Research

While this study investigated the perception of initiating structure and consideration behaviors in conjunction with agentic and affiliative communication styles for male and female leaders, it failed to take into account the possible influence of individual observer characteristics. The relatively small number of male as compared to female participants in this study is not an accurate depiction of workplace demographics, especially for upper management. A greater number of female observers may have skewed the results of this study. In fact, research has found that women tend to hold other women to higher degrees of role expectancies (Eagly, 1987; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). Thus, female observers have a greater expectancy of gender behaviors for women leaders than male observers do. Greater role expectancies may have contributed to the overestimation of consideration and an underestimation of initiating structure behaviors for female leaders by female observers. Consequently, to further research in this area, it will be necessary to examine how observer gender affects the perception of behavior when stereotyped communication is employed. Understanding the way in which observer gender affects the perception communication is essential to the magnitude of how female

leaders are being inhibited in the corporate world. As such, it has been found that people prefer styles of communication and behavior similar to their own (Geller & Hobfoll, 1993; Tannen, 1995). These behavioral preferences have been suggested to perpetuate male dominance in the workplace (Geller & Hobfoll, 1993; Tannen, 1995). Therefore, stereotyped communication along with observer gender could essentially be contributing to a preference that hinders the advancement of female leaders.

Beyond preference and to better understand how gender affects the perception of communication, it would also be necessary to perform a study that provides both visual and non-verbal cues that contribute to leadership perception. As a significant visual cue, research shows that biological sex is the first thing observed and encoded during a social interaction (Eagly, 1987). Merely being either a male or a female leader actually influences observer perception of leadership behavior. Feminine and masculine mannerisms may also enhance the expectancy of stereotypical communication and behaviors. For these reasons, research utilizing video clips of leaders employing stereotyped communication in various interpersonal interactions would resolve such issues and greatly contribute to this body of knowledge. Clearly, additional research is needed to fully understand how the discrepancy between leadership prototypes and social role expectancies affect the perception of female leaders. Although the current findings offer compelling insight into how stereotyped communication affects the perception of leadership behavior, additional investigation into this area of research is necessary to completely comprehend the way in which female leaders are being inhibited in the workplace.

Summary

The overall findings in this study suggest that style of communication does indeed influence the perception of behavior for leaders. Gender and communication differences found in this study can be explained through the possible congruence or incongruence between masculine influenced implicit prototypes and role expectancies for both male and female leaders. It is the alignment of communication and role expectancies that may actually lead to the overestimation of initiating structure behaviors for males, and consideration behaviors for females. Incongruence between styles of communication and leadership behaviors, on the other hand, may be the result of a discrepancy between implicit leadership prototypes and social role expectancies. This discrepancy was found to affect female more so than male leaders in this study. Perception of likelihood of behavior was consistently lower for female as compared to male leaders when they were described as employing styles of communication that were incongruent with the evaluated behavior. This outcome suggests that there is a larger gap between actual communication and perceived behaviors for female leaders. As discussed, such a perceptual gap may be a key contributor to the inhibition of female leaders in various occupational environments. Ultimately, the results of this research demonstrate how the possible discrepancies between stereotypical communication, implicit leadership prototypes, and social role expectancies may greatly affect the perception of behaviors for both male and female leaders.

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Appendix A

SCENARIO 1

Steven is a department supervisor at the Foundations Company. The Corporate Director has just assigned Steven's department a large project. Please read the scenario below (the first part describes an interaction between Steven and his employees and the second part describes Steven in a meeting with the Corporate Director). After reading both parts, answer the questions that follow.

Part 1: (Steven tells his employees about the project)

Steven: {Steven walks out onto office where his employees are working} "I need everyone in the conference room right now."

Employees: {Employees head into the conference room}

Steven: "I have just been assigned a large project from the Corporate Director. I will be assigning each of you a specific task for the project. I expect that all of you will have the task I assign you on my desk, completed without mistakes by Friday at 1:00pm."

Part 2 (Steven is in a meeting with the Corporate Director, after the completion of the project)

Corporate Director (Steven's boss): "Steven your department did a great job on the project."

Steven: "Yes, I worked my hardest to see that it was done thoroughly and completed in a timely manner."

Corporate Director: "Well, nice job."

Steven: "Thank you, I feel that my previous experience in this area was beneficial to the success and completion of this project."

SCENARIO 2

Steven is a department supervisor at the Foundations Company. The Corporate Director has just assigned Steven's department a large project. Please read the scenario below (the first part describes an interaction between Steven and his employees and the second part describes Steven in a meeting with the Corporate Director). After reading both parts, answer the questions that follow.

Part 1: (Steven tells his employees about the project)

Steven: {Steven walks out onto office where his employees are working} "Could everyone please come into the conference room after they finish up what they are working on."

Employees: {Employees head into the conference room}

Steven: "We have just been assigned a large project from the Corporate Director. Perhaps we can work together as a team to complete this project. Please let me know what task you would like to work on. We want to try and have it completed by Friday afternoon, ok? Does anyone have any comments or questions?"

Part 2 (Steven is in a meeting with the Corporate Director, after the completion of the project)

Corporate Director (Steven's boss): "Steven your department did a great job on the project."

Steven: "Thank you, my team worked very hard to see that it was done thoroughly and completed in a timely manner."

Corporate Director: "Well, nice job."

Steven: "Thank you, the expertise that several members of my team have in this area seemed to be beneficial to the success and completion of this project."

SCENARIO 3

Susan is a department supervisor at the Foundations Company. The Corporate Director has just assigned Susan's department a large project. Please read the scenario below (the first part describes an interaction between Susan and her employees and the second part describes Susan in a meeting with the Corporate Director). After reading both parts, answer the questions that follow.

Part 1: (Susan tells her employees about the project)

Susan: {Susan walks out onto office where her employees are working} "I need everyone in the conference room right now."

Employees: {Employees head into the conference room}

Susan: "I have just been assigned a large project from the Corporate Director. I will be assigning each of you a specific task for the project. I expect that all of you will have the task I assign you on my desk, completed without mistakes by Friday at 1:00pm."

Part 2 (Susan is in a meeting with the Corporate Director, after the completion of the project)

Corporate Director (Susan's boss): "Susan your department did a great job on the project."

Susan: "Yes, I worked my hardest to see that it was done thoroughly and completed in a timely manner."

Corporate Director: "Well, nice job."

Susan: "Thank you, I feel that my previous experience in this area was beneficial to the success and completion of this project."

SCENARIO 4

Susan is a department supervisor at the Foundations Company. The Corporate Director has just assigned Susan's department a large project. Please read the scenario below (the first part describes an interaction between Susan and her employees and the second part describes Susan in a meeting with the Corporate Director). After reading both parts, answer the questions that follow.

Part 1: (Susan tells her employees about the project)

Susan: {Susan walks out onto office where her employees are working} “Could everyone please come into the conference room after they finish up what they are working on.”

Employees: {Employees head into the conference room}

Susan: “We have just been assigned a large project from the Corporate Director. Perhaps we can work together as a team to complete this project. Please let me know what task you would like to work on. We want to try and have it completed by Friday afternoon, ok? Does anyone have any comments or questions?”

Part 2 (Susan is in a meeting with the Corporate Director, after the completion of the project)

Corporate Director (Susan’s boss): “Susan your department did a great job on the project.”

Susan: “Thank you, my team worked very hard to see that it was done thoroughly and completed in a timely manner.”

Corporate Director: “Well, nice job.”

Susan: “Thank you, the expertise that several members of my team have this area seemed to be beneficial to the success and completion of this project.”

Appendix B

LEADER BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE – Form XII

Originated by staff members of
The Ohio State Leadership Studies
And revised by the Bureau of Business Research
[Revised for the current study]

Purpose of the Questionnaire

On the following pages is a list of items that may be used to describe the behavior of the supervisor depicted above. Each item describes a specific kind of behavior, but does not ask you to judge whether the behavior is desirable or undesirable. Although some items may appear similar, they express differences that are important in the description of leadership. Each item should be considered as a separate description. This is not a test of ability or consistency in making answers. Its only purpose is to make it possible for you to describe, as accurately as you can, the behavior of the supervisor depicted in the above scenario.

Note: The term, “*group*” as employed in the following items, refers to a department, division, or other unit of organization that is supervised by the person being described.

The term, “*members*,” refers to all the people in the unit of organization that is supervised by the person being described.

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Gender _____

Age _____

Ethnicity _____

College major or current profession _____

Part 1: 20 Questions (this part will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete)

DIRECTIONS:

- a. READ each item carefully
- b. THINK about how frequently the leader depicted above may engage in the behavior described by the item.
- c. DECIDE whether the leader depicted above may (A) Always (B) Often (C) Occasionally, (D) Seldom or (E) Never act as described item

A = Always

B = Often

C = Occasionally

D = Seldom

E = Never

** These direction have been modified for this study and will be adjusted for the on-line version of this survey*

1. Steve [Susan] lets group members know what is expected of them A B C D E
2. Steve [Susan] is friendly and approachable A B C D E
3. Steve [Susan] encourages the use of uniform procedures A B C D E
4. Steve [Susan] does little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group. A B C D E
5. Steve [Susan] tries out his/her idea in the group A B C D E
6. Steve [Susan] puts suggestions made by the group into operation. A B C D E

7. Steve [Susan] makes his/her attitudes clear to the group. A B C D E
8. Steve [Susan] treats all group members as his/her equals A B C D E
9. Steve [Susan] decides what shall be done and how it shall be done. A B C D E
10. Steve [Susan] gives advance notice of changes A B C D E
11. Steve [Susan] assigns group members particular tasks. A B C D E
12. Steve [Susan] keeps to himself/herself A B C D E
13. Steve [Susan] makes sure that his/her part in the group is understood by the group members. A B C D E
14. Steve [Susan] looks out for the personal welfare of group members. A B C D E
15. Steve [Susan] schedules the work to be done. A B C D E
16. Steve [Susan] is willing to make changes. A B C D E
17. Steve [Susan] maintains definite standards of performance. A B C D E
18. Steve [Susan] refuses to explain his/her actions. A B C D E
19. Steve [Susan] asks that group members follow standard rules and regulations. A B C D E
20. Steve [Susan] acts without consulting group. A B C D E

Part 2

There are four questions in this part regarding your perception of the leader described in the scenario above. This part will take you approximately 1-3minutes)

- 1. How likely will Steve [Susan] be evaluated as a competent person in his or her organization?
 - a) Very likely
 - b) Likely
 - c) Somewhat likely
 - d) Neither likely or unlikely
 - e) Somewhat unlikely
 - f) Unlikely
 - g) Very unlikely

- 2. How likely will Steve [Susan] be promoted in his or her organization?
 - a) Very likely
 - b) Likely
 - c) Somewhat likely
 - d) Neither likely or unlikely
 - e) Somewhat unlikely
 - f) Unlikely
 - g) Very unlikely

- 3. Why do you feel that it would be likely or unlikely for Steve [Susan] to be promoted?

- 4. What would you estimate Steve [Susan] yearly salary is? \$ _____

LBDQ Form XII- Record Sheet (Revised for current study)

Initiating

Structure: 1 ___ 3 ___ 5 ___ 7 ___ 9 ___ 11 ___ 13 ___ 15 ___ 17 ___ 19 ___ Total

Consideration: 2 ___ 4 ___ 6 ___ 8 ___ 10 ___ 12* ___ 14 ___ 16 ___ 18* ___
20* ___ Total _____

* Starred items are scored A(1) B(2) C(3) D(4) E(5)
All other items are scored A (5) B (4) C (3) D (2) E (1)

