

# Taking the Reins: The Effects of New Leader Status and Leadership Style on Team Performance

Stephen J. Sauer  
Clarkson University School of Business

New leaders face a challenging task when they take charge of their teams. They have to determine how best to guide the work process, and they must understand how their behaviors will affect the members of their team. This research examines how a newly assigned team leader's status moderates subordinates' reactions to different leadership styles to affect assessments of the leader's self-confidence and effectiveness, and how this impacts team performance. Across 2 experimental studies, results demonstrate that low-status leaders are rated as more effective when they use a directive style, whereas high-status leaders are viewed as more effective when they use a participative style, and this relationship is mediated by perceptions of self-confidence. In addition, teams whose leaders are viewed more favorably perform better on a complex group task. These findings imply that low-status individuals are able to enhance their level of personal power by drawing on whatever positional power they hold, whereas high-status individuals are better off relying solely on their personal power to influence others. This research also provides a clear demonstration that assessments of new leaders' behaviors are subject to an appraisal that is clouded by observers' status perceptions and attributions.

*Keywords:* status, leadership, teams, new leader

Today's organizations increasingly rely on the use of teams to get things done (Barley, 1990; Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999; Hackman, 1990); in many organizations, these teams have a formalized hierarchical structure with a designated leader. Hierarchy, whether it is formal or informal, imposes constraints on team interactions (Mannix & Sauer, 2006), which are particularly salient when the team is in a state of transition from one leader to the next. Transitions are disruptive to organizations in general and work teams in particular (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977; Watkins, 2003), and during the past decade, the incidence of new leaders taking over existing teams has increased (Liberum Research, 2006; Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008). Despite the frequency and impact of leadership transition in organizations, very little research has focused on the activities and problems faced by new leaders as they undergo the process of taking charge of their teams (Gabarro, 1987). Understanding how new leaders establish themselves is crucial to understanding team performance, and the goal of the present study was to examine factors that affect an incoming leader's ability to influence team members' perceptions and behaviors.

A vast body of research has looked at the effects of particular leadership behaviors (Yukl, 2002), and thousands of other studies

have looked at the effects of specific leadership traits (see Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002, for a qualitative review). Certain characteristics of the leader—specifically, leader status—impact team members' reactions to certain types of leadership, and a style that works well for one incoming leader can have negative consequences for another. New leaders come into their teams with different levels of status relative to existing team members, and the leadership behaviors they choose to use draw on different bases of power. In the present article, I suggest that in the case of a new leader taking charge of an existing team, who the leader is affects team members' perceptions of what the leader does, and I focused on how leader status and leadership style interact to affect assessments of leader effectiveness. I tested this relationship in a scenario experiment.

Although evidence of relationships between leader attributions or behavior and leader effectiveness is abundant, a long-standing critique of leadership research is that the processes mediating these relationships are not well understood (Hunt, 1999; Yukl, 1999). To address this criticism, I focused on the mediating role played by team members' perceptions of a new leader's self-confidence. I tested this mediation effect as well as the effect that new leader status and leadership style have on team performance in a laboratory experiment using an interdependent problem-solving task.

## The New Leader

A wide range of theorists have described the process of development that teams undergo as they progress in their interactions (e.g., Gersick, 1988; Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, & Smith, 1999; Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jenson, 1977). During the first stages of team formation, members seek information about others to figure out their place in the team. Members try to demonstrate task competency as they complete tasks and roles, finally focusing on a

---

This article was published Online First February 14, 2011.

Most of this research was conducted while I was affiliated with Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management, and I thank my colleagues at the Johnson School for their support and encouragement. In particular, I am greatly indebted to Beta Mannix, Kathleen O'Connor, and Melissa Thomas-Hunt for the time, resources, and guidance they so willingly offered.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Stephen J. Sauer, School of Business, Clarkson University, Potsdam, NY 13699-5790. E-mail: ssauer@clarkson.edu

normative network of role linkages as they perform as a team (Kozlowski et al., 1999). Any time a new person joins the team, socialization occurs through a process of mutual interaction between newcomers and existing team members (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995; Moreland & Levine, 1982). When the newcomer is not just another team member but is instead the team's leader, the network of role linkages is torn asunder, and incumbent members move back to the team formation stage as they seek information about the new leader. At the same time, team members start to make a status evaluation and form expectations of the leader's performance (Moreland & Levine, 1982). They base this assessment on whatever information they have about the new leader's background or credentials and whatever observable status characteristics the leader possesses (Zelditch, Berger, Anderson, & Cohen, 1970).

The premise of status characteristics theory is that performance expectations are initiated on the basis of the status of personal characteristics possessed by group members (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977; Ridgeway & Erickson, 2000). Status characteristics are divided into two categories: those that provide specific cues or information about task competence in a well-specified domain (e.g., math skills or language proficiency) and those that provide diffuse cues (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) or more generalized information about ability or performance across a wide array of activities. During the socialization period, knowledge about the new leader's expertise and competence is limited. Reputation, résumé, and biographical information might provide some specific status cues, but team members rely primarily on diffuse status cues when forming their assessments. Because status characteristics determine the power and prestige order within the group, whether or not they are specifically related to the group task (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Milanovich, Driskell, Stout, & Salas, 1998), these initial assessments play a key role in determining how much influence the new leader will have.

Management scholars have long recognized that consideration of power and influence is important for understanding organizational behavior and leadership effectiveness (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). From a group process perspective, one person's potential to influence another stems from his or her power (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980), categorized as either position or personal power. Position power is structural in nature, derived from an individual's post in the organization, whereas personal power is determined by personal attributes (Bass, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). In a hierarchical team, the leader has position power—authority and legitimacy imbued by the organizational structure (French & Raven, 1959). The team leader also has some degree of personal power, derived from his or her status, expertise, and persuasiveness.

Empirical studies show that a leader's personal power is more important than position power as a determinant of managerial effectiveness (Yukl & Falbe, 1991). This is an important point, because although the scope may vary, any new leader's position power is a constant, based on the authority vested by the leader role. By contrast, personal power, based on status, can vary widely from one new leader to the next. Understanding how much personal power an incoming leader derives from his or her status is an important element in understanding how the use of certain leadership behaviors might lead to different outcomes.

## Leader Behavior

A look at researchers' operationalization of leadership behavior reveals two basic styles: one in which the team leader directs the team's work process and one in which the leader allows team members to participate in managing the process. *Directive leadership* is defined as leader behaviors that seek team members' compliance with directions about how to accomplish a problem-solving task (Bass, 1990; Bass, Valenzi, Farrow, & Solomon, 1975). In this research, a directive style is marked by behaviors that demonstrate a new leader setting a clear direction for the team (Somech, 2006), actively managing team members' interactions (e.g., Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995; Sagie, 1996), and structuring members' activity (Griffin, 1980; Keller, 2006).

*Participative leadership* is defined as sharing of problem solving by consulting with team members before making a decision (Bass, 1990; Bass et al., 1975). A leader who uses a participative style allows team members to determine for themselves how they want to work to accomplish their objectives. In this research, a participative leadership style is marked by behaviors that demonstrate a team leader providing cues for team members to manage themselves (Wageman, 2001) and providing consultation rather than direction (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004).

A number of prescriptive models have been developed to indicate whether a directive or participative leadership style is more appropriate in a given situation, including the contingency model (Fiedler, 1964) and the Vroom-Yetton decision tree model (Vroom & Jago, 1978; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). These models treat leadership as an environmentally constructed state, with the optimum leadership style dependent on the characteristics of the task, the leader, and the team. According to contingency theory, a directive style is most appropriate if the leader has legitimate power due to position and the task is structured, simple, and easy to solve (Fiedler, 1964). In situations in which the leader lacks sufficient information to solve a problem or to make a decision alone, the Vroom-Yetton model would indicate that a participative leadership style is most effective. In the present research, I consider the context in which interdependent teams are working on a task that is neither simple nor easy to solve, and in which new team leaders have legitimate authority but lack sufficient information to make decisions and solve problems by themselves. In this context, prescriptive models are unclear on whether a directive or participative leadership style is more appropriate for the new leader.

The directive or participative leadership style manifests itself whenever a subordinate embarks on an activity related to the team's work. If the leader is directing the team process, subordinates engage in the activity because the leader told them to do so. By contrast, if the leader is allowing team members to participate in managing the work process, subordinates may take it upon themselves to initiate the activity. This is a key distinction, because assigning a work activity represents an exertion of influence. Directive leaders rely on the power of their position, which gives them the right to give others assignments and to expect compliance (Yukl & Falbe, 1991). Participative leaders rely on personal power to influence team members and effectively manage their teams. Because incoming team leaders can vary widely in the amount of personal power they possess, it makes theoretical sense to pit directive leader behaviors against participative behaviors and to

examine how team members' reactions to each style interact with new leader status.

### Leader Status as a Moderator

The use of directive leadership behaviors is based on the authority of the position, and a leader who uses this style will be perceived as asserting himself or herself in the leadership role. Alternatively, a leader who uses a participative style might be viewed as unassertive. In a recent study, Ames and Flynn (2007) observed a curvilinear relationship between perceptions of assertiveness and leader effectiveness. Leaders who were very low in assertiveness were perceived as weak by the people they led, whereas leaders who were very high in assertiveness were seen as damaging relationships, and both perceptions led to lower ratings of leader effectiveness. The potential for negative socioemotional outcomes from being overly assertive bears consideration. In the case in which the incoming leader has low status and therefore little personal power to begin with, the importance of relying on position power will outweigh the detriment to personal power. In a sense, being perceived as assertive serves to compensate for the leader's low-status position. A high-status leader, by contrast, has a high degree of personal power, and any behaviors that undermine this power will have a negative impact on subordinates' perceptions. The high-status leader who uses a directive style might come off as being too assertive, damaging relationships and lowering team members' assessments.

The new leader's choice of leadership style, then, is viewed differentially based on the leader's status. Team members might see one style as appropriate for one leader but not for another. The idea that group members hold expectations for how their leaders should behave is hardly a new one. An extensive research program by Lord and his associates (Lord, 1985; Lord, Binning, Rush, & Thomas, 1978; Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984) revealed that group members hold a prototype for appropriate leader behavior, and they make leadership attributions when they witness an actor's behavior showing sufficient overlap with the prototype; the greater the overlap, the more favorable the attribution.

When group members interact with a new leader for the first time, status forms an integral part of the context in which they make their judgments of what behaviors are expected and appropriate. Therefore, a new leader's status will moderate team members' perceptions of whether or not a certain style is effective.

*Hypothesis 1:* New leader status and leadership style interact, such that low-status leaders who use a directive leadership style will be perceived as more effective than low-status leaders who use a participative leadership style, whereas high-status leaders who use a participative leadership style will be perceived as more effective than high-status leaders who use a directive leadership style.

### The Role of Self-Confidence

When considering factors that might mediate the relationship between leader status and style and perceptions of effectiveness, self-confidence plays an important role. The public display of self-confidence enhances the positive effects of other charismatic leadership behaviors and is positively related to perceptions of

leader effectiveness (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004). Self-confidence represents the new leader's degree of perceived probability of success in exerting influence (Cartwright, 1965; McClelland, 1985; Pollard & Mitchell, 1972). Additionally, displays of confidence are based on some actual ability, so self-confidence becomes a marker for competence (Chemers, 2000). Team members view leader self-confidence as a sign of efficacy, indicating willingness to take on general leadership responsibilities (Bandura, 1977; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Paglis & Green, 2002). Leaders have to continually "step up" to meet complex challenges and to positively influence their new team members (Hanna, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008), and they have to both exercise high levels of personal agency and create similar levels of agency in the people they are leading in order to mobilize them toward collective performance (Bandura, 2000). In other words, leaders have to display self-confidence and be prominent in the leadership role in order to be viewed as effective.

New leader status will moderate the relationship between leadership style and members' perceptions of self-confidence. In the case in which the incoming leader has low status, the use of a directive style demonstrates a willingness to be prominent in the leader role and to take command of the work process, and will be seen as a display of confidence in one's leadership ability. By contrast, a low-status leader who uses a participative style—asking subordinates for their help in managing the process—might be viewed as lacking in competence, self-efficacy, or will. For the high-status leader, using a participative leadership style could be perceived as a display of self-confidence. Showing a lack of concern for the hierarchical structure and a willingness to share the management of the teamwork process allows for more empathic relationships with subordinates (Chemers, 2000). It also shows team members that the new leader is secure enough in the role to feel comfortable asking subordinates for their input. The high-status leader who uses a directive style, however, might signal reliance on the authority vested in the leader position rather than the personal power that comes with high status. This could be perceived as a lack of self-confidence.

In summary, I predicted that an incoming leader's status and leadership behaviors interact in affecting subordinates' perceptions of the leader's self-confidence, which in turn affects perceptions of leader effectiveness. I tested the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 2:* New leader status and leadership style interact, such that low-status leaders who use a directive leadership style will be perceived as more self-confident than low-status leaders who use a participative leadership style, whereas high-status leaders who use a participative leadership style will be perceived as more self-confident than high-status leaders who use a directive leadership style.

*Hypothesis 3:* Leader self-confidence mediates the interactive effect of leader status and leadership style on leadership effectiveness.

### Team Performance

Team members' perceptions of effectiveness reflect a choice of leadership style that is most appropriate for the new leader's status. In addition, team leaders who are viewed as effective by their

subordinates are better able to align the work efforts of team members around clear objectives and goals, resulting in greater group performance (Hackman, 1987; Kotter, 1977, 1990). Moreover, team members who feel that their new leader is adopting an appropriate and effective leadership style will perceive higher levels of leader self-efficacy, which will in turn impact their collective efficacy and group performance. More effective leadership styles have been repeatedly associated with higher levels of efficacy with individual followers and teams (Chen & Lee, 2007; Jung & Sosik, 2003; Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, & Jung, 2002; Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler, & Shi, 2004), and the relationship between collective efficacy and group performance is well established (Chen & Bliese, 2002; Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, Beaubien, 2002; Katz-Navon & Erez, 2005; Shea & Howell, 1999). Therefore, teams that are led by someone who uses the most effective leadership style, appropriate for their status level, can be expected to perform better on a group task.

*Hypothesis 4:* New leader status and leadership style interact, such that teams that are led by low-status leaders who use a directive leadership style will perform better than teams led by low-status leaders who use a participative leadership style, whereas teams that are led by high-status leaders who use a participative leadership style will perform better than teams led by high-status leaders who use a directive leadership style.

To demonstrate causality in the relationship between the antecedents and mediating variables in the model and the various outcomes, I used a set of controlled experiments. For the first study, I used an interactive video scenario to test whether team members' assessment of leader effectiveness would be affected by leader status and style in the manner predicted. The second study is a laboratory experiment designed to isolate and examine the impact of actual team member behaviors, focusing in particular on the perceptions of leader self-confidence and overall team performance.

## Study 1

### Method

**Participants.** Sixty-eight people participated in this study, solicited via e-mail from lists of current and former business school students and colleagues. Respondents were paid \$10 for their participation. The mean age of participants was 30 years old, and they had, on average, 6.5 years of work experience, with 3 years in a supervisory role. Of the participants, 62% were male, and 66% were U.S. citizens. Their education and job types also varied. In total, 84% of participants were MBA or graduate school alumni. Participants classified themselves in more than 20 different job functions, ranging from CEO of a startup company to homemaker. The most heavily represented function was in finance/accounting, with 25% of participants classifying themselves in that field.

**Task and procedure.** This study was conducted entirely online. Participants received an e-mail with instructions to first read a scenario description then to follow embedded links to two separate video clips and an online survey. In the scenario, participants were asked to play the role of a member of a management

consulting team, interacting with a video-recorded team leader and two other team members engaged in a complex decision-making task. The team is ostensibly part of Synergetic Consulting, Inc., a small firm that specializes in providing management consulting in the high-tech manufacturing industry. Participants were told that they have been working at Synergetic for about 2 years as a consultant on various projects, and for the past 6 months they have worked as part of an engagement team with a team leader and two other team members, Laura and Brian. The team leader has just been transferred after the successful completion of the team's most recent project, and their new team leader, Matt Reynolds, is due to join the team this morning. The team will start working on a new engagement this morning, developing a turnaround plan for a production facility that has been plagued by problems.

Participants first read the scenario description above and then watched a video filmed from the first-person perspective such that the participant played the role of a team member interacting with other team members. The first video clip depicts Brian and Laura exchanging pleasantries and chatting over coffee. Brian has pulled the new team leader's bio from the company website, and he reads it aloud, providing information about the new leader's name (Matt Reynolds), age, alma mater, and prior work experience. Soon after, the video shows the new team leader entering the room and introducing himself to the members of his team. After watching this video clip, which lasted less than 2 min, participants responded to a set of questions that asked them to recall information about the team leader and to record their perceptions of each team member.

Participants then watched another video segment that lasted about 5 min. In this clip, participants watched the team leader manage the team's work activities as they develop the plan for the plant turnaround. At the end of the video, participants responded to questionnaire items measuring their perceptions of the leader and other team members.

**Design and manipulations.** A  $2 \times 2$  design was used with manipulations of the incoming leader's status (high vs. low) and leadership style (directive vs. participative). The video clips were created specifically for this study, and the same three actors played Matt, Laura, and Brian in each of the four video-recorded conditions.

**Leader status.** The incoming leader's status was manipulated through his biographical information, dress, and appearance. In the high-status condition, the new team leader's bio states that he is 38 years old, received his MBA from a top-tier university, and had worked for two of the most prestigious consulting companies before coming to Synergetic. In addition, he's been with Synergetic for almost 5 years and has developed strategies for a large client's two most recent product launches. When the actor portraying Matt appears in the video, he is dressed in a well-tailored navy blue suit with a conservative tie, wears fashionable wire-rimmed glasses and an expensive gold watch, and carries a leather briefcase.

In the low-status condition, Matt's bio states that he is 32 years old, has an MBA from a second-tier university, and had worked for two less prestigious firms before coming to Synergetic. He's been with Synergetic for less than 6 months and has developed strategy for one recent product launch. In the video, the same actor portrays Matt, but he is dressed in business casual attire, wearing a light



blue shirt and khaki pants, no glasses, and a black sports watch, and he has the strap of a messenger bag slung on his shoulder.

**Leadership style.** The team leader's style was manipulated through his and the subordinate team members' dialogue. In the directive condition, the team leader tells Laura to call the human resources (HR) manager at the manufacturing plant and to come up with more detail around why absenteeism and turnover are so bad. He tells Brian to look at the financial reports to get a more detailed breakdown of costs. Later, he gives both Laura and Brian additional instructions, telling them to contact certain people and to ask for specific pieces of information. Finally, he directs each of them to draft a short proposal, laying out a list of options for lowering direct labor costs and reducing employee turnover and absenteeism. He informs them that he will look at the options and decide which items to include in the turnaround plan.

In the participative condition, the team leader begins by asking Laura and Brian how they would like to approach the problem. Laura suggests that she call the HR manager at the manufacturing plant and to come up with more detail around why absenteeism and turnover are so bad. Brian says he will look at the financial reports to get a more detailed breakdown of costs. Later, both Laura and Brian recommend that they contact certain people and ask for specific pieces of information. Finally, Brian suggests that they each draft a short proposal laying out a list of options, and Laura suggests that they all look at the options together and decide which items to include in the turnaround plan. The leader agrees with each of their suggestions and includes them in the work process.

## Dependent Measures

**Manipulation checks.** To evaluate the effectiveness of the status manipulation, participants were asked the following: "To what extent does Matt, the team leader, have high status?" Participants responded to this and to all scale items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Two scales were used to verify the manipulation of the incoming team leader's behavior. The first scale used five items to measure directive leadership style. Sample items include "To what extent did the team leader decide how the team would work on this task?" and "To what extent did the team leader assign work activities to other team members while working on this task?" The five items were combined to form one average score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ).

The second scale, composed of five items indicating a participative style, included items such as "To what extent did the team leader allow team members to participate in setting the objectives for this task?" and "To what extent did the team leader allow other team members to determine their own activities while working on this task?" The five items were combined to form one average score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Leader effectiveness.** Perceptions of the leader's effectiveness were measured using a three item scale, which included items such as "To what extent is Matt, the leader, effective in the leadership role?" and "To what extent are team members' working relationships with the team leader effective?" The items were combined to form one average score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$ ).

## Results

**Manipulation checks.** A 2 (leader status)  $\times$  2 (leadership style) analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant main effect for perceptions of leader status. Participants in the high-status condition perceived the new team leader as having higher status ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) than did participants in the low-status condition ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ),  $F(1, 64) = 9.39$ ,  $p < .01$ .

Comparing means for perceptions of the new leader's behavior, I saw that participants in the directive leader condition perceived the new team leader as being more directive than did participants in the participative leader condition ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SD = 1.22$  vs.  $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ),  $F(1, 64) = 68.43$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants in the directive leader condition also perceived the new team leader as having less of a participative style than did participants in the participative leader condition ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 1.51$  vs.  $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1, 64) = 79.09$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Leader effectiveness.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that new leader status leaders would moderate the effect of leadership style on perceptions of effectiveness. A 2 (leader status)  $\times$  2 (leadership style) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between leader status and leadership style (see Table 1) in support of this hypothesis.

Low-status leaders who used a directive style were perceived to be more effective ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) than low-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ), whereas high-status leaders who used a directive style were perceived to be less effective ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ) than high-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ),  $F(1, 64) = 4.47$ ,  $p < .05$  (see Figure 1).

Table 1  
Study 1: Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of Leader Status and Leadership Style on Perceptions of Appropriateness and Leader Effectiveness

	Low-status team leader		High-status team leader		F(64)		
	Participative style	Directive style	Participative style	Directive style	Leader status	Leader style	Interaction
Effectiveness	3.55 (1.30) (n = 19) (12 men)	4.25 (1.32) (n = 16) (11 men)	4.35 (1.41) (n = 17) (8 men)	3.66 (1.40) (n = 16) (10 men)	0.10	0.00	4.47*

Note. Values represent means and (standard deviations).  
\*  $p < .05$ .

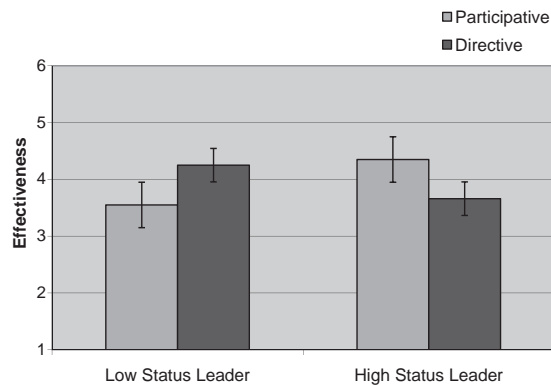


Figure 1. Study 1: Effects of leader status and leadership style on perceptions of leader effectiveness.

**Appropriateness.** Although I had not developed specific hypotheses around members' perceptions of the new leader's choice of leadership style, I also looked at the appropriateness of the leader's behavior. I asked participants "To what extent is the leader's behavior appropriate for working on this task?" and "To what extent is the leader's behavior acceptable?" ANOVA results indicated that low-status leaders' use of a directive style was perceived to be more appropriate ( $M = 4.62, SD = 1.48$ ) than their use of a participative style ( $M = 3.50, SD = 1.48$ ), whereas high-status leaders' use of a directive style was perceived to be less appropriate ( $M = 4.31, SD = 1.29$ ) than their use of a participative style ( $M = 4.79, SD = 1.82$ ),  $F(1, 64) = 4.65, p < .05$ .

## Discussion

The main goal of Study 1 was to test how a new leader's status and leadership behavior affect team members' perceptions of when a choice of leadership style is effective. Even though this was only a vignette scenario and the new leader played the narrow role of meeting manager, the study revealed an interesting interaction pattern: New leaders who came into a team with low status were rated as most effective when they "held the reins tightly," assigning tasks and directing team members' activities. New leaders who came in with high status were better off "loosening the reins" and letting team members guide their own work activity. I also found that a leadership style deemed appropriate for one type of leader was not appropriate for another. The same behaviors enacted by the same person—albeit dressed differently and bearing a different cover story—yielded significantly different results. This provides a clear demonstration that observers' assessments of behavior are impacted by their status perceptions.

Although Study 1 was designed to test only one hypothesis, the results were encouraging and led me to consider a test of the mechanisms that would account for these findings. The vignette design provided a good test of the status and style relationship, but it afforded no opportunity to test the mediating role of leader self-confidence or to measure actual team performance. Additionally, participants responded to questionnaire items on the basis of how they thought they would behave in a given situation, rather than how they actually behaved. Therefore, the design of the second study involved face-to-face interactions and interdependent

work with a team leader and other team members, all in a controlled experimental setting.

## Study 2

### Method

**Participants.** Two hundred sixteen people participated in this study. Participants were solicited from the student body of a large university in the northeastern United States. They were each paid \$20 and entered into a lottery for a cash award in exchange for their participation. Participants were arranged in 54 four-person teams, each with a team leader and three subordinates. Thus, there were 162 participants who worked as subordinate team members; these are the respondents of interest for all of the individual dependent measures used in this study. Most of the participants who worked as subordinate team members were undergraduates (87%). Their mean age was 20.8 years old ( $SD = 2.9$ ), mean years of work experience was 2.8 years ( $SD = 2.7$ ), and mean years of supervisory experience was 1.0 ( $SD = 1.7$ ). Eighty-six participants were women (53% female). The majority of participants listed their race or ethnicity as Caucasian (43%), followed by Asian/Asian American (35%), Indian (7%), Black/African American (4%), and Hispanic/Latino (4%); the remaining 7% were "other/not reported."

**Task and procedure.** Participants worked as members of a four-person team to complete a complex computer adventure game called the Mystery of Time and Space. The team's objective was to solve problems to get through as many levels of a simulated environment as possible in the allotted time while using the fewest number of clicks on a mouse controller. Participants signed up for the study ahead of time and arrived at the lab in groups of four. One of the four was then selected as the team leader and the other three as subordinate team members. The three subordinates went into a separate room where a research assistant trained them on how to play the simulation. The designated leader went into a different room for training on how to play the simulation and how to manage the team process.

**Team member training.** In the team room, subordinate team members received 15 min of training. At the start of their training, they were told the team leader's name, academic year, and major, and that he or she was enrolled in a leadership course at the business school. Team members received instructions on the objectives and procedures of the exercise as well as tips on strategy for playing the simulation. All participants were told that they could buy a "HintCard" (at a price of 15 mouse clicks) at any point in the simulation if they got stuck on a level. They then spent the next 15 min working as a three-person team to complete the first three levels of the simulation, counting their mouse clicks and purchasing HintCards as needed. At the end of their training, members completed a short questionnaire and awaited the incoming team leader.

**Team leader training.** In addition to receiving instructions on how to play the simulation, team leaders were coached on how to manage the team process using either a directive or a participative style. Leaders were told that team members should fill the roles of Mouse Controller, Recorder, Click-Counter, and HintCard Purchaser. Team leaders spent the next 15 min working through the first three levels of the simulation. At the end of their training, they

completed a short questionnaire and moved to the other room to join their teams.

The team leader then had 5 min to meet team members, develop a plan, and set up the team. At the end of this time, teams started work on Level 4 of the simulation, and they played for the next 20 min, working through as many levels as possible. Teams were video recorded as they worked on the task. At the end of their time, participants left the simulation and moved to individual computer terminals to complete a detailed questionnaire.

**Design and manipulations.** A  $2 \times 2$  design was used with manipulations of the incoming leader's status (high vs. low) and leadership style (directive vs. participative).

**Leader status.** The incoming team leader's status was manipulated by changing their undergraduate/graduate category and major. In the low-status condition, participants were told that the team leader was an undergraduate student majoring in communications, and that he or she was enrolled in the Foundations Leadership Course at the business school, which is an elective open to all students in the university. Participants in the high-status condition were told that the team leader was a graduate student in the MBA program, enrolled in the Foundations Leadership Course at the business school, which is open only to specially selected students based on academic merit and demonstrated leadership potential. Team leaders were informed of the manipulation and were instructed not to diverge from the cover story. Because the high-status leader manipulation used an MBA cover story, selection of participants to play the role of high-status leader was not random. Instead, in the interest of plausibility, the most senior person among each group of participants was selected to play the role of high-status leader. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the average ages of high-status ( $M = 23.2$ ,  $SD = 3.2$ ) and low-status leaders ( $M = 19.9$ ,  $SD = 2.0$ ),  $t(51) = 4.57$ ,  $p < .01$ . There were no other demographic differences between conditions; gender, race, and academic major were evenly distributed across all conditions.

**Leadership style.** The incoming team leader's style was manipulated through the instructions given during their leader training. In the directive condition, leaders were told to "direct the activities of all of your team members, rather than letting them decide for themselves how they should work together." It was suggested that the leader should determine decision rules, assign work activity, and designate members to play the roles of Mouse Controller, Click-Counter, and Recorder.

In the participative condition, leaders were told that they should "allow the members of your team to decide for themselves how they want to work together, rather than directing their specific activities." It was suggested that the leader should ask team members how they would like to approach the adventure, let them establish a strategy for navigating each level of the simulation, and allow them to suggest what role they would each play.

## Dependent Measures

**Manipulation checks.** To evaluate the effectiveness of the status manipulation, participants were asked at the end of their training, but before they had met the new leader, to respond to a four-item scale. Sample items include "How much status do you expect the team leader to have in this team?" and "How much respect do you expect the team leader to have in this team?" The

four items formed a reliable scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ) of overall status perception. This and all other scale items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

The leadership style manipulation was checked using the same scale measures used in the first study. The first scale, used to measure directive leadership style, had a Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ . The second scale, used to measure a participative style, had a Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ .

As an additional manipulation check, frequency of each team leader's interaction with the mouse controller was reviewed. Two independent raters, blind to the experimental condition, watched the video for each team and counted the number of times the leader directed the mouse controller by pointing to the screen. This served as a test of whether team leaders' behavior mapped to the training they had received.

**Leader effectiveness.** Perceptions of the leader's effectiveness was measured using a four-item scale, which included two items from the scale used in Study 1. Items included "To what extent was the leader effective in the leadership role?"; "To what extent are team members' working relationships with the team leader effective?" Participants also rated the extent to which they agreed with the statements "The team leader was successful in leading us through the adventure game" and "The team leader did a good job in his/her role." The four items were combined to form one average score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Leader self-confidence.** Because self-confidence is characterized by an individual's willingness to "step up" as a leader, perceptions of the leader's self-confidence was measured by asking participants "To what extent was the team leader self-confident?" and "To what extent was the team leader prominent?" The two items had a Cronbach's alpha of .72 and were highly correlated ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Team performance.** Team performance was measured on the basis of how far each team progressed through the simulation during the allotted time and the number of mouse clicks they used. Thus, team performance is measured as mouse clicks per level, with a smaller number indicating better performance.

## Results

Participants in this study were nested in teams; therefore, the study data are multilevel in nature, with leadership at the team level influencing individual perceptions and behaviors. Thus, I used linear mixed models, also known as hierarchical linear models (HLMs), for all individual-level analyses. A benefit of this approach is that individual differences in team member reactions to the leader are treated as error. Team performance was measured at the group level, and all other measures were taken at the individual level of analysis.

**Manipulation checks.** HLM analysis, controlling for team assignment, revealed that participants in the high-status condition perceived the new team leader as having higher status ( $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) than did participants in the low-status condition ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 6.91$ ,  $p < .01$ . These means were higher overall than the means for the status manipulation check in the first study due to the different sample pool. Recall that participants in the first study were nearly all MBA and graduate alumni and were, on average, 9 years older than participants in the second study. The participants in the second study likely made higher

assessments of team leader status because they themselves were younger and less experienced.

HLM analysis confirmed that participants in the directive leader condition perceived the new team leader as being more directive than did participants in the participative leader condition ( $M = 3.96, SD = 1.18$  vs.  $M = 3.55, SD = 1.31$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 4.19, p < .05$ . Participants in the directive leader condition also perceived the new team leader as having less of a participative style ( $M = 4.89, SD = 1.17$  vs.  $M = 5.59, SD = 0.90$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 18.51, p < .001$ .

Counting the number of times the team leader directed the mouse controller by pointing to the screen also confirmed the leadership style manipulation. Leaders who were trained to use a directive style pointed to the screen more often than leaders who were trained to use a participative style ( $M = 11.72, SD = 11.57$  vs.  $M = 5.56, SD = 5.81$ ),  $F(1, 52) = 5.82, p < .05$ .

Although the focus of Study 2 was on the 216 participants who worked as team members, I also asked each of the 54 participants who played the role of incoming team leader how self-confident they were during the exercise. Team leaders reported the same level of self-confidence regardless of which condition they were assigned (low-status directive  $M = 5.31, SD = 1.25$ ; low-status participative  $M = 5.50, SD = 0.86$ ; high-status directive  $M = 5.07, SD = 2.02$ ; high-status participative  $M = 5.15, SD = 1.21$ ; all contrasts nonsignificant).

**Leader effectiveness.** In Hypothesis 1, I predicted that an incoming leader's status will moderate the effects of leadership style on subordinates' assessments of the new leader's effectiveness. HLM analysis, controlling for team assignment, provides support for this hypothesis, revealing that leader status and leader style interacted to affect perceptions of effectiveness (see Table 2).

Low-status leaders who used a directive leadership style were perceived to be more effective ( $M = 4.52, SD = 1.18$ ) than low-status leaders who used a participative leadership style ( $M = 4.19, SD = 1.29$ ), whereas high-status leaders who used directive process management behaviors were perceived to be less effective ( $M = 4.16, SD = 1.51$ ) than high-status leaders who used participative process management behaviors ( $M = 5.06, SD = 1.35$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 5.73, p < .05$ .

**Leader self-confidence.** As seen in Table 2, HLM analysis also revealed a significant interaction of leader status and style on team members' perceptions of the leader's self-confidence, supporting Hypothesis 2. Low-status leaders who used a directive style were seen as more self-confident ( $M = 4.76, SD = 1.12$ ) than

low-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 4.01, SD = 1.45$ ), whereas high-status leaders who used a directive style were perceived to be less self-confident ( $M = 4.44, SD = 1.25$ ) than high-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 4.68, SD = 1.19$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 5.0, p < .05$ .

Although both interactions are significant, the pattern of results is not exactly the same for perceptions of leader effectiveness and self-confidence. In Figure 2, the interaction appears to be driven primarily by the larger mean for high-status leaders who used a participative style. Figure 3 suggests that the interaction is driven by low-status leaders who used a directive style. Simple effects tests support this suggestion. Among high-status leaders, choice of leadership style significantly impacted ratings for effectiveness ( $M = 5.06$  for participative vs.  $4.16$  for directive),  $F(1, 24) = 5.02, p < .05$ , but not self-confidence ( $M = 4.68$  for participative vs.  $4.44$  for directive),  $F(1, 24) = 0.64, ns$ . Among low-status leaders, choice of leadership style affected ratings for self-confidence ( $M = 4.76$  for directive vs.  $4.01$  for participative),  $F(1, 26) = 5.42, p < .05$ , but not effectiveness ( $M = 4.52$  for directive vs.  $4.19$  for participative),  $F(1, 26) = 1.02, ns$ . Taken together, this implies that new leaders who have high status are expected to be effective, and stand to lose the most if they adopt an inappropriate leadership style. Similarly, low-status leaders are viewed as having little self-confidence, so a "take charge" leadership style has a greater impact on subordinates' perceptions of self-confidence.

**Mediation analyses.** Testing for mediation is a four-step process (see Baron & Kenny, 1986), and each condition must be satisfied to demonstrate full mediation. First, the independent variables have to be significantly related to the dependent variable. Second, the mediator has to be significantly related to the dependent variable. Third, the independent variables have to be significantly related to the mediator. Fourth, the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable has to be significantly reduced when accounting for the mediator.

Steps 1 and 3 have already been demonstrated by the significant, interactive effect of leader status and leadership style (the independent variables) on both effectiveness (the dependent variable) and self-confidence (the mediator). Linear regression revealed a significant relationship between self-confidence and effectiveness ( $\beta = .52$ ),  $t(160) = 7.74, p < .001$ , satisfying the conditions for Step 2. Finally, when the independent variables and the mediator were included in the model, the previously observed relationship between the independent variables and perceptions of leader ef-

Table 2  
Study 2: Linear Mixed Model Results for the Effects of Leader Status and Leadership Style on Perceptions of Leader Effectiveness and Self-Confidence

Variable	Low-status team leader		High-status team leader		F			Team assignment <sup>a</sup>
	Participative style	Directive style	Participative style	Directive style	Leader status	Leader style	Interaction	Estimate (SE)
Effectiveness	4.19 (1.29)	4.52 (1.18)	5.06 (1.35)	4.16 (1.51)	0.96	1.24	5.73*	.43* (.18)
Self-confidence	4.01 (1.45) (n = 42)	4.76 (1.12) (n = 42)	4.68 (1.19) (n = 39)	4.44 (1.25) (n = 39)	0.59	1.30	5.00*	.20 (.15)

Note. Values represent means and (standard deviations).

<sup>a</sup> Estimate of the random variance between teams.

\*  $p < .05$ .



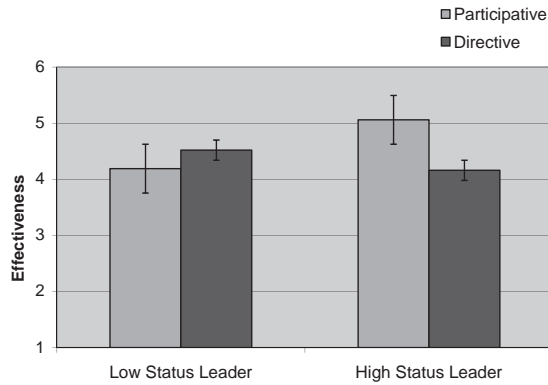


Figure 2. Study 2: Effects of leader status and leadership style on perceptions of leader effectiveness.

fectiveness became nonsignificant,  $F(1, 49) = 2.74, p = .10, ns$ , thus satisfying the fourth condition. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported: The interactive effect of new leader status and leadership style on team members' perceptions of leader effectiveness is mediated by perceptions of the leader's self-confidence.

**Team performance.** Using a performance measure of mouse clicks per level (smaller numbers indicate better performance), ANOVA revealed that teams led by low-status leaders who used a directive style ( $M = 108.9, SD = 31.3$ ) performed better than teams led by low-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 126.0, SD = 31.4$ ), whereas teams led by high-status leaders who used a directive style ( $M = 119.3, SD = 19.1$ ) performed worse than teams led by high-status leaders who used a participative style ( $M = 92.5, SD = 12.8$ ),  $F(1, 50) = 10.19, p < .01$ . This provides support for Hypothesis 4.

To provide a more clear interpretation of these results, I note that over all teams, the highest number of levels cleared was 3.2. With perfect knowledge of how to play the game and no wasted motions, a team would have to use 131 mouse clicks to clear that number of levels. Therefore, the absolute best score a team could achieve is 41 mouse clicks per level. Actual scores in this study ranged from 61 to 178 mouse clicks per level. Figure 4 depicts the average performance of teams in each condition. To aid in visu-

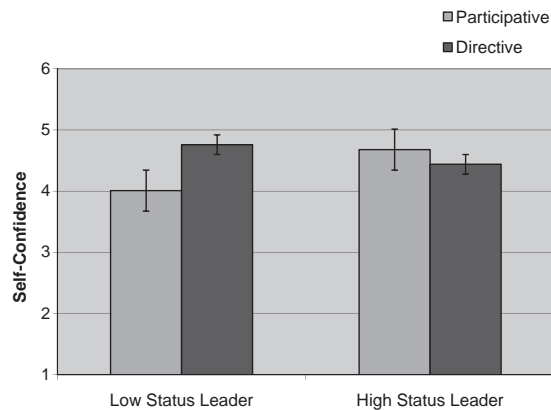


Figure 3. Study 2: Effects of leader status and leadership style on perceptions of leader self-confidence.

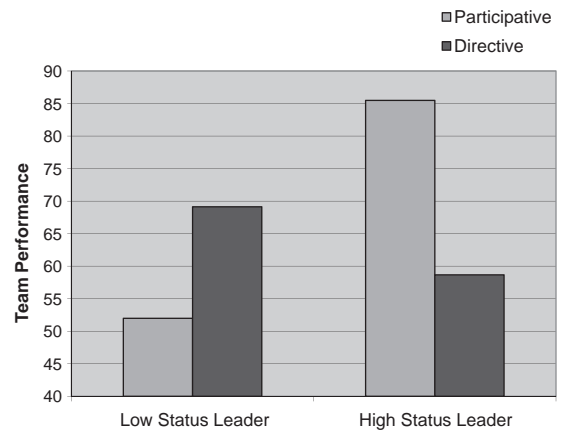


Figure 4. Study 2: Effects of leader status and leadership style on team performance.

alization, each team's score has been subtracted from 178 (the worst score observed). Therefore, higher bars indicate better performance.

**Status change.** I conducted post hoc analysis to look at the status gains or losses that team leaders incurred as a result of their interaction with their teams. In the manipulation check, I measured team members' perceptions of the new leader's status before they started working on the team task. I also asked participants to rate the team leader's status in the posttask questionnaire. HLM analysis of the normalized difference between pretask and posttask ratings revealed a significant relationship between leader status and style and gain or loss in status. Use of a directive style resulted in a status gain for low-status leaders but a status loss for high-status leaders, and use of a participative style resulted in a status loss for high-status leaders but a status gain for low-status leaders,  $F(1, 50) = 5.16, p < .05$  (see Figure 5). Although these effects were not hypothesized, they provide us with a better understanding of the status dynamics at play in this experiment.

## Discussion

As in Study 1, the findings of Study 2 show that a newly assigned team leader's status interacts with his or her leadership

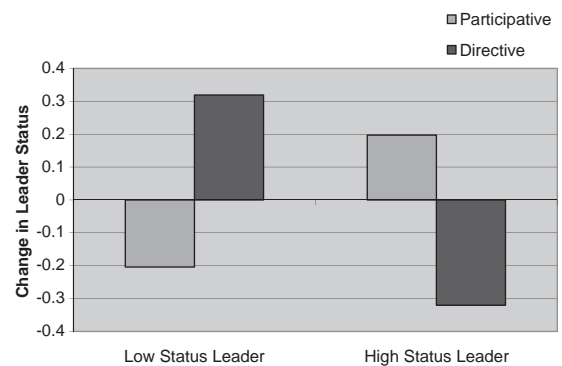


Figure 5. Study 2: Effects of leader status and leadership style on normalized change in leader status.

style to affect team members' assessments of leader effectiveness. These same factors impact perceptions of the leader's self-confidence, and this mediates the relationship with effectiveness. I observed that teams performed better when the leader's choice of management style was appropriate for his or her status level, and I saw that teams led by high-status leaders who used a participative style outperformed all other teams, on average. Finally, in post hoc analysis, I discovered that use of a directive style resulted in a status gain for low-status leaders but a status loss for high-status leaders, and use of a participative style resulted in a status loss for low-status leaders but a status gain for high-status leaders.

### General Discussion

These studies demonstrate that who an incoming team leader is plays an important role in affecting team members' reactions to what the new leader does, and it is clear that team members have similar perceptions regardless of whether they are simply watching a video clip or interacting in real time to complete a complex task. The manner in which new leaders' status and style interact to affect their teams is an important area of organizational study. Although the body of leadership research that has focused on leader behaviors is vast, featuring thousands of studies covering a span of 75 years (Yukl, 2002), very little research has focused particularly on the situation in which a new leader takes over an existing team. And although a number of other studies have explored how certain characteristics of the leader affect power and influence, none have looked at how leader status might moderate the impact of certain types of leadership behaviors on team member's reactions. In short, I argued and found that the same leadership style that works well for one new leader might sabotage another. Low-status leaders are rated more favorably when they use a directive style, whereas high-status leaders are better off using a participative style. At the group level, the same interaction pattern occurs for measures of team performance.

### Implications

Results from these studies have significant theoretical and managerial implications for researchers and practitioners alike. A broad implication concerns the gain or loss of status that results from calling on different bases of power to influence others in a group. I found that incoming leaders with low status were most effective when they "took charge" and told their team members what to do. In doing so, they were relying purely on the authority vested in their position as leader, and their directive style was seen as a display of self-confidence. By contrast, using a directive style was detrimental for high-status leaders and the teams they led. Recall that individuals derive personal power in part from their status (French & Raven, 1959; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). My analysis of status gains and losses implies that low-status individuals in a group setting are able to enhance their level of personal power by drawing on whatever positional power they hold. I also found that when high-status leaders exercised their authority with a directive style, they lost status. This suggests that high-status individuals are better off relying solely on their personal power to influence others in a group setting. This also underscores the changeable nature of status and influence relationships that exist in interdependent teams, and lends credence to the idea of viewing power as a

dynamic integrative process (Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005). From a managerial perspective, these findings imply that a new team leader will need to recognize the status structure of the team and must be prepared to adapt his or her style accordingly.

This research has implications for the study of status as well. The long tradition of status characteristics research tells us that group members make attributions about one another as soon as they first meet (Berger et al., 1977), and continue to interpret status cues and develop a view of each other's relative status as they continue to interact (Flynn, Chatman, & Spataro, 2001). Group members attribute status and reorder the status hierarchy on the basis of their observations of others' behaviors. Any individual with an initially low-status position must demonstrate multiple examples of competence in order to compel others to shift their status-based expectations of competence (Hollingshead & Fraudin, 2003). My findings indicate that the assessment of these examples of competence is based not only on behavior but also on status as well. As we see across both studies, the same leader behaviors that garnered higher standing in one team led to lower standing in another, depending on the leader's status. In essence, this research study is one of attribution; I manipulated features of a simulated leader and participants evaluated their perceptions of effectiveness on the basis of how they view status and behavior. Examples of competence—and any behaviors for that matter—are subject to an appraisal that is clouded by status and by observers' attributions.

This research also makes important contributions to the study of leadership. These studies did not simply identify a relationship between new leader status and style and assessments of leader effectiveness, but they focused on the process through which these effects come about—a focus that has largely been missing in leadership studies (Hunt, 1999; Yukl, 1999). I looked at the mediating role played by perceptions of a new leader's self-confidence, and although other scholars have looked at how leader self-confidence leads to effectiveness, this research differs in a number of ways. Others have viewed self-confidence as a personality trait possessed (or not) by the leader, reflecting his or her perceived probability of successfully exercising influence over other group members (Cartwright, 1965; McClelland, 1985; Pollard & Mitchell, 1972). Mowday (1978, 1979) theorized that self-confidence was an important component of power motivation in predicting the likelihood that a leader would attempt to exercise influence in decision situations. Recall that team leaders reported the same level of self-confidence regardless of which condition they were assigned. Despite the lack of effect on the team leaders' own perceptions, leader status and style had a significant effect on team members' perceptions. In other words, it does not matter whether the leader actually feels self-confident or is motivated to use power; team members will make more favorable assessments of effectiveness if they simply perceive the leader to be self-confident. This suggests that team members view self-confidence as a demonstration of a leader's self-efficacy, indicating a willingness to step up and prominently wear the mantle of leadership. It also suggests that an air of self-confidence forms part of the prototype that most people hold for their leader and lends support to the idea that team members make leadership attributions when they see sufficient overlap with the prototype (Lord et al., 1984; Nye & Forsyth, 1991; Rush & Russell, 1988).

From an organizational perspective, the impact that new leader status and style had on objective measures of group success bears

significant managerial implications. Consider the performance of teams in Study 2. Those led by high-status directive leaders used, on average, 119 mouse clicks to clear each level of the game. Teams led by high-status participative leaders were much more efficient, clearing each level with 92 clicks, on average. If these were real teams working in industry, performance differences of this magnitude would have considerable organizational impact. Self-awareness on the part of a new team leader, understanding where he or she stands in the status hierarchy, and selecting the appropriate leadership behaviors can have a significant effect on the bottom line.

The idea that incoming leaders need to be self-aware is a critical point for the extension and application of these findings. Self-awareness is considered to be the foundation of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), representing an "individual's ability to assess other's evaluations of the self and to incorporate these assessments into one's self-evaluation" (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992, p. 143). Self-awareness enables a leader to engage in self-monitoring behavior, responding to social and interpersonal cues that indicate the appropriateness of their leadership behavior for the situation (Salovey & Mayer, 1989–1990; Snyder, 1974). Self-awareness can be developed using tools such as 360-degree feedback and personality inventories (see, e.g., McCarthy & Garavan, 1999), and it is a critically important competence among high-performing managers in organizations (Church, 1997). The research presented here underscores that importance.

### Limitation and Directions for Future Research

Like any study, the present research has limitations that leave some questions unanswered, providing the opportunity for future research. For one thing, the experimental setting of these studies constrained the context of the team interaction and thus the generalizability of the results. Teams have varied levels of interdependencies that structure the workflow relations across team members, and the findings presented here may not hold for a different type of interdependent task. At the simplest level, team members' discrete contributions are simply pooled together without any necessity of coordination. Sequential interdependence exists when individual contributions occur in a fixed serial order, whereas reciprocal interdependence exists when tasks are bidirectional and team members rely on the actions of one another to accomplish objectives (Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig, 1976). At its most complex, team interdependence is characterized by workflows that are simultaneous and parallel, as well as reciprocal, serial, and pooled (Kozlowski et al., 1999). The task in this study called for moderately complex interdependencies among team members. The task was serial, with one set of actions occurring before the next, but individual members also pooled their contributions as they called out ideas for solving the puzzle. The role of the team leader was primarily one of coordination, combining these ideas into a problem-solving strategy. It is likely that the complexity of the task exacerbated team members' reactions to leader status and style. As task interdependencies become more complex, greater contribution and coordination are required among team members (Galbraith, 1977; Thompson, 1967). Participative leadership, by definition, encourages this input from team members. If a group task is characterized by highly complex interdependencies, it is likely that

the use of a directive leadership style, regardless of new leader status, could have deleterious effects on group performance.

By contrast, some types of tasks call for a directive leadership style, even if the new team leader has high status. Consider the new shop foreman on a manufacturing assembly line, for example; Fiedler's (1964) contingency holds that when the task is structured and simple, a directive style is most appropriate for the leader who is held in high esteem. Or consider a task that involves high stress, urgency, or dire consequences for failure (emergency response or combat, for example). In these situations, the new fire chief or troop commander is warranted in using a directive leadership style (Hahn & Trittipoe, 1961). Clearly, we would not expect high-status leaders who are directive to be perceived as less effective across all tasks, and context cannot be ignored when considering the implications of this research. Future studies should look at teams performing different types of tasks in different situations to gain a better understanding of the boundary conditions of the findings presented here.

Additional research should also examine the mechanisms that account for the poor performance outcomes witnessed in Study 2. A study that explicitly measures the effects of new leader status and style on members' collective efficacy and perceptions of leader self-efficacy would yield a better understanding of how these factors impact group performance. It is possible that in teams led by low-status participative leaders, a lack of alignment and control causes lower performance. In teams led by high-status directive leaders, team members might shut down, disengage, and become less willing to contribute. It is also possible that issues of trust account for these differential effects. Trust can be described as the degree to which a trustee (the new team leader in this case) is believed to have skills that garner influence in a specific domain, and it represents team members' willingness to accept that influence based on the expectation that the leader will behave in a particular way (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Trustworthiness is a multifaceted construct that captures the competence and character of the trustee as well as the proclivities and expectations of the trustor (Gabarro, 1978). When a new leader uses a style that is deemed inappropriate for someone of their status, members' expectations are violated, and the antecedents of trust—ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995)—disappear. Future research should take a closer look at these processes, examining how leader behaviors affect subordinates' perceptions of trust, their willingness to accept influence, and their subsequent desire to contribute to a team process.

Finally, the differential status gains and losses experienced by directive leaders is an area worthy of further exploration. Research from the status generalization perspective could aid in providing an explanation for how these effects arise. This work suggests that the display of task cues (e.g., steady gaze, fluid gestures, well-moderated voice tone, speaking more often, and sitting at the head of the table) is an effective means to enhance one's status in groups. However, the display of dominance cues is ineffective and can lead to a loss in status (Driskell, Olmstead, & Salas, 1993). Dominance cues include pointing gestures, a loud voice, and statements such as "listen to me" or "do as I say" (Ellyson & Dovidio, 1985). In my research, the operationalization of directive leadership included elements from both of these lists, and directive leaders displayed both task and dominance cues. Directive leaders spoke more often in telling people what to do, stood over the

shoulder of seated team members (akin to sitting at the head of the table), pointed their finger when directing the mouse controller, and essentially told others to “do as I say.” It is possible that leader status moderates group members’ perceptions of whether a specific behavior is a task cue or a dominance cue. Directive leadership may be seen as a cue of task ability for low-status leaders, but a dominance cue for high-status leaders. This would account for the differential gains and losses in status witnessed here, and it presents an interesting question for future study.

## Conclusion

This research examined how a newly assigned team leader’s status and leadership style interact to affect group members’ perceptions and group performance. In this research, I made distinctions between a leader-directed process and a participative process. Across two experiments, I found that low-status leaders were viewed as more effective when they used a directive style, whereas high-status leaders were better off using a participative style. I also found that perceptions of self-confidence mediated the relationship between leader status and style. Finally, I found that teams whose leaders were viewed as being more effective performed better on a complex team task. New leaders face a challenging task when they take charge of their teams. They have to recognize where they stand, and they have to determine how best to manage the team process—when to let it emerge and when to rein it in. Understanding the nature of the interaction of new leader status and leadership style and its impact on teams remains a critical endeavor, ripe for future research.

## References

- Amabile, T. M., Schatzel, E. A., Moneta, G. B., & Kramer, S. J. (2004). Leader behaviors and the work environment for creativity: Perceived leader support. *Leadership Quarterly*, *15*, 5–32. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.12.003
- Ames, D. R., & Flynn, F. J. (2007). What breaks a leader: The curvilinear relation between assertiveness and leadership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*, 307–324. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.2.307
- Atwater, L., & Yammarino, F. (1992). Does self-other agreement on leadership perceptions moderate the validity of leadership and performance predictions? *Personnel Psychology*, *45*, 141–164. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.1992.tb00848.x
- Bacharach, S. B., & Lawler, E. J. (1980). *Power and politics in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 191–215. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191
- Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *9*, 75–78. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.00064
- Barley, S. R. (1990). The alignment of technology and structure through roles and networks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *35*, 61–103. doi:10.2307/2393551
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 1173–1182. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173
- Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass and Stodgill’s handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., Valenzi, E. R., Farrow, D. L., & Solomon, R. J. (1975). Management styles associated with organizational, task, personal, and interpersonal contingencies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *60*, 720–729. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.60.6.720
- Berger, J., Cohen, B. P., & Zelditch, M. (1972). Status characteristics and social interaction. *American Sociological Review*, *37*, 241–255. doi:10.2307/2093465
- Berger, J., Fisek, M. H., Norman, R. Z., & Zelditch, M. (1977). *Status characteristics and social interaction: An expectation states approach*. New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Cartwright, D. (1965). Influence, leadership and control. In J. March (Ed.), *Handbook of organizations* (pp. 1–47). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Chemers, M. M. (2000). Leadership research and theory: A functional integration. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *4*, 27–43. doi:10.1037/1089-2699.4.1.27
- Chen, C., & Lee, H. (2007). Effects of transformational team leadership on collective efficacy and team performance. *International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, *4*, 202–217. doi:10.1504/IJMED.2007.011792
- Chen, G., & Bliese, P. D. (2002). The role of different levels of leadership in predicting self- and collective efficacy: Evidence for discontinuity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*, 549–556.
- Church, A. (1997). Managerial self-awareness in high-performing individuals in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*, 281–292. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.82.2.281
- Colquitt, J. A., Scott, B. A., & LePine, J. A. (2007). Trust, trustworthiness, and trust propensity: A meta-analytic test of their unique relationships with risk taking and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*, 909–927. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.909
- De Cremer, D., & van Knippenberg, D. (2004). Leader self-sacrifice and leadership effectiveness: The moderating role of leader self-confidence. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *95*, 140–155. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2004.04.002
- Devine, D. J., Clayton, L. D., Philips, J. L., Dunford, B. B., & Melner, S. B. (1999). Teams in organizations: Prevalence, characteristics, and effectiveness. *Small Group Research*, *30*, 678–711. doi:10.1177/104649649903000602
- Driskell, J. E., Olmstead, B., & Salas, E. (1993). Task cues, dominance cues, and influence in task groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *78*, 51–60. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.78.1.51
- Ellyson, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1985). *Power, dominance, and nonverbal behavior*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1964). A contingency model of leadership effectiveness. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 149–190). New York, NY: Academic Press. doi:10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60051-9
- Flynn, F. J., Chatman, J. A., & Spataro, S. E. (2001). Getting to know you: The influence of personality on impressions and performance of demographically different people in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *46*, 414–442. doi:10.2307/3094870
- French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies of social power* (pp. 150–167). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.
- Gabarro, J. J. (1978). The development of trust, influence, and expectations. In A. G. Athos & J. J. Gabarro (Eds.), *Interpersonal behaviors: Communication and understanding in relationships* (pp. 290–303). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gabarro, J. J. (1987). *The dynamics of taking charge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Galbraith, J. R. (1977). *Organization design*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Gersick, C. J. G. (1988). Time and transition in work teams: Toward a new model of group development. *Academy of Management Journal*, *31*, 9–41. doi:10.2307/256496
- Gist, M. E., & Mitchell, T. R. (1992). Self-efficacy: A theoretical analysis



- of its determinants and malleability. *Academy of Management Review*, 17, 183–211. doi:10.2307/258770
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Griffin, R. W. (1980). Relationships among individual, task design, and leader-behavior variables. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23, 665–683. doi:10.2307/255555
- Gully, S. M., Incalcaterra, K. A., Joshi, A., & Beaubien, J. M. (2002). A meta-analysis of team efficacy, potency and performance: Interdependence and level of analysis as moderators of observed relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 819–832. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.87.5.819
- Hackman, J. R. (1987). The design of work teams. In J. W. Lorsch (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior* (pp. 315–342). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hackman, J. R. (1990). *Groups that work (and those that don't)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hahn, C. P., & Trittipoe, T. G. (1961). *Situational problems for leadership training: III. Review for petty officers of leadership research*. Washington, DC: Naval Contract Report, Institute for Research.
- Hannah, S. T., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., & Harms, P. D. (2008). Leadership efficacy: Review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 669–692. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.09.007
- Hollingshead, A. B., & Fraidin, S. N. (2003). Gender stereotypes and assumptions about expertise in transactive memory. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39, 355–363. doi:10.1016/S0022-1031(02)00549-8
- Hunt, J. G. (1999). Transformational/charismatic leadership's transformation of the field: An historical essay. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 129–144. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00015-6
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. W. (2002). Personality and leadership: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 765–780. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.765
- Jung, D., & Sosik, J. (2003). Group potency and collective efficacy. *Group Organization Management*, 28, 366–391. doi:10.1177/1059601102250821
- Katz-Navon, T., & Erez, M. (2005). When collective- and self-efficacy affect team performance. *Small Group Research*, 36, 437–465. doi:10.1177/1046496405275233
- Katz-Keller, R. T. (2006). Transformational leadership, initiating structure, and substitutes for leadership: A longitudinal study of research and development project team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 202–210. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.202
- Kim, P., Pinkley, R., & Fragale, A. (2005). Power dynamics in negotiation. *Academy of Management Review*, 30, 799–822.
- Korsgaard, M. A., Schweiger, D. M., & Sapienza, H. J. (1995). Building commitment, attachment, and trust in strategic decision-making teams: The role of procedural justice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 60–84. doi:10.2307/256728
- Kotter, J. P. (1977). Power, dependence, and effective management. *Harvard Business Review*, 55, 125–136.
- Kotter, J. P. (1990). What leaders really do. *Harvard Business Review*, 13, 103–111.
- Kozlowski, S. W. J., Gully, S. M., Nason, E. R., & Smith, E. M. (1999). Developing adaptive teams: A theory of compilation and performance across levels and time. In D. R. Ilgen & E. D. Pulakos (Eds.), *The changing nature of work and performance: Implications for staffing personnel actions and development* (pp. 240–292). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Liberum Research. (2006). *Management changes – January 2005 through May 2006*. New York, NY: Author.
- Lord, R. G. (1985). An information processing approach to social perceptions, leadership, and behavioral measurement in organizations. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 7, pp. 87–128). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Lord, R. G., Binning, J. F., Rush, M. C., & Thomas, J. C. (1978). The effect of performance cues and leader behavior on questionnaire ratings of leadership behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 21, 27–39. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(78)90036-3
- Lord, R. G., Foti, R. J., & De Vader, C. (1984). A test of leadership categorization theory: Internal structure, information processing, and leadership perceptions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34, 343–378. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(84)90043-6
- Major, D. A., Kozlowski, S. W. J., Chao, G. T., & Gardner, P. D. (1995). A longitudinal investigation of newcomer expectations, early socialization outcomes, and the moderating effects of role development factors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 418–431.
- Manderscheid, S. V., & Ardichvili, A. (2008). New leader assimilation: Process and outcomes. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 29, 661–677. doi:10.1108/01437730810916622
- Mannix, E. A., & Sauer, S. J. (2006). Status and power in organizational group research: Acknowledging the pervasiveness of hierarchy. In E. Lawler & S. Thye (Eds.), *Advances in group processes: Social psychology of the workplace* (Vol. 23, pp. 149–182). New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709–734. doi:10.2307/258792
- McCarthy, A. M., & Garavan, T. N. (1999). Developing self-awareness in the managerial career development process: The value of 360-degree feedback and the MBTI. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 23, 437–445. doi:10.1108/03090599910302613
- McClelland, D. C. (1985). *Human motivation*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Milanovich, D. M., Driskell, J. E., Stout, R. J., & Salas, E. (1998). Status and cockpit dynamics: A review and empirical study. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 2, 155–167. doi:10.1037/1089-2699.2.3.155
- Mintzberg, H. (1983). *Power in and around organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Moreland, R. L., & Levine, J. M. (1982). Socialization in small-groups: Temporal changes in individual-group relations. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 15, 137–192. doi:10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60297-X
- Mowday, R. (1978). The exercise of influence in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23, 137–156. doi:10.2307/2392437
- Mowday, R. (1979). Leader characteristics, self-confidence, and methods of upward influence in organizational decision situations. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 22, 709–725. doi:10.2307/255810
- Nye, J. L., & Forsyth, D. R. (1991). The effects of prototype-based biases on leadership appraisals: A test of leadership categorization theory. *Small Group Research*, 22, 360–379. doi:10.1177/1046496491223005
- Paglis, L. L., & Green, S. G. (2002). Leadership self-efficacy and managers' motivation for leading change. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23, 215–235. doi:10.1002/job.137
- Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing.
- Pollard, W., & Mitchell, T. (1972). Decision theory analysis of social power. *Psychological Bulletin*, 78, 433–446. doi:10.1037/h0033727
- Ridgeway, C. L., & Erickson, K. G. (2000). Creating and spreading status beliefs. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 106, 579–615.
- Rush, M. C., & Russell, J. E. A. (1988). Leader prototypes and prototype-contingent consensus in leader-behavior descriptions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 24, 88–104. doi:10.1016/0022-1031(88)90045-5
- Sagie, A. (1996). Effects of leader's communication style and participative goal setting on performance and attitudes. *Human Performance*, 9, 51–64. doi:10.1207/s15327043hup0901\_3

- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1989–1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, 185–211.
- Shea, C., & Howell, J. (1999). Charismatic leadership and task feedback: A laboratory study of their effects on self-efficacy and task performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 375–396. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00020-X
- Sivasubramaniam, N., Murry, W., Avolio, B., & Jung, D. (2002). A longitudinal model of the effects of team leadership and group potency on group performance. *Group and Organization Management*, 27, 66–96. doi:10.1177/1059601102027001005
- Snyder, M. (1974). The self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, 526–537. doi:10.1037/h0037039
- Somech, A. (2006). The effects of leadership style and team process on performance and innovation in functionally heterogeneous teams. *Journal of Management*, 32, 132–157. doi:10.1177/0149206305277799
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in action*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384–399. doi:10.1037/h0022100
- Tuckman, B. W., & Jenson, M. A. C. (1977). Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group and Organization Management*, 2, 419–427. doi:10.1177/105960117700200404
- Van de Ven, A. H., Delbecq, A. L., & Koenig, R. (1976). Determinants of coordination modes within organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 41, 322–338. doi:10.2307/2094477
- Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E. H. (1977). *Toward a theory of organizational socialization*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Vroom, V. H., & Jago, A. G. (1978). On the validity of the Vroom-Yetton model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 63, 151–162. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.63.2.151
- Vroom, V. H., & Yetton, P. W. (1973). *Leadership and decision making*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Wageman, R. (2001). How leaders foster self-managing team effectiveness: Design choices versus hands-on coaching. *Organization Science*, 12, 559–577.
- Walumbwa, F., Wang, P., Lawler, J., & Shi, K. (2004). The role of collective efficacy in the relations between transformational leadership and work outcomes. *Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology*, 77, 515–530. doi:10.1348/0963179042596441
- Watkins, M. (2003). *The first 90 days: Critical success strategies for new leaders at all levels*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 285–305. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00013-2
- Yukl, G. (2002). *Leadership in organizations* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Yukl, G., & Falbe, C. M. (1991). Importance of different power sources in downward and lateral relations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 416–423. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.76.3.416
- Zelditch, M., Berger, J., Anderson, B., & Cohen, B. P. (1970). Equitable comparisons. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 13, 19–26.

Received March 19, 2010

Revision received December 20, 2010

Accepted December 20, 2010 ■