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## Literature Review

# The Effects of interaction of leadership and followership based on followers' perceptions: Relationships among leader-member exchange, organizational citizenship behavior, work engagement, and job performance

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## Abstract

The success of an organization cannot depend solely on leaders or followers. In past research, more attention has been paid to leaders. However, the success of an organization may depend more on followers; and even a harmonious relationship between leaders and followers. This study aims to focus on the Interaction of Leadership and Followership (ILF) perceived by different types of followers; the behavioral patterns generated by such interaction; and the impact of their interpersonal interaction on organizational citizenship behavior, work engagement, and job performance. Furthermore, the mediating effect of Leader-Member exchange (LMX) on the relationship among ILF, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Job Performance (JP); ILF, Work Engagement (WEng) and job performance. There were four styles of followership matched with four styles of leadership, and 16 groups of leadership and followership style interaction combinations were obtained in this study. The study found the interaction of different leadership and followership had positive, negative, and non-impact on OCB, WEng and JP. Future research can examine the interactions between more different types of leadership and followership characteristics to understand their impact on different working variables, and to better understand the impact of the interaction between leaders and followers.

## Introduction

Leadership and followership have become popular topics among scholars in recent decades. In practice, it is common for the same supervisor to have different corresponding leadership behaviors for different subordinates; similarly, subordinates will follow different supervisors differently. Many existing studies have explored variable leadership and followership behavior, but they cannot be clearly explained in the existing leadership theory or followership theory. However, as long as we discuss the relevant issues of leadership theory, it is difficult not to talk about followers, because, without followers, leaders

do not exist. Even so, many studies have also confirmed that leaders and followers have an interactive relationship with each other's behavior (Uhl-Bien, et al. 2014; Yukl, 2010), but more studies have emphasized the followership generated by the interaction between the leader and follower behaviors. In the past, the strong leadership tendencies of supervisors have gradually changed into a differentiated management mode based on the individual characteristics of employees.

In recent studies on leaders and followers, it is not difficult to find that followers have gradually morphed into active and positive roles in the process of leadership. The study of

followership behavior has been paid more and more attention in leadership research and has even become the main variable of research (Baker 2007; Jin & Hahm, 2017; Kelly, 2008; Uhl-Bien and Phillai 2007). However, to have a deeper understanding of follower behavior patterns, researchers should set the subject of the study as followers themselves, and study follower behavior from followers' viewpoints, to have a more accurate understanding of follower behavior. More research adds variables that affect work efficiency to leadership and follower behavior research, such as non-task-related attributes, leader-member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior, and work engagement [1,2]. Unfortunately, only a few studies have integrated their relationships and analyzed the impact of these variables on job performance.

In this study we aim to fill the recent research gaps, thereby focusing on the interaction between leadership and followership perceived by different types of followers, the behavioral patterns generated by such interaction, and the impact of their interpersonal interaction on organizational citizenship behavior, work engagement, and job performance. The purpose of this study is to explore: (1) the interaction between leadership and followership under the perspective of the Followers (ILF) (2) the influence of ILF on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and job performance; work engagement and job performance (3) the mediating effect of Leader-Member exchange (LMX) on the relationship among ILF, OCB and job performance; ILF, Work Engagement (WEng) and job performance.

### Interaction of Leadership and Followership (ILF)

According to the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001 and 2004) which believes that individual actions and behaviors in society are learned through observation of the behavior of others in society. That is, the learning of personal knowledge and behavior is learned through self-modeling and self-regulatory mechanisms, in the context of social interaction and experience, based on one's observation of others. Moreover, based on the social influence theory proposed by Kelman [3], who believed that social influence has three levels of influence on people. They are compliance, identification, and internalization. Some influences will allow people to engage in public compliance, such as superficial speech or action support, but do not involve changes in personal beliefs. Some influences can be accepted by the heart, the effect is more durable, and People integrate influence into their values. Social influence can change an individual's attitude and behavior, and accepting the influence of others has a relative relationship with personal motivations. Social influence is due to the existence of a certain relationship between the two parties, one party intentionally or unintentionally affects the other party's behavior.

The findings of Ehrhart and Klein in 2001 [4], followers had different responses to the same leader's behavior. To enhance employee work engagement and job performance, it becomes very important to identify types of followership so that managers can maximize employee productivity by adopting different leadership styles [5]. Bjugstad, et al. [6] proposed integrative views of leaders and followers, combining

situational leadership theory and followership models. He believed leadership performance can only be produced when leadership behavior and subordinate follow-up models are coordinated. Leadership should not only be influenced by a single leadership behavior but also by subordinates. In other words, leadership performance is influenced by the interaction between leaders and followers at the same time.

In this study, the interaction between leaders and followers has a great impact on the performance of the organization. Based on the social exchange theory [7], which is a model for interpreting society as a series of interactions between people that are based on estimates of rewards and punishments. Moreover, people tend to expand benefits, reduce costs, or tend to expand satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction. It emphasizes that people should avoid competition in conflicts of interest as far as possible and win-win or multi-win through mutual social exchange. It includes not only material things but also spiritual things. Moreover, micro-sociologists point out that most of the rewards people seek can only come from other members of society who interact with them.

### Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

A better understanding of the LMX construct may lead to improved subordinate relationships and hence to improved organizational outcomes. Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory refers to those leaders who treat subordinates differently due to their contributions, time, pressure, personal preferences, and other reasons and form a leadership-subordinate exchange relationship of different qualities. LMX theory was originally developed based on the 1975 study of Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, which described the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers, it emphasizes the dyadic relationship of leader-member. Later it received attention from scholars to make further studies developing the term leader-member exchange (LMX) theory [8]. According to this theory, a leader develops exchange relationships with her/his subordinates and based upon these relationships a more trusted or close group called an "in-group, and a rather less-trusted "out-group" are developed. If a leader gives more favorable treatment to in-group members, these members will enjoy the high-quality exchange. Likewise, these followers will exert extra effort for the leader and the leader reciprocates by doing the same for them. In turn, the employee who feels part of the out-group experiences low-quality exchange. They received less valued resources and get less favorable treatment from their leaders [1,9].

### Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

For many different scholars, the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) derives from the different explanations and definitions of employees' autonomous behavior in the organization. Autonomous behavior is widely evidenced in organizations. Many researchers are interested in it. Chester Barnard proposed the concept of willingness to cooperate in 1938. Later, Daniel Katz proposed the distinction between dependable role performance and creativity and spontaneity. He stated that the normal operation

of an organization requires employees to show three types of behavior: (1) The member in an organization must be attracted by the organization, and willing to stay in the organization to work for the organization; (2) Members must complete the tasks within their roles; (3) Members must show initiative and innovation beyond the role requirements. Smith, Organ, and Near in 1983 [10] first proposed the concept of organizational citizenship behavior. In 1988 [11], Organ describes OCB as an “individual behavior at work that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal rewards system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (p.4).

According to Organ (1998), organizational citizenship behavior should be composed of five dimensions: altruistic, courtesy, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship. Altruistic behavior refers to employees' willingness to take the time to help their colleagues accomplish their tasks or prevent possible mistakes in their work. Courtesy means that employees treat others with respect. Civic virtue means that employees take the initiative to care and invest, i.e. participate in various activities of the organization, including active reading of internal documents of the organization, concern about major events of the organization, and making suggestions for the development of the organization. Conscientiousness refers to employees' performance exceeding the basic requirements of the organization, planning their work as early as possible, and setting the time to complete the work. Sportsmanship refers to employees' spirit at work. In an unsatisfactory environment, they will still maintain a positive attitude to face it, and remain loyal to their duties without complaining about the poor environment; in addition, individuals will sacrifice their interests for the benefit of their working groups.

### Work Engagement (WEng)

The term engagement, currently found in the scholarly literature has three primary definitions; personal engagement [12], self-engagement [13] and work engagement [14]. Work engagement is the most popular scholarly model of engagement, which is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” [14] and “the emotional and intellectual commitment of an individual or group to build and sustain strong business performance” [15]. Engaged employees should see themselves as able to deal completely with the demands of their job and have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities.

In earlier literature, it is not difficult to find research on the factors related to work engagement and job performance, such as LMX, OCB, job satisfaction, and job burnout. It revealed a positive correlation with those factors [16-19]. In current studies, work engagement was the factor used to determine the correlation among LMX, trust in supervisors, and job performance.

### Relationship among ILF, LMX, OCB, WEng and JP

Leadership emerges from interactions between followers and leaders, where, empowerment leaders share power and

engage their followers' talents. On the other hand, different follower traits often have different behaviors in organizations. This has been verified in previous studies. However, different leadership styles have different effects on different followers' behavior changes. For an organization, what matters is how bad follower behavior can be transformed into follower behavior that contributes to the organization through leadership management [9,17,19].

A study conducted by Subramainiam, et al. [9] found that managers' relationships with their superiors have a moderating effect on the relationship between the leadership expectation gap and LMX quality. Pan and Liu's (2018) study indicated how supervisors' negative affect at work influences their interaction with subordinates. The finding was that supervisors' negativity at work was positively related to abusive supervision; the indirect effect of supervisors' negativity impacting subordinate outcomes, which means higher negativity affects work, lowers job satisfaction, and results in fewer personal initiatives. Moreover, Schyns [21] also conducted a study to find out how far followers' leadership-related four characteristics: idealized supervisor, the romance of leadership, the need for leadership, and dependence are related to the perception. The finding showed a positive relationship between the perception of LMX and the need for leadership/dependence.

Sharifirad and Hajhoseiny [22] surveyed 296 teachers from 36 branches of an English language institute in three major cities of Iran to find out the relationship between implicit leadership theories (ILT) and change behaviors. They used LMX as a mediating role and found that LMX has significant relationships with employees' support and resistance to change. Furthermore, a study conducted by Tastan and Davoudi [2] with 327 participants in Turkey examined the relationship between LMX and innovative work behavior with the moderating role of trust in the leader. Findings indicated that LMX quality had a positive influence on trust in leaders.

Additionally, previous studies have also verified that leaders' related behaviors in organizations have a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. Dartey-Baah, et al. [17] investigated 209 samples from 45 different hospitality institutions in Accra, Ghana. This study found that both leadership behaviors increased employees' engagement in OCB. Erthurk's [23] investigation of 1,018 academicians from a public university in Turkey, found that trust in a supervisor fully mediates the relationship between organizational justice and OCB. Zacher and Jimmieson [24] conducted a study with 236 samples from 61 food and beverage attendants at a casino. They found that transformational leadership was positively related to both OCB and productivity.

To integrate the previous literature and to fill the gaps of the previous studies, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the interaction of leadership and followership based on follower perception among the relationship of OCB, Work Engagement (WEng), and Job Performance (JP) with mediating role of LMX. Understanding this relationship could help to enhance the employee's OCB, and work engagement; and further impact job performance. The author proposed

a conceptual model summarizing all of the methodology, hypotheses, and research architecture as depicted in Figure 1.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between the interaction of leadership and followership under the perspective of the Followers (ILF) and Leader-Member exchange (LMX).

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive relationship between ILF and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a positive relationship between ILF and Work Engagement (WEng).

**Hypothesis 4:** LMX mediates the positive relationship between ILF, OCB, and Job Performance (JP).

**Hypothesis 5:** LMX mediates the positive relationship between ILF, WEng, and job performance.

## Methods

### Data collection and participants

To obtain a wide range of heterogeneous employees to study the interaction between different types of follower-leaders, a questionnaire survey was conducted among workers from 10 different industries. Through the Internet business directory, 150 China enterprises were visited by telephone. However, only about 50 companies agreed to send the link to the online questionnaire to the staff, who have to be currently employed and subordinated to at least one executive. Researchers agreed

to share the research results with the company that assisted with the data collection as a management reference.

A total of 308 participants completed the questionnaire, providing usable and complete responses. Each subordinate completed the questionnaire with the leadership, followership, leader-member exchange, organizational citizenship behavior, work engagement, job performance, and personal data scales. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. All constructs were measured with scales adapted from existing scales. A total of 84 items with 10 items of personal data was used to assess all factors. In our sample of 308 subordinates; the gender distribution was representative of the population: male subordinates accounted for 44.2%; forty years old and over subordinates accounted for 54.2%; 87.4 percent of the subordinates graduated from college; 55.5% of the subordinates' monthly income was more than RMB 10,000; 80.6 percent of subordinates had been working for their current employer for more than five years; 55.2 percent of the subordinates had been working for more than five years with their current supervisor; and, 57.4 percent of the subordinates' leaders were male.

### Measures

**The interaction between leaders and followers:** Respondents' cognition of their leaders' leadership is measured with 25 items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 5 ("always"). These items were adopted and modified from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ

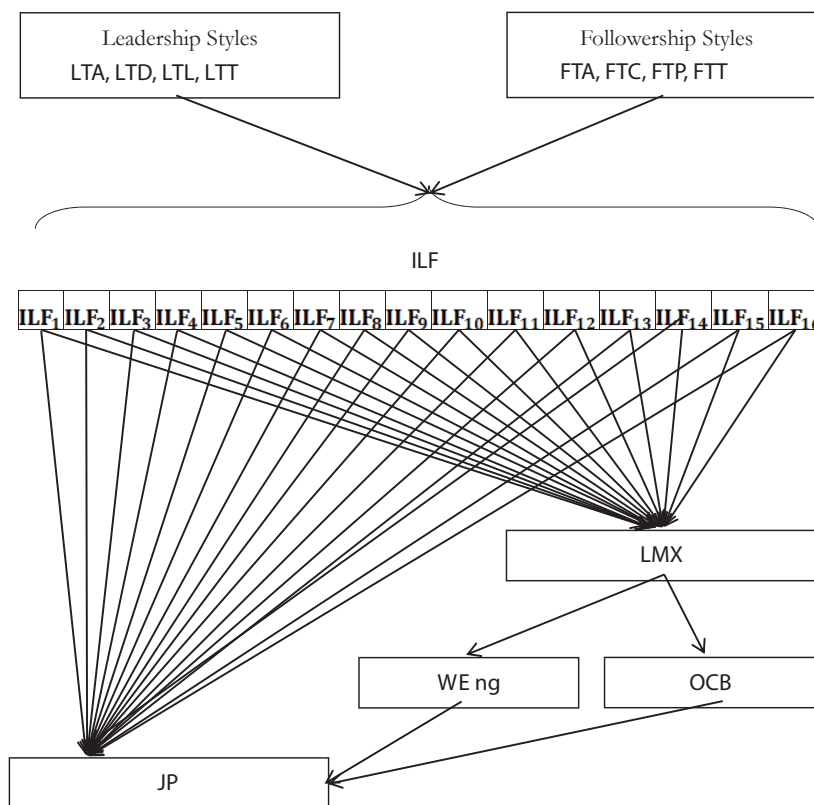


Figure 1: The methodology, hypothesis, and research architecture.



5X), which is the most common questionnaire for leadership styles used in recent studies [25,26]. The present study used principal components analysis to assess four leadership styles (Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-Faire, and Transformational) for the 25 items. This study set the variable of autocratic leadership style as **LTA**, which was measured by 6 items; the variable of democratic leadership style is set as **LTD**, which was measured by 8 items; the variable of laissez-laie leadership style as **LTL**, which was measured by 4 items; the variable of transformational leadership style as **LTT**, which was measured by 7 items [27].

Respondents, cognition of their followership is measured with 19 items, which was originally designed by Kelly in 1992 [28]. In this study, to have a better understanding of the different followership styles, the scale modified by Colangelo [29] was adopted to measure followership. The followership styles were active engagement in the organization’s critical activities (active); critical, independent thinking (critical); passion; and team-mindedness (team). This study set the variable of active followership style as **FTA**, measured by 7 items; the variable of critical followership style as **FTC**, measured by 4 items; the variable of passion followership style as **FTP**, which was measured by 4 items; the variable of team followership style as **FTT**, which measured by 4 items [30].

From the literature review, the interaction between leaders and followers (**ILF**) has a great impact on the performance of the organization. For the discussion on the impact of different **ILFs**, this paper set 16 variables for the multiple of four leadership styles and four followership styles, as **ILF<sub>1</sub>** set for FTA⊗LTA, which has 42 measures; **ILF<sub>2</sub>** set for FTA⊗LTD, which has 56 measures; **ILF<sub>3</sub>** set for FTA⊗LTL, which has 28 measures; **ILF<sub>4</sub>** set for FTA⊗LTT, which has 49 measures; **ILF<sub>5</sub>** set for FTC⊗LTA, which has 24 measures; **ILF<sub>6</sub>** set for FTC⊗LTD, which has 32 measures; **ILF<sub>7</sub>** set for FTC⊗LTL, which has 16 measures; **ILF<sub>8</sub>** set for FTC⊗LTT, which has 28 measures; **ILF<sub>9</sub>** set for FTP⊗LTA, which has 24 measures; **ILF<sub>10</sub>** set for FTP⊗LTD, which has 32 measures; **ILF<sub>11</sub>** set for FTP⊗LTL, which has 16 measures; **ILF<sub>12</sub>** set for FTP⊗LTT, which has 28 measures; **ILF<sub>13</sub>** set for FTT⊗LTA, which has 24 measures; **ILF<sub>14</sub>** set for FTT⊗LTD, which has 32 measures; **ILF<sub>15</sub>** set for FTT⊗LTL, which has 16 measures; **ILF<sub>16</sub>** set for FTT⊗LTT, which has 28 measures. [31,32].

The reliabilities and convergent validities on the variables of the interaction between leaders and followers were acceptable (see Table 1). Table 1 describes the Cronbach’s Alpha, rho A, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results of **ILF<sub>1</sub>**,..., **ILF<sub>16</sub>**. From Table 1, Cronbach’s Alpha, rho A, CR, and AVE values **ILF<sub>1</sub>** are all sufficient for further data analysis, although AVE for some variables is a bit lower, which is more than 0.39.

**Leader Member Exchange (LMX)**

There are 12 items of respondents’ Leader-Member Exchange (**LMX**) set for a leadership-subordinate exchange relationship of different quality, which is on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (“very strongly disagree”) to 5 (“very strongly agree”). **LMX-7** with 7 items scale is the most commonly used scale to test **LMX**. Liden and Maslyn [33], based on the **LMX**,

proposed four dimensions of the questionnaire: **LMX-MDM**., which provided a better understanding of the **LMX**. Other researchers have used it to test Chinese enterprises and found that they have good reliability and validity. As this study is going to access Chinese employees, the **LMX-MDM** was used to measure **LMX**. **LMX-MND** contains four dimensions: affect, contribution, loyalty, and professional respect.

From Table 1, Cronbach’s Alpha, rho A, CR, and AVE values of **LMX** are all sufficient for further data analysis.

**Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)**

This study adopted the 15 items questionnaire from Kumar and Shah [34] for respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior (**OCB**) based on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly Agree. The **OCB** scale used in this study was originally developed by Prdsakoff, et al. (1990). It has 24 items on a seven-point Likert scale. Kumar and Shah (2015) completed a study, which examined the psychometric properties of this scale to find out whether it is suitable for use in an Asian context. The reliability and validity of the brief version 15 items of the scale were found to be satisfactory, thereby providing support for the relevance of using this scale in the Asian context.

From Table 1, Cronbach’s Alpha, rho A, CR, and AVE values of **OCB** are all sufficient for further data analysis, although AVE for **OCB** is a bit lower, which is more than 0.41.

**Work Engagement (WEng)**

This study adopted 9 items questionnaire from Schaufeli, et al. [35] for respondents’ work engagement (**WEng**) based on

**Table 1:** The Cronbach’s Alpha, rho A, CR, AVE on **ILF**, **LMX**, **OCB**, **WEng**, **JP**.

	Cronbach’s Alpha	rho A	CR	AVE
<b>ILF<sub>1</sub></b>	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.46
<b>ILF<sub>2</sub></b>	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.66
<b>ILF<sub>3</sub></b>	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.63
<b>ILF<sub>4</sub></b>	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.56
<b>ILF<sub>5</sub></b>	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.39
<b>ILF<sub>6</sub></b>	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.56
<b>ILF<sub>7</sub></b>	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.53
<b>ILF<sub>8</sub></b>	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.48
<b>ILF<sub>9</sub></b>	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.51
<b>ILF<sub>10</sub></b>	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.69
<b>ILF<sub>11</sub></b>	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.67
<b>ILF<sub>12</sub></b>	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.60
<b>ILF<sub>13</sub></b>	0.94	0.95	0.95	0.44
<b>ILF<sub>14</sub></b>	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.63
<b>ILF<sub>15</sub></b>	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.60
<b>ILF<sub>16</sub></b>	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.54
<b>LMX</b>	0.94	0.95	0.95	0.62
<b>OCB</b>	0.86	0.91	0.89	0.41
<b>WEng</b>	0.94	0.95	0.95	0.69
<b>JP</b>	0.84	0.84	0.90	0.68



a 7-point Likert scale (0= never: 6=always). Work engagement was measured using the 9 items short form of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) [35]. It was modified from the original 24 items measurement developed by Schaufeli, et al. in 2002 [14]. This scale has three underlying dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption, each measured with three items.

From Table 1, Cronbach's Alpha, rho A, CR, and AVE values of **WEng** are all sufficient for further data analysis.

### Job Performance (JP)

This study adopted 4 items questionnaire from Williams and Anderson (1991) for respondents' job performance (JP) based on a 5-point Likert scale (1= never; 5 = always). From Table 1, Cronbach's Alpha, rho A, CR, and AVE values of **JP** are all sufficient for further data analysis.

### Data analysis

A two-step process of analysis with Smartpls 3.0 was employed to test the hypotheses. In the first step, we used three tests to verify the distinctiveness of the five core variables in this study-**ILF**, **LMX**, **OCB**, **WEng** and **JP**. In the second step, the authors used a model with a path weighting scheme to evaluate our structural models [36-38].

Based on the above discussion, the methodology, hypotheses, and research designs are illustrated in Figure 1. Considering the magnitude consistency of each variable, the paths of the model (Hypotheses) are:

$$JP = \beta_{1,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{1,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (1)$$

$$LMX = \beta_{1,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{1,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (2)$$

$$OCB = \beta_{2,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{2,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (3)$$

$$Weng = \beta_{3,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{3,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (4)$$

$$JP = \beta_{4,i}OCB + \beta_{5,i}LMX + \beta_{6,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{4,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (5)$$

$$JP = \beta_{7,i}Weng + \beta_{8,i}LMX + \beta_{9,i}ILF_i + \epsilon_{5,i}, i = 1, \dots, 16 \quad (6)$$

Where  $\epsilon_{1,i}, \epsilon_{2,i}, \epsilon_{3,i}, \epsilon_{4,i}, \epsilon_{5,i}$  are residual variances. Equation (1) ~ (5) tested the hypotheses, for

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>):** There is a relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **JP**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→JP**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>1A</sub>, H<sub>1B</sub>, H<sub>1C</sub>, H<sub>1D</sub>, H<sub>1E</sub>, H<sub>1F</sub>, H<sub>1G</sub>, H<sub>1H</sub>, H<sub>1I</sub>, H<sub>1J</sub>, H<sub>1K</sub>, H<sub>1L</sub>, H<sub>1M</sub>, H<sub>1N</sub>, H<sub>1O</sub>, H<sub>1P</sub>**) for the relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **JP**.

**Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>):** There is a relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **LMX**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→LMX**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>2A</sub>, H<sub>2B</sub>, H<sub>2C</sub>, H<sub>2D</sub>, H<sub>2E</sub>, H<sub>2F</sub>, H<sub>2G</sub>, H<sub>2H</sub>, H<sub>2I</sub>, H<sub>2J</sub>, H<sub>2K</sub>, H<sub>2L</sub>, H<sub>2M</sub>, H<sub>2N</sub>, H<sub>2O</sub>, H<sub>2P</sub>**) for the relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **LMX**.

**Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>3</sub>):** There is a relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **OCB**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→OCB**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>3A</sub>, H<sub>3B</sub>, H<sub>3C</sub>, H<sub>3D</sub>, H<sub>3E</sub>, H<sub>3F</sub>, H<sub>3G</sub>, H<sub>3H</sub>, H<sub>3I</sub>, H<sub>3J</sub>, H<sub>3K</sub>, H<sub>3L</sub>, H<sub>3M</sub>, H<sub>3N</sub>, H<sub>3O</sub>, H<sub>3P</sub>**) for the relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **OCB**.

**Hypothesis 4 (H<sub>4</sub>):** There is a relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>**, **Weng**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→Weng**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>4A</sub>, H<sub>4B</sub>, H<sub>4C</sub>, H<sub>4D</sub>, H<sub>4E</sub>, H<sub>4F</sub>, H<sub>4G</sub>, H<sub>4H</sub>, H<sub>4I</sub>, H<sub>4J</sub>, H<sub>4K</sub>, H<sub>4L</sub>, H<sub>4M</sub>, H<sub>4N</sub>, H<sub>4O</sub>, H<sub>4P</sub>**) for the relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>** and **Weng**.

**Hypothesis 5 (H<sub>5</sub>):** **LMX** mediates the relationship among **ILF<sub>i</sub>**, **OCB** and **JP**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→LMX→OCB→JP**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>5A</sub>, H<sub>5B</sub>, H<sub>5C</sub>, H<sub>5D</sub>, H<sub>5E</sub>, H<sub>5F</sub>, H<sub>5G</sub>, H<sub>5H</sub>, H<sub>5I</sub>, H<sub>5J</sub>, H<sub>5K</sub>, H<sub>5L</sub>, H<sub>5M</sub>, H<sub>5N</sub>, H<sub>5O</sub>, H<sub>5P</sub>**) for the relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>**, **LMX**, **OCB** and **JP**.

**Hypothesis 6 (H<sub>6</sub>):** **LMX** mediates the relationship among **ILF<sub>i</sub>**, **Weng** and **JP**. (**ILF<sub>i</sub>→LMX→Weng→JP**) For  $i = 1, \dots, 16$ , there are sixteen sub-hypothesis (**H<sub>6A</sub>, H<sub>6B</sub>, H<sub>6C</sub>, H<sub>6D</sub>, H<sub>6E</sub>, H<sub>6F</sub>, H<sub>6G</sub>, H<sub>6H</sub>, H<sub>6I</sub>, H<sub>6J</sub>, H<sub>6K</sub>, H<sub>6L</sub>, H<sub>6M</sub>, H<sub>6N</sub>, H<sub>6O</sub>, H<sub>6P</sub>**) for the other relationship between **ILF<sub>i</sub>**, **LMX**, **Weng** and **JP**.

## Results

Table 2 and Figure 1 present the means, standard deviations (S.D.), and loading of all the studied variables, and **R<sup>2</sup>** for **LMX**, **OCB**, **Weng** and **JP**. From Table 3, the means of **ILF<sub>4</sub>**, **ILF<sub>12</sub>**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>**, **ILF<sub>14</sub>**, **ILF<sub>16</sub>** are lower than 9, so there might be lower recognition of respondents for some perceived interactions between leaders and followers, as **FT⊗ALTT**, **FTP⊗LTT**, **FTT⊗LTA**, **FTT⊗LTD**, and **FTT⊗LTT**, and the key factors should be **FTT** and **LTT**. From Table 3, **ILF**, **LMX**, **OCB**, **Weng** and **JP** variables with the bigger S.D. range are **ILF<sub>4</sub>**, **ILF<sub>5</sub>**, **ILF<sub>9</sub>**, **ILF<sub>12</sub>**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>**, so there might be lower recognition of respondents for some perceived interaction between leaders and followers, as **FTA⊗LTA**, **FTC⊗LTA**, **FTP⊗LTA**, **FTP⊗LTT**, and **FTT⊗LTA**, and the key factors should be **LTA**. From **R<sup>2</sup>** and adjusted **R<sup>2</sup>** Table 2, **OCB** with their lowest values might be least interpreted by **ILF**.

To emulate Fornell and Larcker (1981), Netemeyer, et al. (1990), Henseler, et al. [39], and Hair, et al. [36], the authors tested the discriminant validity of **ILF**, **LMX**, **OCB**, **Weng**, **JP**, by proposing an alternative approach which is the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) based on the multitrait-multimethod matrix (See Table 3). Most HTMT values are below 0.90, so the discriminant validity should have been established between two reflective constructs of **ILF**, **LMX**, **OCB**, **Weng** and **JP**.

### Hypotheses tests

To further study, this paper uses Bootstrapping method to collate the test results and coefficient significance of path coefficients as Table 4 and Table 5. From the results of Table 4, most sub-hypothesis of **H<sub>1</sub>**, **H<sub>2</sub>**, **H<sub>3</sub>**, **H<sub>4</sub>** are not supported. Only **H<sub>2D</sub>**, **H<sub>3D</sub>**, **H<sub>4D</sub>**, **H<sub>1I</sub>**, **H<sub>1J</sub>**, **H<sub>2J</sub>**, **H<sub>3J</sub>**, **H<sub>4J</sub>**, **H<sub>1L</sub>**, **H<sub>2L</sub>**, **H<sub>3L</sub>**, **H<sub>4L</sub>**, **H<sub>2M</sub>**, **H<sub>3M</sub>** and **H<sub>4M</sub>** are supported, so the subordinates' job performance might be affected by **ILF<sub>4</sub>**, **ILF<sub>9</sub>**, **ILF<sub>10</sub>**, **ILF<sub>12</sub>**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>**, which are **FTA⊗LTT**, **FTP⊗LTA**, **FTP⊗LTD**, **FTP⊗LTT**, and **FTT⊗LTA**, but not for others. Moreover, subordinates' perceived **FTP**, **LTT**, and **LTA** might be the key factors in their job performances.

From the results of Table 4, there are positive significant path coefficients for **ILF<sub>4</sub>→LMX**, **ILF<sub>4</sub>→OCB**, **ILF<sub>4</sub>→Weng**, **ILF<sub>10</sub>→JP**, **ILF<sub>10</sub>→LMX**, **ILF<sub>10</sub>→OCB**, **ILF<sub>10</sub>→Weng**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>→LMX**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>→OCB**, **ILF<sub>13</sub>→Weng**, so the subordinates' job performance might be positively affected by the interaction of **FTP** and



**Table 2:** The Cronbach's Alpha, rho A, CR, AVE on ILF, LMX, OCB, WEng, JP.

	Mean	S.D.	Loading		Mean	S.D.	Loading
ILF <sub>1</sub>	9.24~12.59	4.91~5.96	0.48~0.84	ILF <sub>9</sub>	9.21~13.57	4.69~5.84	0.57~0.83
ILF <sub>2</sub>	9.41~13.26	5.05~5.75	0.70~0.87	ILF <sub>10</sub>	9.41~14.17	4.75~5.68	0.76~0.88
ILF <sub>3</sub>	11.03~14.51	5.20~5.73	0.72~0.84	ILF <sub>11</sub>	10.92~15.60	4.78~5.54	0.78~0.84
ILF <sub>4</sub>	8.47~12.53	5.03~5.75	0.54~0.84	ILF <sub>12</sub>	8.39~13.47	4.60~5.72	0.64~0.85
ILF <sub>5</sub>	10.16~12.93	4.89~5.93	0.30~0.78	ILF <sub>13</sub>	7.74~10.85	4.17~5.32	0.48~0.84
ILF <sub>6</sub>	10.23~13.50	5.11~5.62	0.55~0.82	ILF <sub>14</sub>	7.73~11.57	4.34~5.18	0.67~0.86
ILF <sub>7</sub>	11.96~14.89	5.17~5.57	0.58~0.81	ILF <sub>15</sub>	9.12~12.63	4.39~5.39	0.69~0.83
ILF <sub>8</sub>	9.12~12.85	4.97~5.62	0.42~0.80	ILF <sub>16</sub>	6.90~11.18	4.12~5.10	0.55~0.84
	Mean	S.D.	Loading		R <sup>2</sup>		Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
LMX	3.11~3.71	0.91~1.06	0.72~0.87		0.21		0.16
OCB	3.24~6.08	0.98~1.63	-0.24~0.77		0.54		0.51
WEng	3.63~4.83	1.24~1.60	0.69~0.91		0.14		0.14
JP	3.87~4.03	0.79~0.88	0.78~0.86		0.22		0.21

**Table 3:** The Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, CR, AVE on ILF, LMX, OCB, WEng, JP.

	ILF <sub>1</sub>	ILF <sub>2</sub>	ILF <sub>3</sub>	ILF <sub>4</sub>	ILF <sub>5</sub>	ILF <sub>6</sub>	ILF <sub>7</sub>	ILF <sub>8</sub>	ILF <sub>9</sub>	ILF <sub>10</sub>	ILF <sub>11</sub>	ILF <sub>12</sub>	ILF <sub>13</sub>	ILF <sub>14</sub>	ILF <sub>15</sub>	ILF <sub>16</sub>	LMX	OCB	Weng	JP
ILF <sub>1</sub>																				
ILF <sub>2</sub>	0.84																			
ILF <sub>3</sub>	0.83	0.81																		
ILF <sub>4</sub>	0.79	0.93	0.75																	
ILF <sub>5</sub>	0.65	0.52	0.48	0.47																
ILF <sub>6</sub>	0.53	0.75	0.52	0.66	0.86															
ILF <sub>7</sub>	0.44	0.48	0.67	0.42	0.86	0.81														
ILF <sub>8</sub>	0.47	0.66	0.45	0.73	0.82	0.95	0.77													
ILF <sub>9</sub>	0.83	0.70	0.67	0.66	0.53	0.44	0.36	0.41												
ILF <sub>10</sub>	0.70	0.88	0.67	0.81	0.43	0.65	0.39	0.58	0.88											
ILF <sub>11</sub>	0.66	0.67	0.83	0.62	0.38	0.43	0.56	0.39	0.88	0.85										
ILF <sub>12</sub>	0.64	0.79	0.61	0.88	0.38	0.57	0.34	0.64	0.84	0.95	0.81									
ILF <sub>12</sub>	0.91	0.74	0.71	0.69	0.62	0.50	0.41	0.45	0.85	0.71	0.67	0.66								
ILF <sub>14</sub>	0.72	0.92	0.69	0.84	0.47	0.72	0.44	0.63	0.69	0.88	0.66	0.79	0.84							
ILF <sub>15</sub>	0.69	0.69	0.90	0.64	0.42	0.48	0.64	0.42	0.67	0.67	0.85	0.62	0.83	0.80						
ILF <sub>16</sub>	0.66	0.83	0.63	0.92	0.42	0.63	0.38	0.71	0.65	0.81	0.62	0.88	0.79	0.93	0.74					
LMX	0.53	0.67	0.57	0.64	0.35	0.52	0.39	0.49	0.59	0.70	0.62	0.66	0.57	0.68	0.60	0.65				
OCB	0.51	0.52	0.48	0.50	0.27	0.35	0.27	0.34	0.44	0.46	0.42	0.44	0.57	0.56	0.54	0.55	0.39			
WEng	0.55	0.58	0.48	0.57	0.35	0.41	0.27	0.40	0.58	0.59	0.51	0.58	0.52	0.53	0.43	0.52	0.48	0.53		
JP	0.22	0.11	0.14	0.11	0.16	0.08	0.10	0.09	0.19	0.11	0.13	0.13	0.23	0.11	0.16	0.11	0.10	0.38	0.12	

LTD. On the other side, there are negative significant path coefficients for ILF<sub>9</sub>→JP, ILF<sub>12</sub>→LMX, ILF<sub>12</sub>→OCB, ILF<sub>12</sub>→Weng so the subordinates' job performance might be negatively affected by the interaction of FTP and LTA and the interaction of FTP and LTT.

From the results of Table 5, most sub-hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> and all sub-hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> are not supported. Only H<sub>5D</sub>, H<sub>5J</sub>, H<sub>5L</sub> and H<sub>5M</sub> are supported, so the subordinates' LMX might be significantly mediated the relationship among ILF<sub>i</sub>, Weng and JP only for ILF<sub>1</sub> are ILF<sub>4</sub>, ILF<sub>10</sub>, ILF<sub>12</sub>, ILF<sub>13</sub>, which are FTA⊗LTT, FTP⊗LTD, FTP⊗LTT, and FTT⊗LTA, but not for others. They are positive for FTA⊗LTT, FTP⊗LTD, and FTT⊗LTA; negative for FTP⊗LTT.

### Practical implications and suggestions for employees, leaders and organizations

The findings of the study have several implications for practice. First, although the importance of followers has emerged in connection with leadership theory, research on the theme of follower behavior still needs to be increased. In the development of followership theory, Kelley's [40] followership model has been the pioneer of research on followership behavior. As followership theory has gradually evolved from the research orientation of "follower-centered leadership behavior research" to a "follower-based research approach", this research focuses on defining the relationship



**Table 4:** The Significance of Path Coefficients.

	Mean(S.D.)		Mean(S.D.)		Mean(S.D.)		Mean(S.D.)
ILF <sub>1</sub> →JP	0.94(1.22)	ILF <sub>1</sub> →LMX	-0.71(0.75)	ILF <sub>1</sub> →OCB	-0.27(0.30)	ILF <sub>1</sub> →Weng	-0.33(0.36)
ILF <sub>2</sub> →JP	-0.55(1.42)	ILF <sub>2</sub> →LMX	-0.30(0.85)	ILF <sub>2</sub> →OCB	-0.11(0.31)	ILF <sub>2</sub> →Weng	-0.14(0.39)
ILF <sub>3</sub> →JP	-0.76(0.95)	ILF <sub>3</sub> →LMX	-0.30(0.65)	ILF <sub>3</sub> →OCB	-0.12(0.25)	ILF <sub>3</sub> →Weng	-0.14(0.30)
ILF <sub>4</sub> →JP	0.45(1.18)	ILF <sub>4</sub> →LMX	1.55**(0.78)	ILF <sub>4</sub> →OCB	0.59**(0.30)	ILF <sub>4</sub> →Weng	0.72**(0.38)
ILF <sub>5</sub> →JP	-0.10(0.60)	ILF <sub>5</sub> →LMX	0.12(0.38)	ILF <sub>5</sub> →OCB	0.05(0.14)	ILF <sub>5</sub> →Weng	0.05(0.18)
ILF <sub>6</sub> →JP	0.25(0.76)	ILF <sub>6</sub> →LMX	-0.03(0.67)	ILF <sub>6</sub> →OCB	-0.02(0.25)	ILF <sub>6</sub> →Weng	-0.01(0.31)
ILF <sub>7</sub> →JP	0.02(0.44)	ILF <sub>7</sub> →LMX	-0.27(0.35)	ILF <sub>7</sub> →OCB	-0.11(0.13)	ILF <sub>7</sub> →Weng	-0.13(0.16)
ILF <sub>8</sub> →JP	-0.15(0.61)	ILF <sub>8</sub> →LMX	0.27(0.57)	ILF <sub>8</sub> →OCB	0.11(0.22)	ILF <sub>8</sub> →Weng	0.13(0.27)
ILF <sub>9</sub> →JP	-1.24**(0.76)	ILF <sub>9</sub> →LMX	-0.46(0.48)	ILF <sub>9</sub> →OCB	-0.17(0.19)	ILF <sub>9</sub> →Weng	-0.21(0.23)
ILF <sub>10</sub> →JP	2.35***(1.04)	ILF <sub>10</sub> →LMX	1.08**(0.67)	ILF <sub>10</sub> →OCB	0.41*(0.26)	ILF <sub>10</sub> →Weng	0.50**(0.31)
ILF <sub>11</sub> →JP	0.49(0.59)	ILF <sub>11</sub> →LMX	0.64(0.45)	ILF <sub>11</sub> →OCB	0.24(0.18)	ILF <sub>11</sub> →Weng	0.30(0.21)
ILF <sub>12</sub> →JP	-1.82**(0.96)	ILF <sub>12</sub> →LMX	-0.98**(0.51)	ILF <sub>12</sub> →OCB	-0.37**(0.20)	ILF <sub>12</sub> →Weng	-0.45**(0.24)
ILF <sub>13</sub> →JP	0.19(0.93)	ILF <sub>13</sub> →LMX	0.92*(0.59)	ILF <sub>13</sub> →OCB	0.34*(0.23)	ILF <sub>13</sub> →Weng	0.43*(0.28)
ILF <sub>14</sub> →JP	-1.67(1.04)	ILF <sub>14</sub> →LMX	-0.31(0.77)	ILF <sub>14</sub> →OCB	-0.12(0.31)	ILF <sub>14</sub> →Weng	-0.15(0.36)
ILF <sub>15</sub> →JP	0.37(0.72)	ILF <sub>15</sub> →LMX	0.16(0.56)	ILF <sub>15</sub> →OCB	0.07(0.22)	ILF <sub>15</sub> →Weng	0.07(0.26)
ILF <sub>16</sub> →JP	1.17(0.89)	ILF <sub>16</sub> →LMX	-0.62(0.69)	ILF <sub>16</sub> →OCB	-0.23(0.28)	ILF <sub>16</sub> →Weng	-0.29(0.33)
LMX→JP	0.16*** (0.04)			LMX→OCB	0.38*** (0.05)	LMX→Weng	0.46*** (0.05)
OCB→JP	<b>0.38*** (0.08)</b>						
WEng JP	0.03(0.07)						

\*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

**Table 5:** The Significance of Mediators' Path Coefficients.

	Mean(S.D.)		Mean(S.D.)
ILF <sub>1</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.10(0.11)	ILF <sub>1</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	-0.01(0.04)
ILF <sub>2</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.04(0.13)	ILF <sub>2</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.04)
ILF <sub>3</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.04(0.10)	ILF <sub>3</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.03)
ILF <sub>4</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	<b>0.22*(0.13)</b>	ILF <sub>4</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>5</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	0.02(0.05)	ILF <sub>5</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.02(0.06)
ILF <sub>6</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.01(0.10)	ILF <sub>6</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>7</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.04(0.05)	ILF <sub>7</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>8</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	0.04(0.08)	ILF <sub>8</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>9</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.06(0.07)	ILF <sub>9</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>10</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	<b>0.16*(0.11)</b>	ILF <sub>10</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.01(0.04)
ILF <sub>11</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	0.09(0.07)	ILF <sub>11</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.01(0.03)
ILF <sub>12</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	<b>-0.14*(0.08)</b>	ILF <sub>12</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	-0.01(0.04)
ILF <sub>13</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	<b>0.13*(0.09)</b>	ILF <sub>13</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.01(0.03)
ILF <sub>14</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.05(0.12)	ILF <sub>14</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	-0.01(0.03)
ILF <sub>15</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	0.03(0.08)	ILF <sub>15</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	0.00(0.02)
ILF <sub>16</sub> →LMX→OCB→JP	-0.09(0.11)	ILF <sub>16</sub> →LMX→Weng→JP	-0.01(0.03)
LMX→OCB→JP	0.14*** (0.03)	LMX→Weng→JP	0.01(0.03)

between leadership behavior and followership behavior from a subordinate perspective of interactions of job performance. The interaction between different leadership styles and different followership styles will lead to different followership results, but it is not good or bad by itself. Followers and leaders are both important to the organization. They are interconnected and inseparable. As an important part of the organization, the role of followers in the organization cannot be ignored.

The relationship between followers and leaders directly or indirectly affects the operation of the organization. It is critical to establish a positive, stable and open relationship between followers and leaders. The two-way relationship is the focus of future research, which will help to achieve self-improvement of followers and leaders and an efficient and stable organization [41-56].





Secondly, in this study, four different followership behaviors were matched with four different leadership behaviors, and 16 groups of different leadership and follower style interaction combinations were obtained. However, only some combinations of interactions show a significant impact on job performance. Therefore, the organization expects employees to have good job performance and must strengthen the leadership training of supervisors. Supervisors must adopt different leadership styles in the face of different follower behavior styles. Similarly, employees may work with leaders of different leadership styles in their careers. Leaders' recognition and preference for high-performing employees may affect their exchange relationship. In light of this, leaders may appreciate and be willing to accept suggestions and reminders from high-performing employees. An effective follower should learn to adapt to different leadership styles, establish a good interactive relationship, and improve self-ability, to realize their value in the organization. In addition, future research can examine the interactions between more different types of leadership and followership characteristics to understand their impact on different working variables and to better understand the impact of the interaction between leaders and followers.

Third, the study also found that LMX has a significant and insignificant moderating effect on different sets of the interaction of leadership styles and followership styles. A key insight the authors found is that leaders have different degrees of exchange relationships in the face of different follower behaviors, which further affects work engagement and job performance. To improve the performance of employees, organizations must recognize this phenomenon. The authors also found in this study that when subordinates who have the passion followership trait complimented by the democratic leadership trait will have a positive impact on their LMX, work engagement, and job performance. However, subordinates with the passion followership trait complimented by leadership traits of autocratic, transformational, and laissez-faire experience negative or insignificant impacts on work factors. In addition, leaders with the laissez-faire leadership style have no impact on followers who possess passion, active engagement, team-mindedness, and critical thinking followership traits. Does this mean that when the supervisor's leadership style has a positive interaction with the style of followers, it will have a more positive impact on the subordinates' work-related variables? As there is no single followership style in an organization, a leader must adopt different leadership methods for different follower traits to effectively improve the overall performance of the team.

### Limitations

As with all research, our study is subject to limitations. In the first instance, with the expansion and deepening of the research on followership, scholars have only begun to recognize the important role and status of the followership force in organizations. This research is based on the perspective of followers, but future research considers the comprehensiveness of the research and avoids cognitive errors from a single source. It is recommended that future research

can measure the perspective of the leader to better understand whether the supervisor and the subordinates have common ideas and can also avoid bias in the discussion of dependent variables.

A second potential limitation in our research is that in terms of the number of sample data collected in this study, the main source is limited to the Chinese region of China. It is suggested that future research can increase the number of samples in different countries. If studies can be more extensive and collect samples from various industries to verify the research, it is assumed that the results will be more comprehensive.

Third, in this study, a questionnaire survey method was used, and by exploring the related literature in the past, the questionnaire design for the related variables and factors proposed by scholars in the past was used. In the design of the questionnaire, although the text strives to be concise and clear, it is still impossible to confirm whether the participants can truly understand the original intention of the questionnaire. This may affect the authenticity of the research results.

### Conclusion

Followership has traditionally been overlooked and understudied in the leadership literature. Today, how well the followers follow is probably just as important to enterprise success as how well the leaders lead. Different follower and leader behaviors do have an impact on job performance. This research result reflects the complexity of the interaction between supervisors and subordinates. After considering the followership behavior of subordinates, it is difficult for supervisors to use a single type of leadership behavior to simultaneously pursue high-performance subordinates. Therefore, in practice, the supervisor should first determine which leadership mode has the greatest effect on the performance of the subordinates, and for this leadership effectiveness, determine how to lead the subordinates by considering their followership behavior. In general, in the interaction between the supervisor and the subordinates, the supervisor should respond appropriately to the subordinates who possess different followership behaviors. Supervisors or subordinates can use the relationship between positioning and behavior as the basis for changing leadership behavior or followership behavior.

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