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**EMPOWERED TO LEAD:
PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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ABSTRACT

EMPOWERED TO LEAD: PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This paper examines the relationship between managerial cognitions of empowerment and transformational leadership. Empowerment is hypothesized to be positively related to transformational behaviors including charisma, innovation, and upward influence and negatively related to the monitoring of subordinates, a behavior more consistent with transactional leadership. Examined on a sample of 393 middle managers from a Fortune 50 organization, the hypotheses linking empowerment with transformational behaviors were supported. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

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EMPOWERED TO LEAD: PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of empowerment cognitions on transformational leadership behavior. The motivation for studying the relationship between psychological empowerment and transformational leadership is two-fold. First, as the external environment continues to become more complex with increasing global competition, new organizational forms, and technological change, organizational scholars have recognized the growing need for transformational leadership -- leadership that encourages commitment, risk-taking, and innovation (Drucker, 1988; Kanter, 1989). The general consensus is that amidst a fast changing environment, organizations require more transformational behavior and less transactional behavior (Bass, 1985), more leadership and less management (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 1990; Zaleznik, 1977). While much research has focused on the outcomes of transformational and charismatic leadership (Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987; Conger, 1989a; Hater & Bass, 1988; Howell & Avolio, 1993), we have little understanding of the cognitions that are necessary for managers to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. In fact, Bass (1994) identified the lack of knowledge on the cognitions associated with transformational leadership as a critical void in contemporary leadership research. Through a better understanding of the requisite cognitions for transformational leadership, organizations will be better equipped to effectively select and develop the next generation of individuals able to lead in turbulent environments.

The second key motivation for studying the relationship between cognitions and leadership behavior stems from the emerging literature on empowerment. While organizational researchers (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) and business practitioners (e.g., Block, 1987; Byham, 1988; Kanter, 1989) have focused increasing attention on the role of psychological empowerment in the workplace, we have little understanding of its nomological network, particularly in terms of its behavioral outcomes. More specifically, while we have an increasingly clear picture of what empowerment is (Conger & Kanungo, 1988a; Spreitzer, in press-a; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), we have little knowledge of the leadership behaviors associated with feelings of empowerment. An assumption in much of the literature is that feelings of empowerment stimulate transformational leadership behaviors

(Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Though empowerment may prove to be a critical antecedent of transformational leadership behaviors, to date, virtually no empirical research has explicitly examined the relationship between empowerment and leadership behavior (Conger, 1989b; Keller & Dansereau, 1995).

The basic proposition underlying this research is that cognitions of empowerment will be associated with transformational leadership behaviors. An empowered mindset is believed to undergird change-oriented leadership behavior. The paper is organized as follows. First, we draw on emerging theory on psychological empowerment and various leadership theories to develop a series of hypotheses regarding the relationship between psychological empowerment and certain dimensions of transformational leadership behavior. Next, the research design used to test these hypotheses is described, and results are discussed. Finally, implications of the research for theory and practice are examined, and suggestions are made regarding directions for future research.

A COGNITIVE DEFINITION OF EMPOWERMENT

While notions of empowerment have been implicit in research on alienation (Blauner, 1964; Seeman, 1959), participative management (Lawler, 1988), and job enrichment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), the construct of psychological empowerment has only recently received rigorous conceptualization and operationalization.¹ Building on the work of Conger and Kanungo (1988a), Thomas and Velthouse (1990) define empowerment as intrinsic motivation manifested in four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Each dimension is described below.

Meaning, or purpose, involves a fit between the requirements of one's work role and one's beliefs, values and behaviors (Brief & Nord, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). *Competence*, or self-efficacy

¹ A complementary perspective on empowerment in the organizational studies literature (Conger & Kanungo, 1988a) views empowerment as a set of organizational interventions or managerial practices which involve employees in decision making (Bowen & Lawler, 1992). Because we believe that the psychological mindset of empowerment, rather than empowering organizational practices, will have a more powerful influence on leadership behaviors (Conger & Kanungo, 1988a), we adopt the psychological perspective, rather than the structural perspective, of empowerment for this paper.

specific to one's work, is a belief in one's capability to perform work activities with skill (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is analogous to personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1977). *Self-determination* is a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's actions (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and reflects autonomy over the initiation and continuation of work behavior and processes such as making decisions about work methods, pace, and effort (Bell & Staw, 1989; Spector, 1986). Finally, *impact*, the converse of learned helplessness (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978; Martinko & Gardner, 1982), is the degree to which one can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). Self-determination and impact reflect different perspectives on the notion of control; self-determination is control over self and work, while impact is control over the larger work context. Together, the four dimensions reflect an active, "challenge the status quo" rather than a passive, "don't rock the boat" orientation to one's work role.

In a thematic analysis of the interdisciplinary literature on empowerment in organizational studies, psychology, social work, sociology, and theology, Spreitzer (1992) independently derived these same four cognitions of empowerment. Confirming the validity of this multidimensional conceptualization of empowerment, Spreitzer (in press-a) found that the four dimensions contributed to an overall "gestalt" of psychological empowerment in the workplace. In empirical research, psychological empowerment has been found to be related to effectiveness (Spreitzer, in press-c), job performance, job satisfaction, and reduced stress (Thomas & Tymon, 1994). Because of the active orientation of the empowered individual, we expect that feelings of empowerment will be related to transformational leadership behavior in a workplace context. In the next section of the paper, we expand the nomological net of psychological empowerment in the workplace to examine its relationship to various leadership behaviors.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership emphasizes making changes in the current system for performance beyond expectations; it is contrasted with transactional leadership which emphasizes the maintenance of the status quo for more routine performance (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Where transformational leaders

motivate followers to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group or organization, transactional leaders motivate followers to fulfill basic job requirements by exchanging rewards for services rendered (Bass, 1990a). In spite of these contrasts, Bass (1985) does not consider transformational and transactional leadership to be at opposite ends of a continuum; instead, he suggests that leaders can be both transformational and transactional simultaneously, though to different degrees and intensities. Theoretically and practically, these behaviors may serve multiple and different purposes.

While some theorists (e.g., House, 1977) have identified certain personality traits (such as Machiavellianism) which may be associated with various leadership behaviors, little empirical research has examined the *cognitions* which may be related to transformational leadership (Bass, 1994). Further, Howell and Avolio (1993) suggest that while much research has focused on the outcomes of transformational leadership, less attention has been paid to understanding the cognitions associated with transformational leadership behavior. Cognitions encompass one's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about a given situation (Baron & Byrne, 1991), and therefore have implications for resulting behavior in that situation. Drawing on previous work linking cognition and behavior (e.g., Ajzen, 1980; James & Jones, 1976), we know that how people think and feel about themselves in relation to their environment affects their capacity to act, their behavior, and ultimately how others view them. We argue that an empowered leader (i.e., one who believes s/he possesses the above four dimensions with regard to their tasks or work) will be more transformational because, as Thomas and Velthouse assert, empowered individuals "demonstrate flexibility in controlling their own task accomplishment, initiation of new tasks as problems or opportunities, and resiliency to obstacles, sustaining activity in the face of problems and ambiguity" (1990: 673), all behaviors consistent with transformational leadership. We argue that manifestations of transformational leadership depend significantly on the leader's mindset or cognitive state (Conger & Kanungo, 1988c).

In addition, we argue that each of the four dimensions of psychological empowerment are conducive to transformational leadership behavior. Bass (1985) hypothesized that clear inner direction (consistent with the *meaning* dimension of empowerment) would stimulate transformational behaviors because leaders have a clear mission and purpose. Zaleznik (1977) and Hunt (1991) argued that a high

level of self-confidence or self-efficacy (i.e., *competence*) is a prerequisite for transformational leadership given the inherent risk and uncertainty of challenging the status quo. Finally, Bass (1985) hypothesized that notions of personal control and influence (consistent with the dimensions *self-determination* and *impact*) would be positively associated with transformational leadership. Previous research has also found that leaders who believe they can "influence the direction of organizational events" (consistent with the *impact* dimension of empowerment) are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors than are leaders who believe that events are due to luck, fate, or chance (Howell & Avolio, 1993: 893). Those who believe they can personally influence their work environment have been found to pursue more change-oriented, risky and innovative company strategies and are more capable of dealing with stressful situations (Miller & Toulouse, 1986).

In short, the literature suggests that all four dimensions of empowerment are likely to be positively related to transformational behavior. Specific hypotheses relating psychological empowerment to four sets of leadership behaviors argued to be transformational in nature are developed below. These sets include: (1) charismatic behavior, (2) innovation, (3) upward influence, and (4) little monitoring of subordinate behavior. This last set of behaviors, monitoring of subordinates, is more consistent with transactional leadership; we therefore argue that its converse, little monitoring of subordinates is consistent with transformational leadership.

First, Bass (1985) argues that transformational leaders are charismatic. They inspire and motivate subordinates to make the leader's vision a reality (Conger, 1989a). Second, Bass (1985) suggests that transformational leaders stimulate new ways of thinking and acting; he calls this intellectual stimulation. Conger and Kanungo (1988b) suggest that transformational leaders are innovative risk takers who display unconventional behavior. Embracing revolutionary rather than evolutionary change, such leaders tend to be entrepreneurial with a passion for making things better (Conger & Kanungo, 1988c). Third, Conger and Kanungo (1988c) argue that transformational leaders are agents of influence, and are persuasive at articulating and selling their vision to others in the organization (Conger, 1989a). Similarly, Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn (1985) suggest that being persuasive with superiors is particularly important. Fourth, Conger (1989a) argues that transformational leaders do not monitor or micro-manage their

subordinates but rather give them freedom to pursue the organization's vision as they see appropriate. Transformational leaders foster opportunities for subordinates to influence and/or participate in decision making (House, 1977) by providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraint (Conger & Kanungo, 1988c).² In the section below, we develop the logic for hypotheses linking psychological empowerment with charisma, innovation, upward influence, and little monitoring of subordinates.

Charismatic Behaviors

Originally conceived by Weber (1947), charisma involves the development of a vision of idealized change that moves beyond the status quo (Conger & Kanungo, 1988a; Conger, 1989a). Charismatic leaders instill pride, respect, confidence, and trust in their subordinates through the articulation of a vision (Bass, 1990a). House (1977) suggests that three leader characteristics, consistent with the dimensions of empowerment, are conducive to charismatic behaviors: moral righteousness of beliefs, self-confidence, and a desire to influence.

First, the leader must have a conviction in the "moral righteousness of his or her beliefs" (House, 1977: 193) or a clear sense of his or her own value system in order to be perceived as charismatic by subordinates. This sense of moral righteousness is consistent with the *meaning* dimension of empowerment. Through their strong sense of personal meaning or alignment between their values and their work requirements, empowered managers are likely to exude the passion or excitement which inspires followers and is commonly associated with charisma (House, 1977). In addition, empowered managers' strong sense of purpose and values are likely to be manifest in visionary behaviors that drive excellence (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

²Bass (1985) has identified one additional dimension of transformational behavior which he calls individualized consideration which includes paying attention to subordinates' needs. We do not hypothesize a relationship between empowerment and individualized consideration because the logic for this relationship is not clear. We do not see any reason *a priori* why empowered individuals will necessarily pay more attention to subordinates' needs.

Second, the leader must exude a sense of self-confidence and esteem in order to be perceived as charismatic by subordinates (Conger & Kanungo, 1988b; House, 1977).³ This sense of confidence and esteem is consistent with the *competence* dimension of empowerment. Charismatic leaders' sense of competence, or self-efficacy, makes them feel that they are capable of being effective leaders of change (Bass, 1990a). However, while being attracted by a leader's charisma, subordinates are not likely to align themselves with the leader's vision if they do not perceive the leader to be capable of effectively implementing the vision (Conger, 1989a).

Third, the leader must be interested in and willing to exert influence and personal control (Conger & Kanungo, 1988b). Charismatic leaders "influence what is figure and what is ground and thus define the situation for followers" (Bass, 1990a: 47). Moreover, charismatic leaders tend to have high needs for power and achievement and are action-oriented (Bass, 1990a). Influence and personal control are consistent with the *self-determination*, and particularly the *impact*, dimensions of empowerment. Subordinates see charismatic leaders as people who can make a difference and take charge of creating change rather than conforming to the status quo. Due to their belief that they can be autonomous and impactful, empowered managers are likely to be seen as those who make things happen by subordinates who want to identify with and make the leader's vision a reality. Thus, because of the alignment between House's (1977) leader characteristics and the four empowerment dimensions, we expect,

Hypothesis 1: Managers who feel empowered will exhibit charismatic behaviors to a greater extent than managers who feel less empowered.

Innovation

Innovation is defined as behaviors which reflect the creation of something new or different. Innovative behaviors are by definition creative and change-oriented because they involve the creation of a new product, service, idea, procedure, or process (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993) or the dramatic redesign of existing products or services. Intrinsic task motivation through personal meaning contributes to innovative behaviors (Redmond, Mumford, & Teach, 1993). Integrating both the self-determination and

³ According to House (1977), it is entirely possible that charismatic leaders present themselves as highly confident and as having a strong conviction in the moral righteousness of their beliefs but do not indeed believe in either themselves or their beliefs. In this paper, we are not interested in charismatic leaders' *ability to act* as though they are confident or have convictions but rather we are interested in their *actual cognitions* of confidence and meaning.

impact dimensions of empowerment, previous research has found that freedom to decide what to do and how to do one's work, a sense of control over one's work and ideas, and freedom from organizational constraints enhance individuals' capacity for creative behavior (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1987). Because empowered individuals believe they are autonomous and can be impactful, they are likely to be creative because they feel less constrained by technical or rule-bound aspects of work (Amabile, 1988).

Furthermore, previous research has shown that because empowered individuals feel self-efficacious, they are likely to be more innovative -- even in constrained situations -- in their work due to positive expectations of success (Amabile, 1988; Bass, 1990a; Redmond, et al., 1993). Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggest that psychological empowerment is important for stimulating and managing change in organizations; empowered individuals' creative efforts persist despite pervasive organizational and environmental obstacles. Deci and Ryan (1985) observed a link between self-determination and individual flexibility, resiliency, and creativity which may contribute to innovative behavior. In her case studies of entrepreneurial organizations, Kanter (1983) found that empowerment and innovative behavior are inextricably linked. Thus, because of the support for the link between empowerment and innovation, we expect,

Hypothesis 2: Managers who feel more empowered will exhibit innovative behaviors to a greater extent than managers who feel less empowered.

Upward Influence

Upward influence reflects attempts to influence someone higher in the formal hierarchy of authority (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Porter, Allen & Angle, 1981; Schilit & Locke, 1982). We expect that empowered individuals, given their proactive approach to work, will not merely comply with the requests of superiors but will actively seek to influence superiors' actions and beliefs. Mowday (1978) and Porter et al., (1981) argue that different individual characteristics are helpful in predicting organizational members' relative propensities to engage in upward influence. First, individuals are likely to engage in upward influencing behaviors when they

believe their work environment is responsive to their influence attempts (Porter, et al., 1981) and when the probability of success is positive (Mowday, 1978). These conditions are consistent with the *impact* dimension of empowerment. Second, individuals are likely to engage in upward influencing behaviors when they believe that an intrinsic need can be fulfilled, thus enhancing their sense of *meaning*.

Third, individuals are more likely to engage in upward influencing behaviors to the extent that they feel a sense of control over their work environment (Porter, et al., 1982) or personal power (Mowday, 1978). This sense of control is synonymous with cognitions of *self-determination*. In the same vein, Deci and Ryan (1985) found that self-determination produces greater individual initiative which may be translated into upward influencing behaviors. Fourth, individuals will have a greater propensity to exercise upward influence when they have a high degree of self-confidence or *competence* (Mowday, 1978; 1979). In support of the importance of the competence dimension, previous research has found that expert power is particularly critical for upward influence (Yukl, 1989). Thus, the relationship between empowerment and upward influence is fairly well supported.

Because they feel a sense of meaning regarding their work, empowered employees may feel motivated to accept the risks associated with upward influencing behavior. Because empowered individuals believe they have something to offer given their skills and talents (i.e., competence) and because they believe their work environment is responsive to their influence attempts (i.e., impact), they are also more likely to exhibit upward influencing behaviors. In previous work, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggest that empowerment will lead to greater initiative, resiliency, risk taking, and flexibility. Thus, given the espoused relationships between each of the four dimensions and upward influence,

Hypothesis 3: Managers who feel more empowered will exhibit upward influencing behaviors to a greater extent than managers who feel less empowered.

Monitoring

Unlike the active, change-oriented behaviors associated with transformational leadership, monitoring involves assessing deviations from established rules and standards in order to maintain the status quo (Quinn, 1984; 1988). A monitor is expected to know what is going on in the work unit and to continually assess whether subordinates are complying with the rules and standards established for the work unit. Monitoring implies micro-managing and controlling others to preserve stability in the work system (Bass, 1985; Kotter, 1990), behaviors in direct contrast to notions of empowerment. Conger (1989a) argues that empowered managers are likely to create a context where their subordinates can feel empowered. Because empowered managers experience the personal benefits of meaningful autonomous behavior, they are more likely than managers who do not feel empowered to manage in ways that preserve the autonomy of those with whom they work (Conger & Kanungo, 1988b). Furthermore, monitoring implies the need to check up on subordinates to ensure that they are behaving as required. A lack of self-confidence in oneself and in one's subordinates is likely to result in more monitoring behavior because monitoring may enhance feelings of control, even in the absence of high levels of competence (Quinn & McGrath, 1985). Thus, because of the potentially negative relationship between empowerment and monitoring, we hypothesize that,

Hypothesis 4: Managers who feel less empowered will exhibit monitoring behaviors to a greater extent than managers who feel more empowered.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Survey data on feelings of psychological empowerment were collected from 393 middle managers from different units of a Fortune 50 industrial organization. Data on empowerment were collected from managers rather than rank-and-file employees because we were interested in respondents who had subordinates who could assess the respondent's leadership behavior. The

managers were randomly selected across the organization's functions, divisions, and geographic localities. They were approximately 93 percent male, primarily Caucasian, and had a mean age of 46 years. Seventy percent had at least a college education. Their mean tenure in the company was approximately 13 years, and their mean position tenure was just over three years. Though fairly homogenous from a demographic standpoint, this sample is generally representative of the national population of middle managers (Johnson & Frohman, 1989; Torrington & Weightman, 1987).

The respondents were assured of complete confidentiality. All responses were mailed directly to the researchers. The data were collected at the beginning of a two and one half day management development program in groups of approximately 50 participants. This mode of data collection had a number of advantages. First, because all of the company's middle managers participated in the program at some point in time over the three year period and because the date of their participation was selected randomly, there was little chance of selection bias. Selection bias can be a problem with data collected in conjunction with a managerial development program because participants are usually selected for a reason (e.g., high potential or poor performance). As a check for selection bias (i.e., that the managers who participated during one period might differ significantly from the other middle managers in the company), mean difference tests on performance and demographic variables were conducted. The managers included in the study were not found to be significantly different from the rest of the population of middle managers on variables including performance, gender, education, or tenure. Second, because the data were collected at the beginning of the managerial development program, a 100 percent response rate was obtained, further reducing the potential for selection bias. Because the data were collected at the beginning of the two and one half day program, the content of the program was not expected to influence the results. Third, multiple assessments of the leadership variables were collected from a set of each manager's subordinates, thereby reducing potential problems of common method bias (Felson, 1981).

To assess leadership behavior, each manager was asked to select between four and seven subordinates who knew them well. The subordinates were asked to respond to a questionnaire that

measured different aspects of leadership behavior. Subordinates were assured of the complete anonymity of their responses as all responses from a manager's group of subordinates would be aggregated to produce a single score on each of the items assessed in the questionnaire.⁴ Prior to aggregation, the consistency of the subordinate responses were assessed and are reported below. Completed questionnaires were returned by mail to the authors' university for processing. Good cooperation was obtained; an average of four subordinates per middle manager responded to the questionnaire, with a range from zero to eight. Cases where fewer than two subordinates responded were not included in the analysis for reasons of anonymity. The demographics of the subordinates who responded about the participating manager were not available because of concerns about anonymity, but based on organizational demographics at that particular level of the organization, the subordinates were slightly more diverse with respect to race and gender than the target sample of managers.

Measures

The four dimensions of empowerment were measured with self-assessments (see the actual items in the Appendix). In previous research, the scales have been shown to exhibit excellent reliability and convergent and discriminant validity (Spreitzer, in press-a). All the items used a seven-point Likert response format. Based on the findings of a second order confirmatory factor analysis which suggested that the four dimensions combine into an overall "gestalt" of intrapersonal empowerment (Spreitzer, in press-a), an index made up of each of the four dimensions of empowerment was used in the analyses described below in order to reduce the complexity of the model for estimation (see Figure 1 for the precise specification). For subsequent

⁴ This mean aggregation of subordinate responses of leadership behavior is supported by Yammarino and Bass (1990). They found that leader-follower interactions followed a homogeneous (i.e., the leader uses the same basic leadership with each subordinate) rather than a heterogeneous leadership style (i.e., the leader uses a different leadership style with each subordinate (consistent with the leader-member exchange). Bass, et al. (1987) used an aggregation process similar to that used in this paper.

analyses, scales for each of the four dimensions were created by taking the mean of the appropriate items. These scales were used as input to the structural model described below.

Charisma was measured with five items drawn from Bass (1985). The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale and are provided in the Appendix. The charisma items loaded onto a single factor in an exploratory factor analysis, and the mean of the items was used to create a scale which had a Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.90. An F-test ($F=2.0101$; $p<.001$) indicates support for the aggregation of subordinate responses on this scale.

The other leadership behaviors were measured with relevant items from the Competing Values Model of Leadership (Denison, et al., 1995; Quinn, 1988). The Competing Values framework is a meta-theory that was developed to model the domain of leadership roles (Quinn, 1988). Scales for each of the roles in the Competing Values Model have been shown to have adequate convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity and reliability (Denison, et al., 1995). The Cronbach alpha reliability for each leadership role exceeds the .70 rule of thumb (Nunnally, 1978). See Table 1 for the individual scale reliabilities and the Appendix for the items.

Table 1 About Here

The innovator role reflects thinking about old problems in new ways through the experimentation with new concepts, problem solving in creative ways, and innovative ideas. The innovator items loaded onto a single factor in an exploratory factor analysis, and the mean of the innovator items is used to create a scale. An F-test ($F=2.0547$; $p<.001$) supported the aggregation of subordinate responses for the innovator scale.

The broker role reflects the exertion of upward influence and getting access to people at higher levels. The broker items loaded onto a single factor in an exploratory factor analysis, and the mean of the broker/upward influence items is used to create a scale. An F-test ($F=2.0592$;

$p < .001$) provided evidence for the requisite consistency of subordinate responses prior to their aggregation.

Finally, the monitor role emphasizes watching for deviations from rules and standards. The monitor items loaded onto a single factor in an exploratory factor analysis, and the mean of its items are used to create a scale. An F-test ($F = 2.0602$; $p < .001$) provided evidence for the requisite consistency of subordinate responses prior to their aggregation.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the structural analysis is to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and the hypothesized leadership behaviors. The above hypotheses state that the more empowered managers feel, the more they should exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. To initially examine these hypotheses, correlations between managerial empowerment and the leadership behaviors as seen by subordinates are examined. The correlational analysis is confirmed with a LISREL analysis of the relationships between psychological empowerment and the leadership behaviors. LISREL analysis has a number of advantages for examining the hypotheses. First, the four dimensions of empowerment can be modeled as separate measures of overall empowerment (see Figure 1). Second, measurement error in the scales can be taken into account in the analysis. Third, the relationship between overall empowerment and each of the leadership dependent variables can be modeled simultaneously. This is important because the leadership behaviors are moderately correlated with each other; for this reason, a series of separate regression analyses might provide misleading results.

Researchers attempting to model relationships among more than a few latent variables have found it difficult to fit such models, even models with strong theoretical support (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1986). Therefore, steps are needed to decrease the number of indicators yet maintain the estimation of measurement error given by using multiple indicators. We follow the procedures described by Williams and Hazer (1986) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993). To simplify the LISREL model given the limited number of cases available for estimation, scales of the four

dimensions of empowerment and the different leadership behaviors are substituted for the individual items as recommended by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). To account for measurement error, we set the path from the latent variable to the scale score equal to the product of the square root of the scale reliability and its standard deviation, and set the error variance equal to (variance of the scale score * (1 - the reliability)). Netemeyer, Johnston, and Burton (1990) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993) have shown these techniques to be reasonable approximations for measurement error.

Two criteria are used to assess the fit of the LISREL analysis. First, the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), which is "independent of sample size and relatively robust against departures from normality" (Joreskog & Sorbom as cited in Bagozzi & Yi, 1988: 79), should meet or exceed the 0.9 rule-of-thumb. Second the root mean square residual (RMSR), an estimate of the average magnitude of the fitted residuals, should be less than 0.05.

RESULTS

Table 1 reports the univariate statistics and correlations for the variables included in the analyses. In support of hypotheses 1-3, significant correlations were found between empowerment and three transformational leadership roles (charisma, innovation, and upward influencing behavior). In contrast to hypothesis 4, a significant correlation was not found between empowerment and monitoring behavior, though the direction was as hypothesized.

Because the dependent variables are moderately correlated with each other, the correlational analyses may not represent the true, unbiased relationships between psychological empowerment and the different leadership behaviors. A LISREL analysis is therefore preferable because it simultaneously examines the relationship between empowerment and each of leadership dependent variables. Nevertheless, the LISREL findings replicate the correlational analyses (see Figure 1 for a summary of the LISREL results). First, the overall goodness-of-fit statistics provide support for the causal model specified in Figure 1. The AGFI is well above the .90 threshold, and the RMSR is below the .05 ceiling. Second, each of the four dimensions of empowerment are

found to be significant indicators of overall empowerment. And third, the relationships between overall empowerment and the various leadership behaviors replicate the correlational findings. In support of hypotheses 1-3, empowerment is found to be significantly related to the measures of charisma, innovation, and upward influencing behaviors. However, support for hypothesis 4 is not found; though the coefficient is negative as expected, it does not achieve significance. Generally the results provide basic support for the proposition that empowerment will be related positively to transformational leadership behaviors.

DISCUSSION

The relationship between empowerment and leadership has not received adequate attention in the literature (Keller & Dansereau, 1995). In general, our findings support the proposition that empowered managers will be perceived as transformational leaders by their followers; they are seen by subordinates as charismatic, innovative, and upward influencing. These results are particularly noteworthy because our data and analyses avoid problems of same source data bias; we employ leader perceptions of empowerment and subordinate perceptions of leader behavior.

However, contrary to expectations, empowered managers are not significantly different from other managers in their tendency to monitor subordinate behavior, a behavior consistent with transactional leadership behavior. This finding is particularly intriguing because it counters prevailing wisdom which portrays transformational and transactional leadership as polar opposites. Instead, this finding lends support to Bass's (1985) assertion that transformational and transactional leadership are not mutually exclusive, as empowered leaders seem to exhibit both types of leadership behavior. Empowered managers appear to be behaviorally complex (Denison, et al., 1995), playing multiple, or even paradoxical, roles that reflect both transformational and transactional leadership. Interestingly, Denison, et al., (1995) found that those managers rated as highly effected were those who exhibited behavioral complexity. Similarly, Quinn, Spreitzer and Hart (1992) found that managers who managed paradoxical behaviors in their leadership style were also highly effective. Taken together, these findings suggest that researchers need to expand

leadership theory to more explicitly recognize the paradoxical or complex behaviors that contribute to effectiveness in contemporary organizations. For example, while many researchers and practitioners contend that rapidly changing environments require transformational behaviors, effectively addressing this need may require the use of transactional as well as transformational behaviors; this may support the notion the leadership style is not an "one-size-fits-all" proposition. More general implications for both organizational scholars and business practitioners are provided below.

Implications for Research and Practice

Our study contributes to the growing body of literature on empowerment by expanding the nomological net of empowerment to include relevant behavioral (i.e., leadership) outcomes. This study is significant in that it theoretically and empirically identifies a set of leadership behaviors to which psychological empowerment is related. Our research suggests that empowerment cognitions facilitate charisma, innovation, and upward influence -- behaviors associated with transformational leadership -- but have little impact on monitoring behaviors. Such information is critical for validating the nomological net of empowerment in the workplace. Recent empirical work has failed to examine the interindividual or interpersonal implications of empowerment in the workplace; instead, research has tended to focus on the levels of performance and satisfaction associated with an empowered workforce (Thomas & Tymon, 1994). Our work clearly helps to address the interindividual dynamics of managerial empowerment on subordinate perceptions of behavior.

The study also contributes to the leadership literature by beginning to assess a set of psychological or cognitive antecedents of transformational leadership. Recently, there has been renewed interest in the personal factors associated with general leadership notions (Hunt, 1991); however, little research has focused explicitly on the personal factors associated with transformational leadership (Bass, 1994). Previous research on transformational leadership has primarily concentrated on comparing the effects of transformational and transactional leadership

on subordinate performance and satisfaction (Howell & Avolio, 1993). While this previous research is helpful in identifying leadership outcomes, less attention has been paid to the psychological predictors of transformational behaviors.⁵ This research contributes to the literature on leadership by examining how the leader's cognitive processes (i.e., sense of empowerment) relates to subordinate perceptions of the leader and his/her behavior.

Our research also contributes to the literature by examining transformational leadership behavior at the middle levels of the organizational hierarchy. Most of the prior research on charismatic/ transformational leadership has been conducted using samples of top level managers (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988). Prior research suggests that traditional, top-down, bureaucratic designs may be antithetical to transformational behaviors at the middle and lower levels of the hierarchy. Spreitzer and Quinn (1995) found three primary barriers to transformational change at the middle levels of the organization in a Fortune 50 organization: (1) structural constraints (such as a top-down culture, lack of vision, bureaucratic structure, etc.), (2) embedded conflict among functions, peers, and subordinates, and (3) personal time constraints due to heavy work loads and family obligations. Other research has found that middle managers are a key source of resistance to organizational transformation (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). Our results suggest that in spite of multiple forces working against transformational leadership at the middle levels of the organization, middle managers with an empowered mindset are able to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors in interactions with subordinates.

The findings of this paper also provide potentially useful insights for business practitioners. Through a better understanding of the requisite cognitions for transformational leadership, organizations will be better equipped to effectively select and develop the next generation of individuals able to lead in turbulent environments. One reason that notions of empowerment have been so widely embraced in industry is that practitioners believe it facilitates the requisite leadership capacities for organizational effectiveness in contemporary organizations

⁵One recent exception is Howell and Avolio (1993) who looked at the relationship

(e.g., Kanter, 1989; Kizilos, 1990). As organizations face more turbulent external environments, transformational behaviors take on increased significance for organization effectiveness (Conger, 1989b). Our results support the popular claims regarding the benefits of empowered managers.

Given these findings, the challenge for contemporary organizations then is to find appropriate interventions for enhancing psychological empowerment of managers in the workplace. These interventions may take several forms, as suggested by previous research. First, structural interventions (e.g., creating large spans of control) help managers avoid micro-management and can increase managers' sense of *self-determination* (e.g., Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Spreitzer, in press-b). Second, cultural interventions (i.e., creating and maintaining an organizational culture in which the contribution of human capital to the long term success of the organization is valued) facilitate a sense of *meaning* and purpose (e.g., Kanter, 1989; McKenna, 1990). Third, educational interventions (i.e., providing ongoing opportunities for employee growth and development) facilitate a sense of *competence* (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988; Conger & Kanungo, 1988c). Finally, sociopolitical interventions (i.e., influencing the work context so that managers have support from those with whom they work, access to strategic information about the future direction of the organization and workunit, and access to resources) allow managers to operate independently and creatively, enhancing their sense of *impact*. Thus, by implementing interventions as described above, organizations can tap each of the requisite cognitions of empowerment.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this research makes a number of potential contributions to research and practice, it is not without limitations. One limitation of this study is that we were unable to actually observe managers interacting with subordinates. Critics recommend using observational data to supplement survey measures of transformational leadership (Hunt, 1991). Future research should

between the personality trait locus of control and transformational/transactional leadership.

complement subordinate perceptions of leader behavior with observed leadership behaviors. Future research should also extend this study by examining the effects of managerial empowerment on subordinate cognitions and behaviors. Because House suggests that the transformational leader is "assumed to be an object of identification by which the followers emulate the leader's values, goals, and behavior" (1977: p. 191), we might expect empowered managers to facilitate empowered subordinates and transformational leaders to stimulate transformational subordinates. In previous work, Bass, et al. (1987) found support for a "falling dominoes" effect of transformational leadership on subordinates.

A second limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data. Data on managerial empowerment and leadership behaviors were collected at the same point in time, though by different assessors. Consequently, the causal nature of the relationships cannot be empirically ascertained. It may be that transformational actions increase a leader's sense of empowerment. Future research designs should be longitudinal, using laboratory and/or field experiments which can model causality as well as help uncover the underlying processes which link empowerment with leadership behaviors. Nevertheless, a strength of this data set was the multiple sources of data (i.e., managers' assessments of their own empowerment and subordinates assessments of their managers' behaviors) to minimize the potential for same source data bias.

Future research is also necessary to test whether the results of the current study generalize to other organizational settings, industries, and cultures. Future research should concentrate on examining contextual and process variables that may influence a manager's opportunity to engage in transformational leadership behaviors. Such research will offer a better understanding of the conditions that facilitate or hinder transformational leadership in organizations. As Bass (1990b) notes, "the overall amount of transformational leadership in an organization can be increased substantially by suitable organizational and human resources policies" (p. 25). House (1977) suggests that transformational effects may be more powerful in times of organizational crisis or uncertainty. High uncertainty and turbulence characterizing an organization's external environment may provide a setting which is more conducive to the emergence of transformational leadership

than to the emergence of transactional leadership (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Managers from this sample were in an industry which was struggling with increased global competition and declining market share. These conditions were likely to create a stressful context of uncertainty where transformational behaviors were more relevant than transactional behaviors. Future research should replicate these findings in different organizational and environmental contexts.

Clearly, the empirical study of empowerment and leader behavior is in its infancy. This research takes some insightful first steps into understanding the relationship between leader empowerment and subordinate perceptions of leader behavior. Our hope is that by clarifying these relationships, more organizational scholars will embark on substantive research addressing these linkages. Further, our hope is that these research findings will provide some initial guidance to business practitioners as they endeavor to find more effective strategies for leadership.

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APPENDIX: MEASURES

Empowerment Measures

Meaning

The work I do is very important to me.

My job activities are personally meaningful to me.

The work I do is meaningful to me.

Competence

I am confident about my ability to do my job.

I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.

I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.

Self-Determination

I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.

I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.

I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.

Impact

My impact on what happens in my department is large.

I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.

I have significant influence over what happens in my department.

APPENDIX: MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Leadership Measures

Charisma

Impact on people's feeling about their assignments

Impact on people's optimism for the future

Capacity to get people to believe they can overcome anything

Capacity to provide a source of inspiration for others

Capacity to excite people with a vision of what might be accomplished if they work together

Innovation

Comes up with inventive ideas.

Experiments with new concepts and procedures.

Does problem solving in clever, creative ways.

Searches for innovations and potential improvements.

Upward Influence

Exerts upward influence in the organization.

Influences decisions made at higher levels.

Persuasively sells new ideas to higher ups.

Gets access to people at higher levels.

Monitoring

Maintains tight logistical control.

Monitors compliance with the rules.

Compares, records, and reports to detect discrepancies.

Checks for errors and mistakes.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Constructs

Construct	No. of Items	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Meaning	3	5.89	.78	.86								
2. Competence	3	5.69	.84	.32	.81							
3. Self-Determination	3	5.51	.83	.38	.36	.82						
4. Impact	3	5.53	.90	.46	.29	.54	.88					
5. Empowerment Index	4	5.65	.62	.70	.61	.81	.82	.74				
6. Charisma	5	3.46	.55	.15	.20	.15	.24	.25	.90			
7. Innovating Behaviors	4	4.90	.70	.17	.22	.16	.19	.24	.61	.88		
8. Upward Influencing	4	4.85	.73	.17	.26	.20	.26	.30	.57	.68	.88	
9. Monitoring Behaviors	4	4.78	.78	-.05	-.11	-.03	-.01	-.06	-.09	.25	.26	.82

Note. Boldfaced elements on the diagonal are the Cronbach alpha reliabilities. Off-diagonal elements are correlations between constructs. Correlations greater than .14 were significant at $p < .01$; correlations greater than .10 were significant at $p < .05$.