

The Impact of Supervisor's Leadership Style on Followers' Leadership Self-Efficacy and  
Motivation to Lead: Differential Effects for Men and Women

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## **Abstract**

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There is an abundance of evidence that women are underrepresented in managerial positions. Drawing on self-determination and social role theory, this study examines the effects of three distinct supervisor leadership styles (transformational, servant and directive) on followers' leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead, while accounting for followers' gender. I propose that supervisors' transformational and servant leadership positively contribute to followers' leadership self-efficacy while directive leadership is negatively related to this variable, and that these relationships are stronger among women followers. I further propose that followers' leadership self-efficacy is positively related to their motivation to lead, but that this effect is weaker among women followers. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and a time-lagged design in a sample of employees (N = 117 at T2) from various firms in the United States. As expected, supervisor transformational and servant leadership were positively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy, and these effects were stronger among women followers. Contrary to expectations, supervisor directive leadership was not significantly related to follower leadership self-efficacy. In turn, leadership self-efficacy was positively associated with follower motivation to lead, but this relationship was weaker among women followers. The findings of this study are relevant for both supervisors and followers, as leaders who adopt a transformational or servant leadership style will be more likely to develop their followers' – and especially women followers – leadership self-efficacy, and ultimately motivate them to take on leading roles in their careers. I discuss implications for future research and for practice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Women should play an important role in leadership positions, however, few of them are represented in top executive positions (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Joy, 2008). Data from the United States Department of Labor shows that women occupied nearly 57% of the labor force in 2015. Nevertheless, only 14% of top manager positions are held by women (Hausmann et al., 2009). In Europe, it is the same story: only 13% of top managers are women in Germany, and only 14% in the UK (Hausmann et al., 2009). However, there has been great progress in gender parity in education and the general workforce (Joy, 2008), women show higher advancement in organizations than men (Bass & Avolio, 1994), and they tend to be more committed to their career (Powell, Posner, & Schmidt, 1985). Organizations would benefit from finding ways to motivate women followers to take more managerial positions. It is thus critical to understand the reasons behind the gender inequity in leadership role occupancy.

Behavior is driven by motivation (Schuh et al., 2014), an individual's motivation affects the direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior (Robbins et. al, 2010). Several researchers found that motivation to lead (MTL) is a critical antecedent of leadership behaviors or whether individuals aim to take leadership roles in the future (e.g., Hong, Catano, & Liao, 2010). Compared to men, women tend to have lower MTL (Elprana et. al, 2015). Therefore, MTL may play a role in explaining why women are less likely to occupy leadership roles. Getting a better understanding of the processes influencing MTL is thus a worthwhile endeavor. Leadership self-efficacy has been found to be an important antecedent of MTL (e.g., Mascia et al., 2015), and research suggests that a supervisor's leadership style could have an influence on followers' leadership self-efficacy. For example, supervisors may be able to develop individuals' leadership self-efficacy through verbal persuasion and coaching (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, a supervisor's leadership style may influence

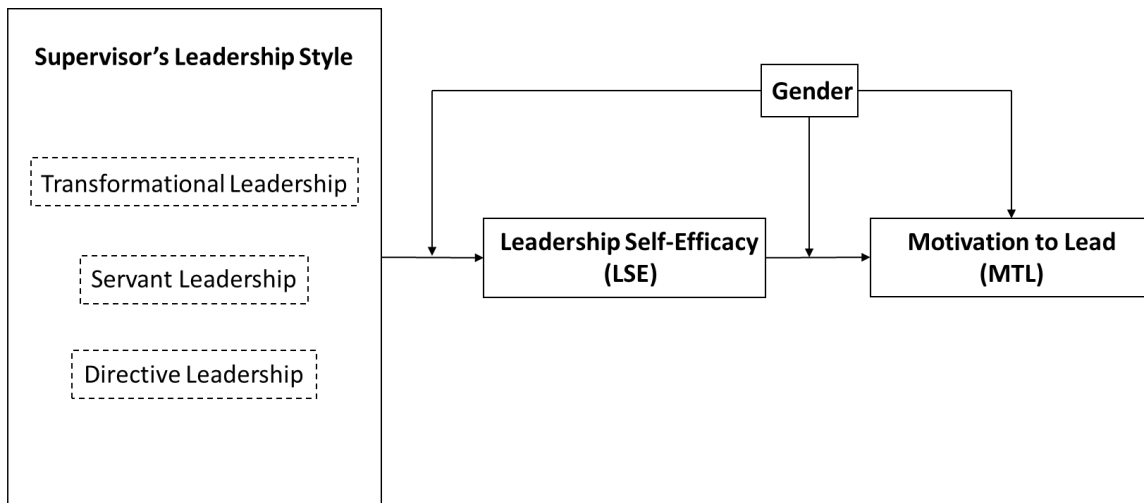


follower's MTL via follower's leadership self-efficacy, but we propose that these relationships may be moderated by gender.

This research aims to advance our understanding of the processes contributing to followers' MTL, and identify possible recommendations for organizations to enhance followers – and especially women's – MTL. More specifically, this study will examine a) whether the immediate supervisor's leadership style impacts leadership self-efficacy, b) whether leadership self-efficacy impacts MTL; and c) the role of gender, in particular whether gender is directly related to MTL, and whether the relationships between the immediate supervisor's leadership behaviors, leadership self-efficacy, and MTL are moderated by the follower's gender. In doing so, this study draws on self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and social role theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The research model is presented in Figure 1. I focus on three distinct leadership styles: transformational, servant, and directive leadership. Not only can these three leadership styles be theoretically and empirically distinguished from each other (e.g., Pearce et al., 2000), but they represent different conceptualizations of the leadership role. While transformational leaders develop followers' potential to achieve organizational goals, servant leaders see leading as a way to serve, first and foremost. Directive leaders provide standards and make decisions for their followers, expecting the work to be completed according to their requirements.

In the following section, I review the literature on MTL, leadership self-efficacy, and the three leadership styles mentioned above. I then discuss the framework for understanding the association among these variables. This framework focuses first on exploring the relationships between the different leadership styles and followers' leadership self-efficacy, and the moderating effect of gender on these relationships. I then focus on MTL, suggesting leadership self-efficacy

may be a predictor of MTL and potentially mediate relationships between supervisor's leadership styles and MTL. I then address the direct and moderating effect of gender on MTL.



**Figure 1** The model of this research

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Motivation to Lead (MTL)

Motivation to lead (MTL) refers to an individual difference “that affects a leader’s or leader-to-be’s decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affects the intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader” (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482). MTL is a critical construct to predict leadership behavior and performance (Waldman et al, 2013), can affect individuals’ desire of being a leader or being trained to be a leader (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), and plays an important role in leadership training effectiveness (Stiehl et al., 2015). MTL drives individuals to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be effective leaders (Clemmons III & Fields, 2011) and can predict leadership behaviors and performance when an individual becomes a leader (Waldman et al., 2013). MTL has been conceptualized as comprising three correlated dimensions (Chan, Rounds, & Drasgow, 2000; Chan & Drasgow, 2001): 1)

affective-identity MTL – individuals lead mainly because they like to be a leader, they enjoy influencing and in charge of others; 2) social-normative MTL – individuals lead because they regard leadership as a privilege and an honor, and believe in the value of leading others; 3) non-calculative MTL – individuals lead not necessarily out of desire, and without calculating the cost or benefits of leading. In this study, only affective-identity MTL and social-normative MTL are explored because these two types of MTL stem from individuals' desire (Joo et al., 2018). In this study, in line with Chan and colleagues' (2000) view that the facets of MTL could be combined into a higher-order construct, and as has been done previously (e.g., Joo et al., 2018), I combine affective-identity and social-normative MTL.

Following the hierarchical model of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), MTL is not only a trait but can also a dynamic state. Deci and Ryan (1985) claimed that motivation can be divided into three types based on different self-determination levels. An important distinction in self-determination theory is that between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to individuals participating activities or taking actions only for their own sake, such as pursuing pleasure, seldom considering external expectations (e.g., Deci, 1976). Affective-identity MTL is similar to the concept of intrinsic motivation, because individuals with affective-identity MTL want to be leaders for themselves, instead of fulfilling others' requirements or expectations. They enjoy or would enjoy being a leader, having a team and being in charge of others. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to individuals regarding take actions as a method to achieve a certain status, seldom considering internal feelings and requirements (Deci, 1975). Social-normative MTL is closer to the concept of extrinsic motivation because individuals with social-normative MTL taking leadership positions in part based on how leading is socially regarded.

The hierarchical model self-determination motivation includes three levels: from low to high, these are situational motivation, contextual motivation, and global motivation. Situational motivation is about specific activities, in a specific situation or at a specific time. It is the most unstable level. Contextual motivation is related to broader contexts, such as interpersonal relationships or work (Lerouge, Cerveau & Corriu, , 2006). Global motivation is at the personality level, referring to individual differences, and is the most stable level. According to the hierarchical model, motivation at one level has a top-down impact on motivation at a lower level, but the distance can reduce this impact. Conversely, motivation at one level has a bottom-up impact on motivation at a higher level, and the distance also decreases such influence. Therefore, self-determination motivation is dynamic, which means the affective-identity MTL and social-identity MTL are dynamic as well.

Research has identified five main antecedents of MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001): Big-Five personality traits, values, emotional intelligence (EI), previous leadership experience, and leadership self-efficacy. The positive relationship between leadership self-efficacy and motivation has been found in education, sports, and business (Schunk, 1995). Leadership self-efficacy is thus a significant, proximate predictor of MTL (Mascia et al., 2015). The influence of leadership self-efficacy on MTL will be further discussed in the next section.

### Leadership Self-Efficacy

Leadership self-efficacy is based on the concept of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura in 1977, which claims that individuals are more likely to get involved in activities or tasks of which they think they are capable. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to take on challenges, and tend to be more tenacious when facing difficulties (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Recent research has examined self-efficacy in the organizational context.

For example, Tierney and Farmer (2002, 2004) conducted studies about how self-efficacy impacts employees' creativity. Saks (1995) studied its influence on newcomer adjustment. Other scholars have begun associating self-efficacy and leadership in the organization context.

There is no universal definition of leadership (e.g., Bass, 1990; House & Podsakoff, 1994; Yukl, 1998), and researchers who have examined leadership self-efficacy have also adopted different perspectives. Some researchers have been interested in individuals' leadership confidence, asking questions such as "I feel confident that I can be an effective leader in most of the groups I work with" (e.g., Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Hendricks & Payne, 2007). Others have sought to define leadership behaviors and then measure the extent to which individuals engaged in these behaviors, asking questions about planning, setting direction, coordinating, communicating, and motivating others (Chemers et al., 2000; Ng et al., 2008). Lastly, a third group of scholars have focused on problem analyzing, effective judgment employing, and initiative-taking (Watson et al., 2001). Paglis and Green (2002), defining leadership as "the process of diagnosing where the work group is now and where it needs to be in the future, and formulating a strategy for getting there; it also involves implementing change through developing a base of influence with followers, motivating them to commit to and work hard in pursuit of change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change" (p.217), defined leadership self-efficacy as "a person's judgment that he or she can successfully exert leadership by setting a direction for the workgroup, building relationships with followers in order to gain commitment to change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change" (p. 217). However, other scholars have called for a more complex multilevel perspective, for example from the leadership dynamics perspective (Schruijer & Vansina, 2002). Leadership dynamics refers to the relationship between individuals and the environment, and highlights the role of context (Livi et al., 2008; Bobbio & Manganelli, 2009). In

line with this, Bobbio and Manganelli (2009) added three dimensions to leadership to enrich Paglis and Green's model. First, leaders should obtain credibility and consensus in groups. Second, individuals' personalities and skills such as presenting self-confidence and handling the social relationship in groups are related to leadership as well. Third, leaders are creative, able to influence followers' thoughts and behaviors (Brown, 2000), develop followers' potentials, and select the best group member (Yukl & Becker, 2006). In sum, based on the above discussion and in line with Bobbio and Manganelli (2009), I considered leadership self-efficacy to include the following six facets: starting and leading change processes in groups; choosing effective followers and delegating responsibilities; building and managing interpersonal relationships within the group; showing self-awareness and self-confidence; motivating people; and gaining consensus of group members.

Research suggests that there are four types of antecedents to an individual's leadership self-efficacy: individual antecedents, subordinate antecedents (for individuals who occupy leadership roles), organizational antecedents, and supervisor antecedents (Paglis & Green, 2002). Within the first category of antecedents, individuals' previous successful experiences are one important source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), because such mastery experiences help individuals build confidence in their capabilities to overcome obstacles (Wood & Bandura, 1989). A study by Judge and Ilies (2002) on Big-Five Factors suggests that extraversion and conscientiousness are positive predictors of task-specific self-efficacy, while neuroticism is a negative predictor. Ng et al. (2008) argued that the main reason for this is that leadership roles require sociality and dispositional tenacity, and individuals' extraversion and conscientiousness are congruent with these demands. In contrast, neurotic individuals are less confident and more self-doubting when confronting leadership obstacles (Paglis, 2010). Internal locus of control has also been found to have a positive

influence on leadership self-efficacy (Paglis & Green, 2002). Indeed, individuals with an internal locus of control believe that the main determinants of their experience are themselves, such as their activities and personal traits; while individuals with an external locus of control believe that outcomes are determined by outside factors (Lefcourt, 1991). Thus, those with an internal locus of control are more likely to make changes in context, take on challenges, and achieve their goals.

The second category of leadership self-efficacy antecedents is related to an individual's current subordinates, and includes subordinates' cynicism and performance characteristics. The study of Wanous et al. (1994) claimed that the cynical attitudes of subordinates can influence leaders' attitude towards changes in the organization context. Meanwhile, subordinates' performance is a critical predictor of group performance, because leaders rely on subordinates to achieve group goals, overcome obstacles and accomplish changes (Paglis & Green, 2002).

The third category of antecedents of leadership self-efficacy is related to the organization. Indeed, leaders' organizational environment is an important element influencing their work (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Many researchers (e.g., Kanter, 1983,1999; Scott & Bruce, 1994) have stated that the extent to which the organizational environment welcomes change impacts individuals' leadership self-efficacy. In line with this, research conducted by Bandura and Wood (1989) showed that individuals working in a work environment that is not easily changeable are more likely to lose faith in their capabilities; however, their leadership self-efficacy increased when they worked in an environment that was open to change. Work autonomy is another organizational factor impacting leadership self-efficacy. More job autonomy means more flexibility and the opportunity to set orientations, gain followers' commitments and take proper actions to overcome problems (Paglis & Green, 2002). Thus, the existence of job autonomy is believed to enhance individuals' leadership self-efficacy.

The fourth category of antecedents, the one of interest in this study, is related to the supervisor. The supervisor may contribute to followers' self-efficacy through two main mechanisms: through role-modeling, and by being a source of feedback. Indeed, observing others is one way to evaluate one's own capabilities (Bandura, 1986). In the organizational context, observing how supervisors deal with difficulties or certain problems helps individuals develop a belief that they can handle similar situations and imitate the behaviors of supervisors. Supervisors can also develop individuals' leadership self-efficacy through verbal persuasion and coaching (Bandura, 1986). For example, performance feedback communication and encouragements at work are effective methods for supervisors to convince followers that they are capable of doing something, and what kind of potential they have. These verbal persuasions are useful to improve individuals' confidence in their ability to take on more challengeable work and overcome difficulties.

## Leadership Style

In order to explore the impact of different leadership styles on leadership self-efficacy and MTL, this research focuses on three distinct styles: transformational, servant, and directive leadership style. Indeed, these three styles have unique characteristics and can be theoretically and empirically distinguished from each other (e.g., Pearce et al., 2000). In the next paragraphs, I present these leadership styles.

***Transformational leadership.*** The transformational leadership style, defined as “one who raises the followers' level of consciousness about the importance and value of desired outcomes and the methods of reaching those outcomes” (Burns, 1978, p. 141), comprises four components: idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985,1999). Some researchers have combined idealized influence and inspiration together as



charisma (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Idealized influence includes two types of relationships between leaders and followers. First, followers are affected by their leader's behaviors. Second, leaders possess certain characteristics or qualities that followers like to imitate (McCleskey, 2014). Inspiration occurs when leaders motivate followers through providing guidance, explaining the ideas or methods to achieve group goals, setting high-performance requirements, and inspiring followers with confidence. Bass and Riggio (2006) claimed that during this process, leader enthusiasm and optimism were critical. Intellectual stimulation involves developing followers' potential. Leaders encourage followers to express their doubts, search new solutions for old problems, take on challenges, and deal with changes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It is important that leaders be confident and open to criticism, thus followers' self-efficacy can be increased in solving problems (McCleskey, 2014). Individualized consideration requires leaders to pay attention to followers' demands and concerns, and provide relevant supervision and support so that followers can reach their full potential (Bass, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

***Servant leadership.*** The concept of servant leadership was proposed by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904 -1990). While it is becoming increasingly popular, there is no clear definition of servant leadership (Farling et al., 1999). Greenleaf (1969, 1977) claimed that meeting the needs of others, and especially followers, is the primary goal of servant leaders. They are motivated by the need to serve, instead of the need for power (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). They “want their followers to improve for their own good, and view the development of followers as an end, not merely a means to reach the goals of leader's or organization's (Ehrhart, 2004, p. 69). Servant leaders view developing followers' fullest potential in task effectiveness, self-motivation, and leadership capabilities as their core responsibilities (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008). Servant leaders understand followers' specific demands, requirements, characteristics, interests, ambitions, goals,

and potential through one-on-one interaction (Liden et al., 2008), and then provide appropriate supervision to help followers achieve their goals. Servant leaders inspire followers by building their self-confidence (Lord, Brown & Freiberg, 1999), are role models, and offer constructive feedback. In order to maximize followers' potential, servant leaders may provide support beyond the formal employment contract (Liden et al., 2008), attending to the affective and emotional needs of followers (Page & Wong, 2000). They are three main distinctions between servant leadership and traditional leadership styles. First, it emphasizes followers' unique traits and focuses on establishing long-term relationships between leaders and followers. Second, servant leaders not only serve followers but also serve stakeholders. Furthermore, they extend the serving from the workplace to outside, such as to the community, and to the whole society (Graham, 1991). Third, servant leaders motivate followers to be future servant leaders by inspiring them and developing their self-confidence (Liden et al., 2008). Based on previous research (e.g., Page & Wong, 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden et al., 2015), servant leadership has seven dimensions: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. Emotional healing means that servant leaders are sensitive to others' (especially followers') emotional needs and desires. Creating value for the community means that servant leaders show a genuine concern for helping the community and making it better. Conceptual skills means that servant leaders are able to offer supervision to followers because they have a good knowledge of the organization management and the work assigned to them. Empowering means providing followers with control to identify and solve organizational problems. Helping subordinates grow and succeed refers to the mentoring and supervision servant leaders provide to develop followers' potential and build their career. Putting subordinates first means that servant

leaders serve others (especially followers) before themselves and manifest this through their words and actions. Lastly, behaving ethically means interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others (Liden et al., 2008).

***Directive leadership.*** Directive leadership refers to “behaviors that seek [...] compliance with [leader] directions about how to accomplish a problem-solving task’ Sauer (2011, p. 575). Bass and Bass hold a similar view, pointing out that directive leaders “play the active role in problem-solving and decision making, and expect followers to be guided by their decisions” (2008, p. 460). In short, directive leaders tell followers what to do, and how to do it. Based on Theory X (MacGregor, 1960), directive leadership style includes two aspects: issuing guidelines and commands; and assigning goals (Pearce & Sims, 2002). This type of leader cares more about tasks and outcomes than about followers’ potential (Fiedler, 1995; Sagie, 1997). Followers of directive leaders have less flexibility and are able to take less initiative (Euwema, Wendt & Van Emmerik, 2007) because they are given the solutions by their leaders or informed of decisions made by them (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). Directive leadership can be regarded as a task-oriented style (Bell, Chan & Nel, 2014), or high task and low relationship leadership style.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

### Leadership Style, Gender and Leadership Self-Efficacy

Leadership self-efficacy has four core antecedents; however, in this research, I focus on exploring supervisor-related antecedents. Previous studies suggest that leaders’ supervision activities can enhance followers’ leadership self-efficacy and confidence for overcoming challenges, and release the stress related to self-doubts about holding managerial positions (Paglis & Green, 2002). Additionally, behavior modeling is thought to be one of the most useful ways of

enhancing followers' leadership self-efficacy (Burke & Day, 1986). In the workplace, supervisors tend to be important role models for followers. Manz and Sims (1981) claimed that observing models (supervisors) perform at a high-level increases observers' (followers') motivation to behave in a similar way. Thus, the supervisor's managerial behaviors are an important source of information for followers to imitate, face and overcome difficult managerial situations or tasks (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Based on this, the supervisor's leadership style may have an influence on followers' confidence in their ability to take on managerial positions or roles, i.e., their leadership self-efficacy.

Verbal persuasion is also regarded as an effective method through which supervisors may develop individuals' self-perceived leadership capabilities (Bandura, 1986). Performance feedback and encouragements are frequently used to convince individuals of their abilities. Gist (1987) and Korman (1970) both stated that these kinds of communications carry high-performance expectations, and impact individuals' self-efficacy. Thus, when followers receive feedback and encouragements from their supervisors, they are inclined to believe in their ability to lead. Therefore, a supervisor's leadership style, at it shapes how and what supervisors communicate with followers, may play a critical role in developing followers' leadership self-efficacy.

Importantly, a supervisor's leadership style may not impact men and women followers in the same manner. Indeed, drawing on social role theory, I propose that there are gender differences in how different leadership styles impact followers. Social role theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) is one of the approaches explaining gender differences in how men and women perceive and react to situations. Based on this approach, the psychological differences between women and men are due to different social roles expectations (e.g. Ridgeway, 1991; Wiley, 1995; Hernandez Bark et al., 2016). Women and men usually take part in different activities (e.g. Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Eagly

& Karau, 2002), and individuals should act in line with their social roles and try to fulfill what society expects from their roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Diekman & Eagly, 2008). Women are expected to be gentle, caring, and supportive, while men are expected to be controlling, dominant and competitive (e.g., Williams & Best, 1990). Role incongruent behaviors are not acceptable (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Diekman & Eagly, 2008). In the following paragraphs, I develop specific hypotheses regarding the relationships between the three leadership styles examined in this study and leadership self-efficacy, and how gender may moderate these relationships.

***Transformational Leadership.*** Transformational leaders influence and motivate their followers by paying attention to their interests, strengths, abilities, and personality (Burns, 1998). Transformational leaders develop followers' potential during work (Bass, 1985; Johnson & Dipboye, 2008; Zareen et al, 2015), such that followers feel respected and valued. For this reason, transformational leaders are particularly likely to be imitated by followers, while followers tend to adopt the behaviors of their supervisors through conscious or unconscious role-modeling. This may occur in particular with these leaders because transformational leaders are charismatic (Zareen et al., 2015). Additionally, transformational leaders may positively impact followers' leadership self-efficacy by providing feedback (Joo et al, 2018). Behaviors are more likely to be repeated following positive feedback, in contrast, negative feedback is more likely to frustrate behavior repetition (Barr & Conlon, 1994). Transformational leaders work closely with followers and are usually regarded as a good and positive source of feedback (Joo et al, 2018). Encouragement and positive feedback from supervisors can affect followers' leadership self-efficacy (Meller et al., 2006). Thus, having a transformational leader should contribute to developing followers' leadership self-efficacy.

However, women may be even more likely to be influenced by transformational leaders than men. The first reason is that transformational supervisors may be more likely to be a role model for women followers, because this leadership style is considered as a “feminine style” (Druskat, 1994). Transformational leaders are not only inspiring, but also caring and encouraging (Druskat, 1994). Based on social role theory, these characteristics of transformational leaders are consistent with the social expectations for women (Hackman et al., 1992). Additionally, Bass (1999) claimed that women are more transformational than men at work. Therefore, even though there are not many same-sex models for women to observe and imitate in the workplace, women followers still can learn leading behaviors from transformational leaders. Second, poor networking is thought to play a role in explaining why fewer women occupy leadership roles than men (Ely et al., 2011). Given the lack of women being represented in high-level positions, women are less likely to develop a network of powerful individuals within the organization on their own. However, a transformational leader can help women followers build their network since transformational leaders interact with followers frequently, and emphasize developing followers’ potential. Their women followers can develop their networking capabilities, build confidence, and be equipped more adequately to seek leadership positions in the future. In sum, transformational leaders likely contribute to enhancing their followers’ leadership self-efficacy, but this may be particularly the case for women followers. Therefore, it is predicted that:

Hypothesis 1a: Supervisors’ transformational leadership is positively related to followers’ leadership self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 1b: Gender moderates this relationship such that it is stronger for women than for men followers.

*Servant leadership.* While transformational leaders influence followers via their charismatic attributes, servant leaders influence followers by relying on the service itself (Gregory Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004). Compared to other leaders, servant leaders see power in a different way. While leaders may typically have high levels of power motivation, which refers to a desire to be strong and influential (McClelland & Burnham, 1976), servant leaders pursue leadership positions because they want to use the power associated with these roles to help and care for others (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Frieze and Boneva (2001) described this motivation as helping power motivation. Greenleaf (1977) stated that the motivation of servant leaders starts with the need to serve (Van Dierendonck, 2011). As such, they may also inspire followers to want the power associated with leadership roles, for the purpose of serving others. In line with this, Neubert et al. (2008) showed that servant leaders can help followers strengthen their promotion focus to pursue higher goals and take on more challenges. Thus, servant leaders may help followers overcome difficulties and increase their confidence in being a leader.

Furthermore, servant leaders have close and high-quality relationships with followers. One reason is that they adopt effective persuasion while communicating with followers (Van Dierendonck, 2011). They use consultation, inspiration, explanations, and facts in order to convince. Thus, followers tend to hold the view that what their leader says is right (Greenleaf, 1998, p.44). Just like transformational leaders, servant leaders may provide positive guidance and constructive encouragement, helping followers improve their leadership self-efficacy via verbal persuasion. Servant leaders also motivate followers by caring about their psychological needs (Mayer et al., 2008). Research shows followers of servant leaders to have increased self-actualization and more positive job attitudes, and to themselves manifest more servant leadership behaviors (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Compared to men, women may be more likely to be influenced by servant leaders. The reason is that servant leaders are more likely to be role models to women followers. Servant leadership focuses on supportive and caring behaviors than other types of leadership (Chan et al., 2001; Greenleaf, 1973; Liden et al., 2008), and servant leaders are effective listeners, considering others' needs and requirements (Fiebig & Christopher, 2018). These characteristics are consistent with what social role theory expects of women (Duff, 2013), which is for instance to be cooperative (Eagly, 2013). As imitating the behaviors of servant leaders would not conflict with the social expectations of women, women may be more likely to see servant leaders as role models. In contrast, men are expected to be individualistic (Eagly, 2013), which is not consistent with the supportive, community and general service orientation of servant leaders. Men followers may thus be less likely to see servant leaders as role models. Therefore, it is predicted that:

Hypothesis 2a: Supervisors' servant leadership is positively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2b: Gender moderates this relationship such that it is stronger for women than for men followers.

***Directive leadership.*** Directive leaders work closely with their followers, but they focus on offering commands, instructions, and directions. Directive leaders pay little attention to develop followers' leadership potential. When supervised by a directive leader, followers have few opportunities to make decisions, because the directive leader makes decisions for them, which may prevent them from developing leadership skills. Thus, followers of directive leaders may be less likely to develop, and believe in their leadership potential.



Moreover, directive leadership is congruent with masculine behaviors and can be integrated into masculine gender stereotypes (Heilman et al., 1995; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Thus, women followers are less likely to imitate directive supervisor behaviors. Research further suggests that, when women in leader positions behave in what are considered masculine ways (Schein et al., 1996), they are less likely to be accepted by their followers, while when women leaders act in what are considered feminine ways, they are seen as more likable by their followers (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Catalyst (2005, p. 24) further found that when female leaders behave in masculine ways, they are more likely to be seen as poor problem solvers, which may undermine their confidence and their perceived leadership abilities (Catalyst, 2005, p.4). The bias based on social role theory also influences women followers' performance evaluation in terms of leadership potential by directive leaders, because it is usually masculine oriented. Women's leadership potential is thus likely to be underestimated by directive leaders. Moreover, because of the negative expectations, women are more likely to underperform with regards to their actual capabilities and their leading potential when working with a directive leader (Steele, 1997; Burgess et al., 2012; Isaac, 2012). In sum, I propose that directive leaders may contribute to reducing their followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that this may be particularly the case for women followers. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Supervisors' directive leadership is negatively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3b: Gender moderates this relationship such that it is stronger for women than for men followers.

## Women and MTL

Women's leadership potential is often underestimated in the organizational context (e.g. Joy, 2008). From a social structural perspective, pursuing power and influencing others and behaving in a competitive, assertive, and decisive manner (Heilman, 2001) are more congruent with the male role than the female role, and the leader role is incongruent with the female gender role, i.e. how society expects women to behave. In addition, these stereotypes have a negative impact on women's own judgements of their abilities and beliefs (Isaas et al., 2012). Thus, women themselves often do not think they are suitable for a leading position. Feingold (1994) pointed out that gender roles may be integrated into one's self-concept through socialization. Influenced by social role theory, women are more likely to hold the view that it is not the right choice for them to take on leading positions. The lack of fit between what is typically associated with leadership and the female gender role may thus have a negative impact on women's MTL (Hernandez Bark et al., 2016). In line with this, Elprana et al. (2015) demonstrated that traditional gender role beliefs decreased women's affective-identity MTL.

Additionally, women's low MTL could be due to a lack of same-sex leader models. Lacking same-sex leader role models has been found to negatively influence women's motivation for pursuing leadership positions (Elprana et al., 2015). Indeed, same-sex role models are significantly associated with individuals' desire for a leadership career (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Wiese & Freund, 2011). Role models can improve individuals' confidence (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997), self-evaluation (Blanton et al., 2000) and aspiration (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). An effective role model has three attributes: 1) similarity, 2) relevance, and 3) attainability (Sealy & Singh, 2009). Marx and Roman (2002) found that female role models are effective in reducing women's stereotype threat. Having same-sex leaders as role models at work to observe and imitate

could help women believe a managerial position is attainable to them (Elprana et al, 2015), however, there are fewer female managers in the workplace than men managers. Thus, women followers are less likely to have same-sex leadership models than men followers, which may result in women being less motivated to lead. In line with this, Elprana et al. (2015) found that same-sex role models have a negative association with women's affective-identity MTL. Several studies have also shown that, compared to men, women have lower affective-identity MTL (e.g., Hong et al, 2011; Schuh et al., 2013). In sum, social role theory and same-sex role model absence help explain why, compared to men, women may present lower MTL in the workplace. Therefore, in line with theory and prior research, I propose that:

Hypothesis 4: Gender is directly related to MTL such that women have lower MTL than men followers.

#### Leadership Self-Efficacy, Gender and MTL

The impact of leadership self-efficacy on MTL is explored in this study as prior research shows leadership self-efficacy to be a significant predictor of MTL (e.g., Mascia et al., 2015). This is not surprising, as individuals tend to want to participate in activities and situations within their capabilities (Bandura, 1977). When an individual has a high level of self-efficacy, his or her motivation to fulfill the role expectation is thus higher (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Endress, 2000). Singer (1989, 1991), through the social-cognitive approach, found that leadership self-efficacy could explain individuals' leadership ambition variance. In addition, Kanfer (1990) claimed that self-efficacy was a proximal antecedent of MTL. In line with this, leadership self-efficacy has been found to be related to an individual's desire and interest to be a leader (Paglis, 2010) and MTL (Paglis & Green, 2002). Chan and Drasgow (2001) further showed that leadership self-efficacy was positively related to both affective-identity and social-normative MTL. However, this

relationship may be weaker for women than for men. Indeed, based on social role theory, women, even when perceiving to have the abilities to successfully exert the leadership role, may have little desire to occupy this role due to a perception that such a role would not be consistent with what society expects from them. I thus hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5a: Followers' leadership self-efficacy is positively related to their MTL.

Hypothesis 5b: Gender moderates this relationship such that it is weaker for women than for men followers.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The proposed model was empirically tested using a sample of employees working in various organizations in the US. Participants were asked to fill out two online questionnaires approximately three weeks apart. Each questionnaire contained the study variables, potential control variables and demographic information: their supervisor's leadership style, their own leadership self-efficacy, their motivation to lead, and demographic information (i.e., gender, tenure in the current leadership position, tenure in a leadership role (any) in an organizational context, and education experience). I used previously-validated instruments for all variables. A few attention checks (i.e., items that were unrelated to the research) were also included to help screen out respondents who may have responded carelessly. Participants' IDs were used to link the two questionnaires, then deleted from the database after the two questionnaires had been linked for all participants.

In total, I received usable data from 291 participants at the first time point, and 117 at the second time point. The final sample was thus composed of 117 participants, 49.6% of whom were women (coded as 2), 50.4% were men (coded as 1), and no participant self-described as non-binary/transgender/other gender. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 75 years old ( $M = 51.89$ ,  $SD = 12.66$ ) and worked in a variety of industries, including Health and Social services (19.66%), Education and Academia (10.26%), and Accounting, Finance and Banking(10.26%). Other industries included law and insurance, consulting, marketing and sales, biotechnologies and pharmaceuticals, and human resources. All participants were full-time employees.

## Procedure

Participants were recruited through Qualtrics data panel services, and were incentivized according to the panel service's policy. Other than this incentive, there were no benefits to participants other than contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the field of organizational behavior.

The web-based questionnaires started with the consent form, which clarified the purpose and the terms of the research. The questionnaires could be completed at any time and in no way forced participants to answer any question. Thus, participants were free to discontinue participation at any time. They were also informed in the consent form that they were free to withdraw without any consequences after having participated.

## Measures

***Supervisor's Transformational Leadership.*** The supervisor's transformational leadership style was measured using the 23-item scale developed by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990), and a 5-point Likert-type scale, from "1=strongly disagree" to "5=strongly agree". The scale includes

six dimensions to capture the four components of transformational leadership. Idealized influence is captured through a “providing an appropriate model” dimension; inspiration, though “identifying and articulating a vision”, “fostering the acceptance of group goal”, and “high-performance expectation”; individualized consideration is measured by the dimension of “individual support”, and “intellectual stimulation” is the scale’s sixth dimension. Example items are “My supervisor has a clear understanding of where we are going”, and “My supervisor behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs” ( $\alpha = .95$  at T1 and T2).

***Supervisor’s Servant Leadership.*** To measure servant leadership, I used the 7-item instrument developed by Liden and colleagues (2015) and a 5-point Likert-type scale, from “1=strongly disagree” to “5=strongly agree”. This scale includes one item to capture each one of the seven dimensions of servant leadership: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. Example items are “My supervisor can tell if something work-related is going wrong” and “My supervisor makes my career development a priority”. ( $\alpha = .88$  at T1 and T2).

***Supervisor’s Directive Leadership.*** The supervisor’s directive leadership style was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Euwema et al. (2007) and a 5-point Likert-type scale, from “1=strongly disagree” to “5=strongly agree”. Example items are “My supervisor expects employees to follow his/her instructions precisely” and “My supervisor requires employees to submit detailed reports of their activities” ( $\alpha = .80$  at T1,  $\alpha = .69$  at T2).

***Leadership self-efficacy.*** Leadership self-efficacy was measured using a 21-item scale developed by Bobbio and Manganelli (2009) and a 7-point Likert-type scale, from “1=strongly disagree” to “7=strongly agree”. This scale comprises six dimensions: 1) starting and leading

change processes in groups (3 items); 2) choosing effective followers and delegating responsibilities (4 items); 3) building and managing interpersonal relationships within the group (3 items); 4) showing self-awareness and self-confidence (5 items); 5) motivating people (3 items); and 6) gaining consensus of group members (3 items). Example items are “I am able to set a new direction for a group if the one currently taken doesn’t seem correct to me” and “I am confident in my ability to choose group members in order to build up an effective and efficient team”. The scale was deemed reliable in this study ( $\alpha = .96$  at T1,  $\alpha = .91$  at T2).

***Motivation to lead.*** MTL was measured by the 14-item instrument developed by Chan and Drasgow’ (2001) and a 7-point Likert-type scale, from “1=strongly disagree” to “7=strongly agree”. This scale is composed of two subscales, which I combined as had been done in prior research (e.g., Joo et al., 2018): 9 items measure affective-identity MTL and 5 items measure social-normative MTL. Example items are “Most of the time I prefer being a leader rather than a follower when working in a group” (affective-identity MTL) and “I feel I have a duty to lead others if I am asked” (social-normative MTL). The scale was deemed reliable within the present sample ( $\alpha = .93$  at T2,  $\alpha = .91$  at T2).

Three attention checks were placed randomly in the questionnaire. These items were unrelated to the research, and used to ensure that respondents who may responded carelessly could be screened out. An example is “I travel through time and space”. Respondents who answered incorrectly to either of these items were removed from the final sample.

## Ethical Considerations

Concordia University’s ethics committee reviewed and approved the research proposal for the present study. A consent form informing participants of the purpose of the research, and that their participation was voluntary was presented before the beginning of the questionnaire. The

consent form also informed participants that their responses were confidential, and that only aggregated data would be shared. The participants agreed to the terms before beginning to answer the questionnaires, and had the possibility of withdrawing from participating at any point.

## RESULTS

### Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics and reliability analyses for all scales were conducted using SPSS, using data from participants who had completed both the first and second questionnaires. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all variables are shown in Table 1. Expectedly, there were positive significant correlations between supervisors' transformational leadership style ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), and servant leadership style ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ) at T1 and followers' leadership self-efficacy at T2. Directive leadership style at T1 was not significantly correlated with leadership self-efficacy at T2. There was a positive significant correlation between T2 leadership self-efficacy and MTL ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ). Gender and MTL were significantly and negatively correlated ( $r = -.20, p < .05$ ).

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 concerned relationships between supervisors' transformational (T1), servant (T1), and directive (T1) leadership style and leadership self-efficacy (T2), and proposed that these relationships would be stronger among women followers. To test these hypotheses, I conducted three separate three-stage hierarchical multiple regressions with followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) as the dependent variable, supervisor leadership style (T1) as the independent variable and followers' gender as the moderating variable. The control variables of age (T2), organizational tenure (T2), and supervisory tenure (T2) were entered at the first stage of the



regression, leadership style (T1) and gender were entered at the second stage, and an interaction term between supervisor leadership style (T1) and follower gender was entered in the third stage of the regression. Followers' age, organizational tenure and supervisory tenure were included as control variables because previous studies suggest demographic factors may be related to individuals' desire for taking on leading positions (e.g., Harlan & Weiss, 1982).

In support of Hypothesis 1a, transformational leadership (T1) was significant predictor of followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $t(117) = 3.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Of note, gender was not a significant predictor of followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $t(117) = -.49$ , ns), but the interaction term added at stage three was a significant predictor of followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $t(117) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ), adding an additional 4.0% of variance in the model (see Table 2). To better understand the nature of the interaction, I plotted the relationship between supervisors' transformational leadership (T1) and followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) for men and women followers ( $\pm 1$  SD). Results indicate that the slope for men followers is positive, but not significant ( $G = .06$ ,  $t(117) = .55$ , ns), while that slope is positive and significant among women followers ( $G = .44$ ,  $t(117) = 4.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (see Figure 2). These results provide support for Hypothesis 1a, which proposed that supervisors' transformational leadership would be positively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy, and for Hypothesis 1b, which proposed that this relationship would be stronger for women than for men followers.

Similarly, in support of Hypothesis 2a, servant leadership (T1) was a significant predictor of followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $t(117) = 3.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the interaction term added at stage three was a significant predictor of followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $t(117) = 2.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ), adding an additional 3.4% of variance in the model (see Table 3). To better understand the nature of the interaction, I plotted the relationship

between supervisors' servant leadership (T1) and followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) for men and women followers ( $\pm 1$  SD). Results indicate that the slope for men followers is positive, but not significant ( $G = .06$ ,  $t(117) = .633$ , ns), while that slope is positive and significant among women followers ( $G = .37$ ,  $t(117) = 3.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (see Figure 3). These results provide support for Hypothesis 2a, which proposed that supervisors' servant leadership would be positively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy, and for Hypothesis 2b, which proposed that this relationship would be stronger for women than for men followers.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among variables.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>1. Transformational (T1)</b>	3.42	0.86	1													
<b>2. Transformational (T2)</b>	3.44	0.83	.89**	1												
<b>3. Servant (T1)</b>	3.26	0.97	.88**	.82**	1											
<b>4. Servant (T2)</b>	3.23	0.97	.79**	.87**	.86**	1										
<b>5. Directive(T1)</b>	2.98	0.76	0.07	0.04	0.03	0.08	1									
<b>6. Directive(T2)</b>	2.97	0.76	-0.02	-0.03	-0.07	0.03	.79**	1								
<b>7. LSE (T1)</b>	5.11	0.94	.32**	.33**	.32**	.38**	.27**	.22*	1							
<b>8. LSE (T2)</b>	5.18	0.79	.32**	.44**	.34**	.48**	0.14	0.17	.77**	1						
<b>9. MTL (T1)</b>	4.29	1.26	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.15	.61**	.49**	1					
<b>10. MTL (T2)</b>	4.36	1.14	0.09	0.16	0.08	0.15	0.05	0.14	.52**	.51**	.87**	1				
<b>11. Age</b>	51.59	12.66	-0.01	-0.10	-.18*	-.21*	-0.00	0.07	-0.12	-0.12	-0.04	-0.09	1			
<b>12. Gender</b>	1.50	0.50	-0.04	-0.06	0.05	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.14	-0.11	-.22*	-.20*	-0.12	1		
<b>13. Organizational Tenure</b>	14.07	8.99	-0.12	-0.17	-.21*	-.27**	-0.09	-0.05	-0.02	-0.03	0.03	-0.02	.43**	-.24*	1	
<b>14. Supervisor Tenure</b>	7.09	4.37	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.06	0.05	0.02	-0.02	-0.03	0.02	0.05	.24**	-0.06	.41**	1

N = 117

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. Regressions on supervisors' transformational leadership (T1), followers' gender and leadership self-efficacy (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Transformational Leadership (T1)	0.25	0.08	0.28	3.11	0.002	0.09	0.41
Transformational Leadership (T1) x Gender	0.38	0.16	1.04	2.43	0.017	0.07	0.68

*N*=117

Figure 2. The moderating role of followers' gender on supervisors' transformational leadership (T1) and followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2).

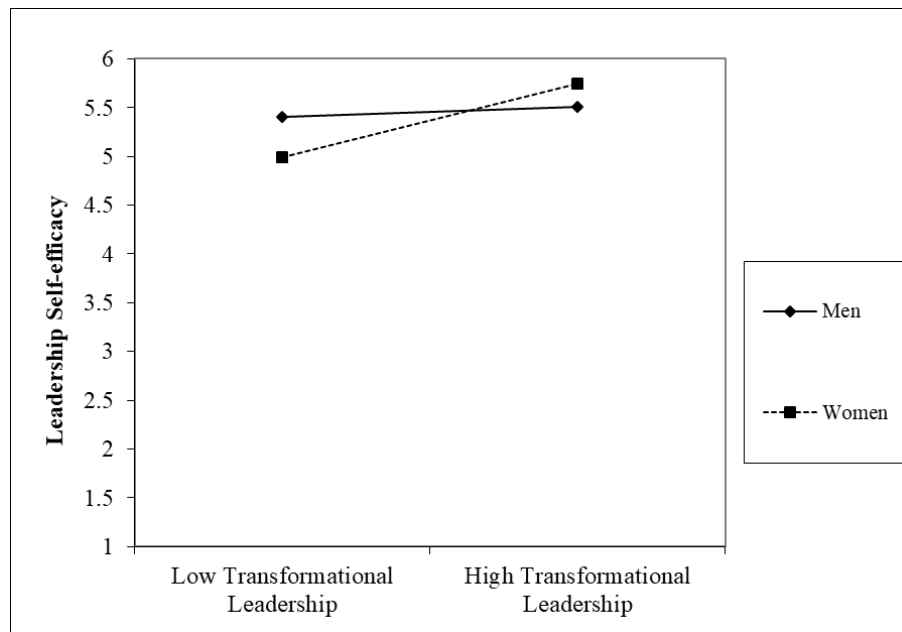
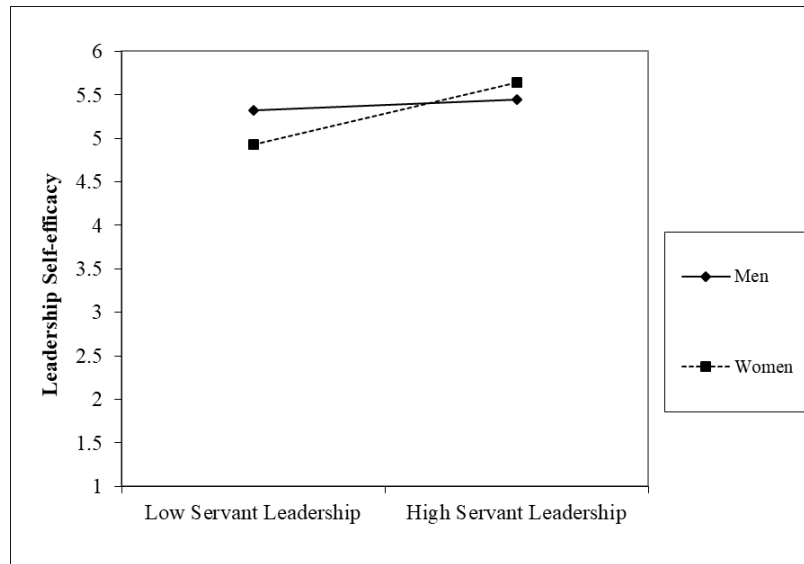


Table 3. Regressions on supervisors' servant leadership (T1), followers' gender and leadership self-efficacy (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Servant Leadership (T1)	0.22	0.07	0.27	3.02	0.003	0.08	0.36
Servant Leadership (T1) x Gender	0.30	0.13	0.89	2.24	0.027	0.04	0.57

*N*=117

Figure 3. The moderating role of followers' gender on supervisors' servant leadership (T1) and followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2).



Contrary to predictions, in the third regression, directive leadership (T1) was not significantly related to followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2). ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $t(117) = .81$ , ns), and neither was the interaction term between directive leadership (T1) and gender ( $\beta = -.22$ ,  $t(117) = -1.19$ , ns) (see Table 4). Hypotheses 3a and 3b, which proposed that supervisors' directive leadership would be negatively related to followers' leadership self-efficacy and that this relationship would be stronger among women followers, respectively, are thus not supported.

Table 4. Regressions on supervisors' directive leadership (T1), followers' gender and leadership self-efficacy (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Directive Leadership (T1)	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.81	0.423	-0.11	0.26
Directive Leadership (T1) x Gender	-0.22	0.18	-0.53	-1.19	0.238	-0.58	0.15

*N*=117

Hypothesis 4 proposed that gender would be directly related to MTL such that women have lower MTL than men. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a two-stage hierarchical multiple

regression with followers' MTL (T2) as the dependent variable and gender as the independent variable in SPSS. The control variables of age (T2), organizational tenure (T2), and supervisory tenure (T2) were entered at stage one and followers' gender was entered at the second stage. Results show that at stage two, followers' gender was not a significant predictor of MTL (T2) ( $\beta = -.22$ ,  $t(117) = -1.02$ , *ns*). To further examine this hypothesis, I examined the direct impact of gender on followers' affective-identity MTL (T2) and social-normative MTL (T2) separately. Similar two-stage hierarchical multiple regressions revealed gender was not related to either affective-identity MTL (T2) ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $t(117) = -1.04$ , *ns*) (see Table 6) or social-normative MTL (T2) ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $t(117) = -.68$ , *ns*) (see Table 7). These results suggest that gender does not have a direct impact on MTL.

Table 5. Regressions on followers' gender and general MTL (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gender	-0.22	0.22	-0.1	-1.02	0.309	-0.65	0.21

*N=117*

Table 6. Regressions on followers' gender and affective-identity MTL (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gender	-0.27	0.26	-0.1	-1.04	0.303	-0.77	0.24

*N=117*

Table 7. Regressions on followers' gender and social-normative MTL (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gender	-0.14	0.21	-0.07	-0.68	0.501	-0.55	0.27

*N=117*

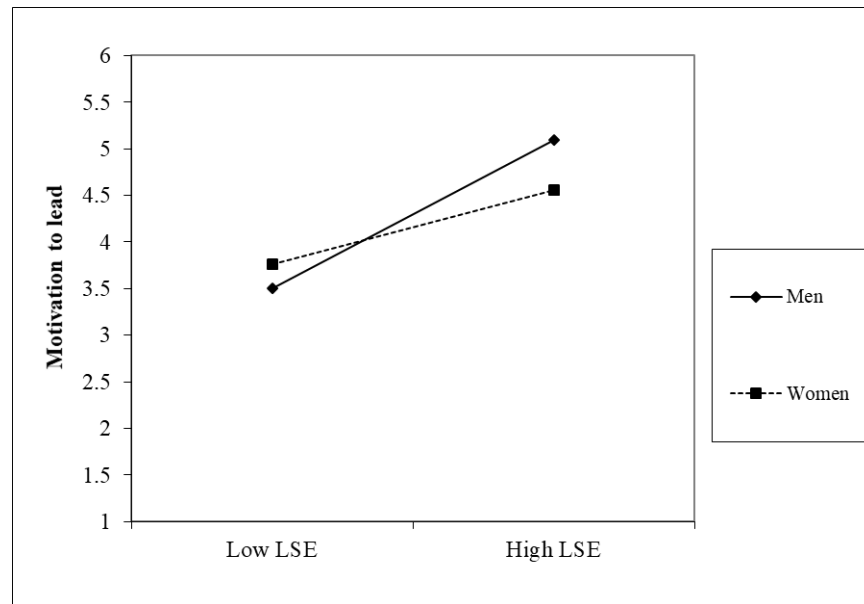
Hypothesis 5a proposed that leadership self-efficacy would be positively related to MTL, and according to Hypothesis 5b, I expected that this relationship would be stronger among women followers. To test these hypotheses, I conducted a three-stage hierarchical multiple regression with followers' motivation to lead (T2) as the dependent variable, followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) as the independent variable and followers' gender as the moderating variable. The control variables of age (T2), organizational tenure (T2), and supervisory tenure (T2) were entered at the first stage of the regression, followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) and gender were entered in the second stage, and an interaction term between followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) and gender were entered in the third stage of the regression. Results revealed that at stage two, followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) was a significant predictor of motivation to lead (T2) ( $\beta = .72$ ,  $t(117) = 5.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In the third stage, the interaction term between followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) and gender was a significant predictor of followers' motivation to lead (T2) ( $\beta = -.51$ ,  $t(117) = -2.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ), adding an additional 2.7% of variance in the model (see Table 8). To better understand the nature of the interaction, I plotted the relationship between followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) and followers' MTL (T2) for men and women followers ( $\pm 1$  SD). Results indicate that the slope for men followers is positive and significant ( $G = 1.03$ ,  $t(117) = 5.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and also positive and significant, but weaker, among women followers ( $G = 0.51$ ,  $t(117) = 3.38$ ,  $p < .005$ ) (see Figure 4). These results provide support for Hypotheses 5a and 5b.

Table 8. Regressions on followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2), gender and MTL (T2) (controls included)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Leadership Self-Efficacy (T2)	0.72	0.13	0.49	5.73	0.000	0.47	0.97
Leadership Self-Efficacy (T2) x Gender	-0.51	0.23	-1.22	-2.21	0.030	-0.97	-0.05

*N*=117

Figure 4. The moderating role of followers' gender on followers' leadership self-efficacy (T2) and followers' motivation to lead (T2).



## DISCUSSION

A number of studies have shown that women leaders can positively influence organizational performance, especially when organizations are in crisis (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Compared to men, women show higher advancement (Bass & Avolio, 1994), and more commitment to the organization and their career (Powell, Posner, & Schmidt, 1985). Having more women leaders is thus beneficial for organizations' long-term development. In order to contribute to our understanding of what might enhance women's desire to occupy leadership roles, and building on the idea that immediate supervisors may play an important role in whether followers intend on seeking leadership roles, this study examined the effects of three distinct supervisors' leadership styles on followers' leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead, accounting for the role of follower gender.



Results suggest that supervisors' transformational leadership is positively associated with followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that this relationship is stronger among women than among men followers. This was expected due to the fact that transformational supervisors develop followers' potential during work (Bass, 1985; Johnson & Dipboye, 2008; Zareen et al, 2015) and are usually regarded as a positive source of feedback (Joo et al, 2018), which is known to affect followers' leadership self-efficacy (Meller et al., 2006). In addition, transformational leadership has been considered to be a "feminine style" (Druskat, 1994), and thus leadership who adopt this style may be more likely to be role models for women followers, as their behavior may appear to be consistent with social expectations of women. In sum, transformational leadership is generally beneficial in terms of follower leadership self-efficacy, but women followers can benefit even more from their transformational leaders to increase their leadership self-efficacy.

Similarly, I found supervisors' servant leadership to be positively associated with followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that relationship was stronger for women than for men followers. This was expected because servant leaders help followers strengthen their promotion focus on pursuing higher goals and taking more challenges (Neubert et al., 2008) and followers are more likely to manifest servant leadership behaviors when working with servant leaders (Van Dierendonck, 2011). In addition, the characteristics of servant leadership (e.g., caring, cooperative and supportive) consist of what social role theory expects from women (Duff, 2013). Therefore, women followers may be more likely to adopt servant leaders as role models. Thus, like transformational leadership, servant leadership enhances followers' leadership self-efficacy, but women followers can benefit more from their servant leaders to increase their leadership self-efficacy.

With regards to directive leadership, I expected that this leadership style would be negatively associated with followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that this negative relationship would be stronger for women than for men followers. This was expected because directive leaders seldom develop followers' leadership potential, and this style, which is congruent with "masculine" behaviors, can be integrated into masculine gender stereotypes (Heilman et al., 1995; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). However, contrary to expectations, in this study, supervisors' directive leadership was not significantly related to followers' leadership self-efficacy, and there was no significant moderation by gender. These results suggest that, while directive leaders may not care or seek to develop their followers' leadership potential, their behaviors may not stifle followers' leadership self-efficacy.

Lastly, while prior studies had suggested that, compared to men, women tended to have lower motivation to lead (Elprana et. al, 2015; Hernandez Bark et al., 2016), I did not, in this study, find a direct relationship between followers' gender and MTL. This was true for both the general construct of MTL and the distinct facets of affective-identity MTL and social-normative MTL. While the results of this study may appear to conflict with prior findings, the literature on followers' MTL has, as mentioned previously, identified five major antecedents (Chan & Drasgow, 2001): Big-Five personality traits, values, emotional intelligence (EI), previous leadership experience, and leadership self-efficacy. In this study, followers' leadership self-efficacy was found to be significantly and positively associated with MTL, which was expected and is consistent with prior findings (e.g., Mascia et al., 2015). Indeed, research suggests that when an individual has a high level of self-efficacy, his or her motivation to fulfill the role expectation is thus higher (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Endress, 2000). Interestingly and as expected, the relationship between leadership self-efficacy and MTL was weaker among women. This suggests that, even when they perceive

having the abilities required to occupy a leadership role, women may be reluctant to envision seeking such a role, and thus report lower MTL.

### Theoretical Implications

The study makes some theoretical contributions. First, the findings of this study advance research in the field of leadership by providing insights into women's leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead. This study also contributes to the literature on by providing a more complete understanding of the relationship between supervisors' leadership style and followers' leadership self-efficacy, by extending the research on transformational, servant and directive leadership. More generally, this study contributes to the literature on gender differences in leadership, motivation, and more generally in organizational behavior.

### Practical Implications

In terms of implications for practice, this study provides organizations and supervisors with concrete ways to help women followers make the most of their potential by seeking leadership positions, and reaching their career goals. Indeed, this study's findings indicate that transformational and servant leadership behaviors are beneficial in terms of enhancing followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that this may be particularly true for women followers. Thus, selecting and promoting supervisors who manifest transformational and servant leadership behaviors is one way organizations may be able to encourage followers – and especially women – to believe in their leadership abilities and seek leadership roles. Organization aiming to develop the leading potential and motivation of their employees, especially women, should also invest in training supervisors to adopt transformational or servant leadership behaviors. Expectations should be clear that these leadership behaviors are expected of all supervisors, and should be measured and rewarded.

Moreover, women who aim to hold leadership positions in their careers can also benefit from this study, as it provides a basis to estimate whether their current or future supervisor, based on his or her behaviors and leadership style, is likely to help them in this regard. Supervised by a directive leader, women followers may not be able to count on their supervisor to help them explore and develop their leadership potential. However, supervised by a transformational or servant leader, women followers may be more likely to learn to lead, and see an increase in their confidence in their leadership abilities. Moreover, these supervisors care about their followers to a greater extent, and are likely to actively help them build their career paths. Thus, having a transformational or servant supervisor may be desirable for women who are considering occupying leading positions.

### Limitations

This study is not without limitations. One such limitation is that, while the time-lagged design reduces concerns related to common method variance, data were collected from a single source: employees, and the sample contained only one participant per leader. Thus, supervisors' leadership behaviors reported by the followers may reflect their perceptions, rather than an accurate representation of their leadership style. Another limitation is the fact that, as this study examined only one antecedent of leadership self-efficacy, i.e., supervisors' leadership behaviors, the impact of individual, subordinate and organizational antecedents of followers' leadership self-efficacy were not accounted for. Specifically, I only examined the possible predicting effects of the characteristics of supervisors, however, the other three types of antecedents were not analyzed. As mentioned previously, individual, subordinate and organizational and supervisor factors all are antecedents to an individual's leadership self-efficacy. A third limitation is that the full indirect model, i.e. the conditional indirect relationship between leadership style and MTL mediated by

LSE, was not tested in this study. In other words, while this study shows that supervisors' transformational and servant leadership styles directly impact followers' leadership self-efficacy, and that followers' leadership self-efficacy directly impacts their MTL, whether leadership self-efficacy plays a mediating role is not examined. Other limitations include the high correlation between transformational and servant leadership, suggesting that maybe in the eyes of participants, these leadership styles were not really distinct, the high attrition rate between T1 and T2, and the correlational design.

### Future Directions

This study attempted to address certain gaps in our understanding of what contributes to women's motivation to lead, focusing on the leadership style of immediate supervisors. While results suggest that supervisor leadership behaviors may indeed contribute to follower leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead, only transformational, servant, and directive leadership style were examined in this study. Future research should examine the impact of other leadership behaviors on women's leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead. For instance, future research could explore the impact of transactional leadership behaviors on these outcomes. This style is based on leader-follower exchanges (Zareen et al,2015), and transactional supervisors tend to motivate followers by providing financial rewards, bonuses, promotions, and praise. As transactional leaders' evaluation of leadership performance tends to rely on traditionally masculine behavior – competitive, assertive, and decisive (Heilman, 2001) – their women followers may be less likely to see them as role models, and more likely to see their leadership potential being underestimated by transactional leaders, which may result in women seeing themselves as lacking in leadership ability, and ultimately reduce their MTL. Future research could also examine the

dimensions of transformational and servant leadership, to better explore and understand what really “drives” the effects.

Future research could also examine other antecedents of followers’ MTL, and find other paths that would be effective to motivate women followers to be a leader. Indeed, beside leadership self-efficacy, research has identified four other main antecedents of MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). For example, Lord and Brown (2001) contended that leaders’ value orientation of self-enhancement is related to their leader behaviors, and Clemmons III and Fields (2011) found that individuals' self-enhancement values were positively related to affective-identity and social-normative MTL. Future research could examine the role of this particular value as a predictor of MTL for men and women followers. Relatedly, future research could include other antecedents of leadership self-efficacy. Studies on the role of supervisor behavior with teams of followers, answering the questionnaire based on a shared immediate supervisor, would contribute to enhance our understanding of how supervisor behaviors, beyond individual perceptions, contribute to leadership self-efficacy and MTL. Lastly, the experience as a leader should be measured in future research, to account for past and current leadership experience.

## CONCLUSION

While considerable work is still needed to understand and remedy the lack of women in leadership positions, this study suggests that supervisors’ leadership style can influence followers’ leadership self-efficacy, and in turn impact their motivation to be a leader in the future. Specifically transformational and servant leadership behaviors may be effective ways to develop followers’ leadership self-efficacy. However, importantly, this study suggests that women, in particular, may be more likely to believe in their leadership abilities and aspire to a leadership position when

working under a transformational or servant leaders. Thus, organizations should strive to hire, promote and train their supervisors to adopt transformational or servant behaviors.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

#### Demographic Information

1. What gender do you most identify with? Female Male Prefer to self-describe
2. What is your age?
3. Are you employed full-time (35h/week or more) or part-time at this organization?
4. What is your current job title?  
*TI only*
5. What is your highest education degree?
6. How long have been working at your current organization?
7. How long have you been working for your current supervisor?
8. How long have you been part of your current work team?
9. Currently, you are a manager or an employee?
10. If you answered "Manager" to the previous question, please indicate how many employees you supervise below:
11. How long have you been in a leadership position?
12. What industry does your company operate in?
13. If other: \_\_\_\_\_
14. How many people make up your current organization?
15. How many people make up your current work team?
16. Supervisor gender: My supervisor's gender is : Female, Male, Prefer to self-describe

**Transformational leadership.** Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly*, 1: 107–142.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Scale: 1("Strongly disagree") to 5("Strongly agree")

1. My supervisor shows us that he/she expects a lot from us.
2. My supervisor acts without considering my feelings. (R)
3. My supervisor paints an interesting picture of where we are going.
4. My supervisor leads by "doing" rather than simply by "telling".
5. My supervisor shows respect for my personal feelings.
6. My supervisor provides a good model for me to follow.
7. My supervisor behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.

8. My supervisor insists on only the best performance. (R)
9. My supervisor treats me without considering my personal feelings. (R)
10. My supervisor has a clear understanding of where we are going.
11. My supervisor will not settle for second best. (R)
12. My supervisor fosters collaboration among work groups.
13. My supervisor inspires others with his/her plans for the future.
14. My supervisor challenges me to think about old problems in new ways.
15. My supervisor is able to get others committed to his/her dream.
16. My supervisor asks questions that prompt me to think.
17. My supervisor encourages employees to be "team players".
18. My supervisor has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things.
19. My supervisor is always seeking new opportunities for the organization.
20. My supervisor gets the group to work together for the same goal.
21. My supervisor leads by example.
22. My supervisor has ideas that have challenged me to re-examine some of basic assumptions about my work.
23. My supervisor develops a team attitude and spirit among employees.

**Servant leadership.** Liden R. C., Wayne, S. J., Meuser, J. D., Hu, J., Wu, J., & Liao, C. (2015) Servant leadership: Validation of a short form of the SL-28. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26, 254-269.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Scale: 1("Strongly disagree") to 5("Strongly agree")

1. My supervisor can tell if something work-related is going wrong.
2. My supervisor makes my career development a priority.
3. I would seek help from my supervisor if I had a personal problem.
4. My supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.
5. My supervisor puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.
6. My supervisor gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.
7. My supervisor would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.

**Directive leadership.** Euwema, M. C., Wendt, H., & Van Emmerik, H. (2007). Leadership styles and group organizational citizenship behavior across cultures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 1035–1057, as used in Stoker, J. I., Garretsen, H., & Soudis, D. (2019). Tightening the leash after a threat: A multi-level event study on leadership behavior following the financial crisis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20, 199-214

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Scale: 1(“Strongly disagree”) to 5(“Strongly agree”)

1. My supervisor expects employees to follow his/her instructions precisely.
2. My supervisor requires employees to submit detailed reports of their activities.
3. My supervisor makes most decisions for employees.  
(SCREENER - My supervisor travels through time and space)
4. My supervisor supervises employees very closely.
5. My supervisor expects employees to carry out instructions immediately.

**Leadership self-efficacy.** Bobbio, A. N. D. R. E. A., & Manganelli, A. M. (2009). Leadership self-efficacy scale: A new multidimensional instrument. *TPM-Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 16(1), 3-24.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Scale: 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”)

1. I am able to set a new direction for a group, if the one currently taken doesn’t seem correct to me.
2. I can usually change the attitudes and behaviors of group members if they don’t meet group objectives.  
(SCREENER - I have been to every country in the world.)
3. I am able to change things in a group even if they are not completely under my control.
4. I am confident in my ability to choose group members in order to build up an effective and efficient team.
5. I am able to optimally share out the work between the members of a group to get the best results.
6. I would be able to delegate the task of accomplishing specific goals to other group members.
7. I am usually able to understand to whom, within a group, it is better to delegate specific tasks.

8. Usually, I can establish very good relationships with the people I work with.
9. I am sure I can communicate with others, going straight to the heart of the matter.
10. I can successfully manage relationships with all the members of a group.
11. I can identify my strengths and weaknesses.
12. I am confident in my ability to get things done.
13. I always know how to get the best out of the situations I find myself in.
14. With my experience and competence I can help group members to reach the group's targets.
15. As a leader, I am usually able to affirm my beliefs and values.
16. With my example, I am sure I can motivate the members of a group.
17. I can usually motivate group members and arouse their enthusiasm when I start a new project.
18. I am able to motivate and give opportunities to any group member in the exercise of his/her tasks or functions.
19. I can usually make the people I work with appreciate me.
20. I am sure I can gain the consensus of group members.
21. I can usually lead a group with the consensus of all members.

**Motivation to lead.** Chan, K. Y., & Drasgow, F. (2001). Toward a theory of individual differences and leadership: understanding the motivation to lead. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 481.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Scale: 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree")

1. Most of the time, I prefer being a leader rather than a follower when working in a group.
2. I am the type of person who is not interested to lead others. (R)
3. I am the type of person who is not interested to lead others. (R)
4. I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others.
5. I believe I can contribute more to a group if I am a follower rather than a leader. (R)
6. I usually want to be the leader in the group that I work in.
7. I am the type who would actively support a leader but prefer not to be appointed as leader. (R)
8. I have a tendency to take charge in most groups or teams that I work in.
9. I have a tendency to take charge in most groups or teams that I work in.

10. I feel that I have a duty to lead others if I am asked.
11. I agree to lead whenever I am asked or dominated by the other members.
12. I was taught to believe in the value of leading others.
13. It is appropriate for people to accept leadership roles or position when they are asked.  
(SCREENER - I sleep less than one hour per night.)
14. I have been taught that I should always volunteer to lead others if I can.