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Transformational Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Setting

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Transformational Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Setting

ABSTRACT

This paper reports the findings of a study that examines the application of transformational leadership in a cross-cultural setting. This study used Baron and Kenny's (1986) and Parker's (2003) mediation model, Podsakoff and Mackenzie's (1990) scale of transformational leadership behaviour, and Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) items on commitment to change. Participants comprising pastors and church members were drawn from six Chinese- and three English-speaking church congregations in St Louis, Missouri, USA. The research findings suggest that the members of Chinese-speaking churches were positively affected by task-oriented behaviors and three types of commitment to change. On the other hand, the members of the English-speaking churches were positively affected by people-oriented behaviors, and the levels of trust in their Pastors and overall satisfaction with their churches.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, cross-cultural, Chinese, task-oriented behaviour, people-oriented behavior*

Transformational Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Setting

INTRODUCTION

Although a large body of cross-cultural research has focused on comparing and contrasting national cultural differences, little work has been done on the managerial implications arising due to the cultural differences of organizational members living in the same locality belonging to different ethnic origins (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). The underlying assumption of this trend is that people from the same region do not behave dramatically differently, and therefore, are treated uniformly. However, this assumption does not necessarily imply that a single style of leadership behavior would be relevant and effective concerning followers from the same locality but of different ethnic origins.

We report the findings of an empirical study of the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on followers' commitment to change in a cross-cultural setting. Specifically, this study examines how trust and satisfaction among followers mediate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and commitment to change in several Chinese and English speaking church congregations in St Louis, Missouri, USA. The rest of the paper is arranged as follows. First, we review the literature on transformational leadership behaviors and present the theoretical model. Second, we develop hypothesis and discuss the methodology of data collection and analysis used in this study. Third, we present our results. Finally, we conclude with the implications of our findings for cross-cultural applications of transformational leadership.

POTENTIAL MEDIATORS IN THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROCESS

Trust and satisfaction are important mediators between a leader's behavior and the performance of followers (Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Organ, 1988a & 1988b; Yukl, 1989a & 1989b; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990; Pierce and Newstrom, 2000). The two constructs of trust and satisfaction are thus posited in the present study as potential mediators of transformational leadership behaviors (as shown in Figure 1).

Trust in the Leader

The present study investigates three types of followers' attitudes towards the leader as identified by Podsakoff and Mackenzie (1990): (i) followers' personal trust at work (interpreted here as the followers' faith in the leader's fairness); (ii) followers' faith in the leader's integrity; and (iii) loyalty to the leader.

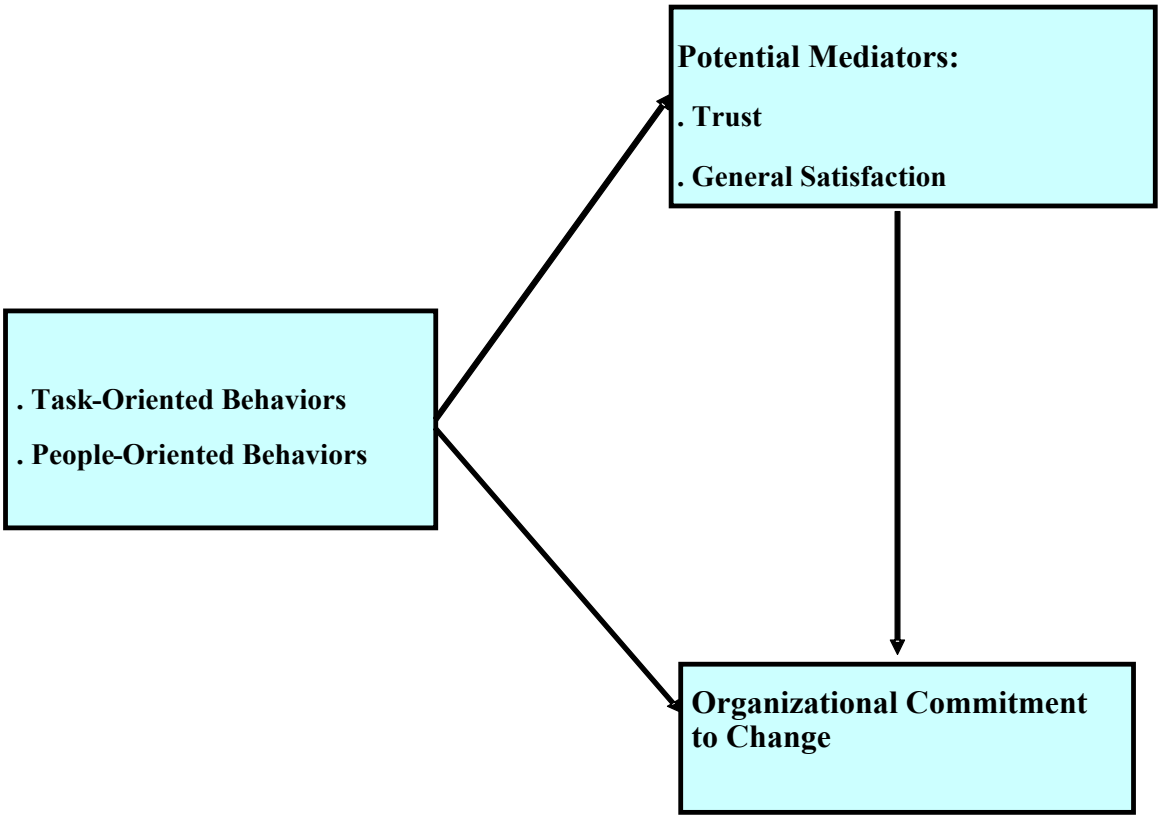
Follower Satisfaction

The study also investigates two types of followers' satisfaction as identified by Weiss et al. (1967) in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ): (i) followers' intrinsic satisfaction; and (ii) followers' overall satisfaction.

Theoretical Model

Figure 1 depicts the relationships between (i) the research antecedents of transformational leadership behaviors (independent construct), (ii) the degree of trust and satisfaction in the leader among followers (mediating construct), and (iii) the outcome of followers' commitment to organizational change (dependent construct).

Figure 1: Theoretical Model



FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

It has been demonstrated that there is a high correlation between transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in the leader and follower satisfaction (Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990). These authors found that an increase in task demands produces a negative impact on both trust and satisfaction. Their research findings also suggest that when a leader increases task demands, employee trust is reduced if followers already have a low level of confidence and communication with the leader. This leads to the following hypotheses being proposed:

> *Hypothesis 1a: There is a negative relationship between task-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' trust in the leader.*
>
> *Hypothesis 1b: There is a negative relationship between task-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' general satisfaction.*

Hypotheses 2a and 2b

The high-high leader model assumes a leader's task-oriented behaviors and people-oriented behaviors have independent additive effects on followers. Yukl (1998) has suggested that people-oriented behaviors may result in higher follower satisfaction. Some researchers have identified the provision of support as being at the core of people-oriented behaviors (Bowers and Seashore, 1966; House and Mitchell, 1974; Yukl, 1998). They all believe that leaders' supporting behaviors help build and maintain effective interpersonal relationships so that leaders are able to win the friendship loyalty and trust of followers. In summary these studies lead to the following hypotheses being proposed:

> *Hypothesis 2a: There is a positive relationship between people-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' trust in the leader's behavior.*
>
> *Hypothesis 2b: There is a positive relationship between people-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' general satisfaction.*

Hypotheses 3a and 3b

Research findings regarding organizational commitment have suggested that affective commitment is related to positive experience through follower satisfaction or training experience (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The same authors concluded that affective commitment is highly correlated positively with follower satisfaction and trust in or loyalty to the leader. Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) examined followers' affective commitment to change in the workplace and found that affective commitment to an organization has a strong positive correlation with an affective commitment to change. They concluded that affective commitment to change has a strong positive correlation with follower satisfaction and trust in and loyalty to the leader. These studies lead to the following hypotheses being proposed:

> *Hypothesis 3a: There is a positive relationship between followers' trust in the leader and their affective commitment to change.*
>
> *Hypothesis 3b: There is a positive relationship between followers' satisfaction and their affective commitment to change.*

Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4C and 4d

Follower's attitudes—such as trust and general satisfaction—represent an important mediator between the leader's behaviors and followers' performance (House, 1977; Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Boal and Bryson, 1988; Organ, 1988a 1988b; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990; Yukl, 1989a 1989b). It is apparent that the relationship between a leader's transformational behaviors and the followers' levels of commitment to change are mediated by the effect of leadership behaviors on the followers' attitudes towards the leader. This discussion leads to the following hypotheses being proposed:

> *Hypothesis 4a: Trust among followers mediates the relationship between a leader's transformational task-oriented behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change.*
>
> *Hypothesis 4b: General satisfaction among followers mediates the relationship between a leader's transformational task-oriented behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change.*

Hypothesis 4c: Trust among followers mediates the relationships between a leader's transformational people-oriented behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change.

Hypothesis 4d: General satisfaction among followers mediates the relationship between a leader's transformational people-oriented behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Two groups were selected by convenience sampling from among several church congregations in St Louis, Missouri, USA. The first population consisted of several hundred Chinese-speaking Christians at seven churches (Chinese Baptist Church, St Louis Chinese Gospel Church, Lighthouse Chinese Church, Taiwanese Presbyterian Church of Greater St Louis, St Louis Chinese Lutheran Church and Light of Christ Church). The second population consisted of several hundred English-speaking Christians at three English-speaking churches (Old Orchard Church, Cornerstone Evangelical Sree Church and Memorial Church).

Data Collection

The data were collected by questionnaire by a combination of: (i) postal mail to the data collector; and (ii) locked 'drop-in' boxes in the various churches. The data did not include the names of individual churches or pastors.

Table I: Response Rate

Chinese-speaking Churches	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Responses collected	Response Rate
1. St. Louis Chinese Gospel Church	120	45	.3750
2. Light of Christ, LCMS	53	51	.7272
3. St. Louis Taiwanese Presbyterian Church	110	63	.9623
4. St. Louis Chinese Lutheran Church	8	2	.2500
5. St. Louis Chinese Baptist Church	50	26	.5200
6. Lighthouse Chinese Church	25	18	.7200

Operationalisation

Podsakoff and Mackenzie's (1990) scale of transformational leadership behavior was used to identify the task-oriented and people-oriented leadership behaviors of the pastors of the churches that formed the populations for the present study. Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) items on commitment to change were used to identify church members' affective commitment to change within their churches. Podsakoff and Mackenzie's (1990) scale for trust in and loyalty to the leader was modified to identify three variables of trust in the pastors and two variables of church members' satisfaction with the organizations.

The present study used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree') to assess: (i) the pastors' transformational leadership behaviors; (ii) the church members' trust in their pastors; and (iii) three types of commitment to change. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('very satisfied') to 5 ('very dissatisfied') was used to assess church members' satisfaction with their churches.

Data Analysis

Data analyses included descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) factor analysis and reliability analysis. The following statistical tests (using SPSS) were conducted: correlation analysis to test: (i) whether transformational leaders' task-oriented change behaviors negatively affect followers' trust and general satisfaction; (ii) whether transformational leaders' people-oriented change behaviors positively affect followers' trust and general satisfaction; and (iii) whether a positive relationship exists between followers' trust (and general satisfaction) and their affective commitment to change; and multiple hierarchical regression to test whether followers' trust and general satisfaction mediate the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and an affective commitment to change. The mediation model used in this study was based on Baron and Kenny (1986) and Parker (2003).

RESULTS

Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Table II shows the two highest mean scores are on "affective" commitment to change (2.2160) and "individual support" (2.1360) scales. The three lowest mean scores are on the "trust in the leader" (1.5875), "modeling" (1.7048), and "acceptance of group goal" scales (1.7312).

Table II: Overall Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leader Task Beh Acceptance of Group Goal Scale	292	1.00	4.75	1.7312	.7189
Leader Task Beh High Performance Expectations Scale	293	1.00	5.00	2.0660	.9184
Leader Task Beh Intellectual Stimulation Scale	291	1.00	5.00	1.9794	.7457
Leader Task Beh Total Scale	280	1.00	4.45	1.9078	.6484
Leader People Beh Modeling Scale	297	1.00	4.67	1.7048	.7023
Leader People Beh Vision scale	295	1.00	4.80	2.1017	.7406
Leader People Beh Individual Support Scale	296	1.00	5.00	2.1368	.7576
Leader People Beh Total Scale	286	1.00	4.58	2.0204	.5891
Trust Scale	293	1.00	4.80	1.5857	.6651
Church Member's Intrinsic Satisfaction	290	1.00	3.67	1.9322	.5383
Church Member's Overal Satisfaction with the Church	293	1.00	4.75	1.8464	.6713
Church Member's Satisfaction Total Scale	283	1.00	3.92	1.9062	.5282
Affective Commitment Scale	272	1.00	5.00	2.2160	.6602
Valid N (listwise)	226				

Reliability Analysis

Table III shows the two highest reliabilities are on the “individual support” (.9023) and “high performance” (.8976) scales. The three lowest reliabilities are on the leader’s task-oriented behaviors-“total scale” (.8810), the followers’ level of satisfaction-“overall with church scale” (.8828), and the leader’s task-oriented behaviors-“intellectual stimulation scale” (.8834) scales. The overall reliability alpha for this study is .8981. All reliabilities on this table exceed Nunnally’s (1978) recommended level of .70.

Table III: Overall Reliability

Scale	Alpha	Overall Alpha
Leader People Behavior-Modeling Scale	.8854	
Leader People Behavior-Vision Scale	.8839	
Leader People Behavior-Individual Support Scale	**.9023**	
Leader People Behavior-Total Scale	.8847	
Leader Task Behavior-Acceptance of Group Goal Scale	.8837	
Leader Task Behavior-High Performance Expectation Scale	.8976	
Leader Task Behavior-Intellectual Stimulation Scale	.8834	
Leader Task Behavior-Total Scale	**.8810**	
Trust Scale	.8878	**.8981**
Satisfaction Intrinsic Scale	.8917	
Overall Satisfaction	.8828	
Satisfaction-Total Scale	.8873	
Affective Commitment Scale	.8880	

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

Hypothesis 1a postulated a negative relationship between task-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' trust in the leader whereas hypothesis 1b postulated a negative relationship between task-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' general satisfaction. The correlation analysis showed positive and statistically significant relationships: (i) between the leader's task-oriented behaviors and the

followers' trust; and (ii) between the leader's task-oriented behaviors and the followers' satisfaction (see Table IV). Hypotheses 1a and 1b were therefore *not* supported.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b

Hypothesis 2a postulated a positive relationship between people-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' trust in the leader's behavior; whereas hypothesis 2b postulated a positive relationship between people-oriented leadership behaviors and followers' general satisfaction. The correlation analysis showed positive and statistically significant relationships: (i) between the leader's people-oriented behaviors and the followers' trust; and (ii) between the leader's people-oriented behaviors and the followers' satisfaction (see Table IV). Hypotheses 2a and 2b were therefore supported.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b

Hypothesis 3a postulated a positive relationship between followers' trust in the leader and their affective commitment to change; whereas hypothesis 3b postulated a positive relationship between followers' satisfaction and their affective commitment to change. The correlation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the followers' trust in the leader and their affective commitment to change (see Table IV). It also showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between followers' satisfaction and their affective commitment to change (see Table IV). Hypotheses 3a and 3b were therefore supported.

Table IV: Summary of Results for Hypotheses 1a to 3b
Leaders' Behaviors and Followers' Levels of Attitudes and Their Commitment to Change

Theoretical Relationship (Correlation)	**Hypothesis Relationship**	**Correction Coefficient & Sample Number**	**Result of Hypothesis**
1a: Task → Trust	Negative	r= .498**	Not supported
1b: Task → Satisfaction	Negative	r= .567**	Not supported
2a: People → Trust	Positive	r= .735**	Supported
2b: People → Satisfaction	Positive	r= .693**	Supported
3a: Trust → AC	Positive	r= .256**	Supported
3b: Satisfaction→ AC	Positive	r= .564**	Supported

** Correlation is signification at the .01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is signification at the .05 level (2-tailed)
AC: Affective Commitment to change

Hypotheses 4a–4d

Hypotheses 4a and 4b postulated that the relationship between a leader's transformational *task-oriented* behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change was mediated by trust (hypothesis 4a) and by satisfaction (hypothesis 4b). Hypotheses 4c and 4d postulated that the relationship between a leader's transformational *people-oriented* behaviors and the followers' affective commitment to change are mediated by trust (hypothesis 4c) and by general satisfaction (hypothesis 4d). Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was used to test these hypotheses. The results show that all four hypotheses were confirmed (see Table V).

Table V: Hypotheses 4a and 4b (Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis)

Theoretical Relationship (Trust & Satisfaction as Mediators)	**Theoretical Relationship (Trust & Satisfaction as a Mediator)**
4a : Task →Trust → AC **4b : Task → Satisfaction→ AC**	**4c : People →Trust → AC** **4d : People → Satisfaction→ AC**
Remark: **Scales** — **Affective** Trust /Satisfaction [a] — .289**/ 307** LB-Task [b] — .347**/.347** LB-Task [c] — .122**/.119** Change R^2 Associated With LB-Task — -.225 / -.228 a = Trust/Satisfaction Alone b = Leaders' Task Behaviors Alone C = Leaders' Task Behaviors Entered after Trust/Satisfaction AC = Affective Commitment to Change ** Correlation is signification at the .01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is signification at the .05 level (2-tailed)	Remark: **Scales** — **Affective** Trust /Satisfaction a — .315**/.327** LB-People b — .252**/.252** LB-People c — .039**/.233** Change R^2 Associated With LB-People — -.039 / -.233 a = Trust/Satisfaction Alone b = Leaders' People Behaviors Alone C = Leaders' People Behaviors Entered after Trust/Satisfaction AC = Affective Commitment to Change ** Correlation is signification at the .01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is signification at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Differences between Chinese-speaking and English-speaking Churches

Analysis by *t*-test revealed that there were some differences between the Chinese-speaking and English-speaking churches (see Table VI). The members of Chinese-speaking churches perceived their pastors as demonstrating task-oriented behaviors (for example, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations and overall task-oriented behaviors) to a greater degree than did the members of English-speaking churches. Moreover, the members of Chinese-speaking churches perceived their pastors as demonstrating people-oriented behaviors (for example, providing individualised support and overall people-oriented behaviors) to a lesser extent than did the members of English-speaking churches. The Chinese-speaking church members' level of affective commitment to change was greater than that of the English-speaking church members. However the Chinese-speaking church members' trust in their pastors and their overall satisfaction with their churches were less than those of the English-speaking church members.

The members of six Chinese-speaking churches were more positively affected by task-oriented behaviors and affective commitment to change, whereas, the members of three English-speaking churches were more positively affected by people-oriented behaviors and by their trust in their pastors and overall satisfaction with their churches.

DISCUSSION

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

The negation of hypotheses 1a and 1b was not consistent with prior research—which had found that a leader's task-oriented behaviors were negatively correlated with followers' attitudes (such as their general satisfaction and trust in the leader) (Brief, Schuler and Van Sell, 1981; Cartwright and Zander, 1960; Fleishman and Harris, 1962; Ganster, Fusilier and Mayes, 1986; Kessler, Price and Wortman, 1985; Likert, 1961; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990; Yukl, 1998). However, the results of the correlation analysis in the present study showed positive and statistically significant relationships between the

pastors' task-oriented behaviors and the church members' trust in their leaders (r = 0.567), and between these leadership behaviors and the followers' general satisfaction (r = 0.481).

Table VI: T-Test for Group Statistics

		Culture dummy variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Affective Commitment Scale	*	English-speaking	84	(L) 2.3452	.5676	6.193E-02
		Chinese-speaking	188	2.1582	.6913	5.041E-02
Cost Resistance Scale	*	English-speaking	94	(L) 3.6773	.8288	8.548E-02
		Chinese-speaking	198	2.7306	.7483	5.318E-02
Normative Commitment Scale	*	English-speaking	95	(L) 3.5642	.7199	7.386E-02
		Chinese-speaking	189	2.6571	.6022	4.381E-02
Trust Scale	*	English-speaking	97	1.3649	.4173	4.237E-02
		Chinese-speaking	196	1.6949 (H)	.7352	5.251E-02
Leader People Beh Modeling Scale		English-speaking	97	1.5979	.6046	6.139E-02
		Chinese-speaking	200	1.7567	.7410	5.240E-02
Leader People Beh Vision scale		English-speaking	96	2.1667	.7230	7.379E-02
		Chinese-speaking	199	2.0704	.7488	5.308E-02
Leader People Beh Total Scale	*	English-speaking	94	1.8670	.5379	5.548E-02
		Chinese-speaking	192	2.0955 (H)	.5998	4.329E-02
Leader People Beh Individual Support Scale	*	English-speaking	99	1.7096	.7220	7.257E-02
		Chinese-speaking	197	2.3515 (H)	.6817	4.857E-02
Leader Task Beh Acceptance of Group Goal Scale	*	English-speaking	97	(L) 1.9588	.6709	6.812E-02
		Chinese-speaking	195	1.6179	.7167	5.133E-02
Leader Task Beh High Performance Expectations Scale	*	English-speaking	96	2.8021	.8427	8.601E-02
		Chinese-speaking	197	(L) 1.7073	.7195	5.126E-02
Leader Task Beh Intellectual Stimulation Scale		English-speaking	97	1.9021	.7311	7.424E-02
		Chinese-speaking	194	2.0180	.7517	5.397E-02
Leader Task Beh Total Scale	*	English-speaking	93	2.1691	.5711	5.922E-02
		Chinese-speaking	187	(L) 1.7778	.6466	4.729E-02
Church Member's Intrinsic Satisfaction		English-speaking	96	1.8657	.5072	5.177E-02
		Chinese-speaking	194	1.9651	.5513	3.958E-02
Church Member's Overal Satisfaction with the Church		English-speaking	95	1.7105	.6298	6.462E-02
		Chinese-speaking	198	1.9116	.6823	4.849E-02
Church Member's Satisfaction Total Scale	*	English-speaking	93	1.8263	.4958	5.141E-02
		Chinese-speaking	190	1.9453 (H)	.5404	3.920E-02

*** . Sig. (2-tailed) < .05**

A possible reason for this discrepancy between the current findings and those of prior studies might be that this study dealt with church organizations, whereas, earlier studies dealt with business organizations. There might be a significant difference between pastoral leadership in a church setting and managerial leadership in a business setting.

Furthermore, earlier researchers characterised task-oriented behaviors as those concerned with methods processes procedures and techniques for conducting a specialised task activity (Cartwright and Zander, 1960; Halpin and Winer, 1957; Likert, 1961; Yukl, 1998). In contrast, people-oriented behaviors were characterised as understanding the feelings attitudes and motives of followers from what they say and do (Cartwright and Zander, 1960; Halpin and Winer, 1957; Likert, 1961; Yukl, 1998). However, it is

difficult to distinguish a pastor's task-oriented behavior from his or her people-oriented behavior. This is because the whole focus of a pastor's leadership is mostly on the personal needs of church members. It is therefore possible that intellectual stimulation in a corporate setting might be identified by employees as being task-oriented leadership behavior whereas the same behavior in a pastoral setting might be characterised by church members as people-oriented leadership behavior. Therefore, in theory, there could be a positive relationship between the so-called task-oriented behaviors by a pastor and the levels of trust and satisfaction felt by church members.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b

The verification of hypotheses 2a and 2b was consistent with prior research—which also found that a leader's people-oriented behaviors have a positive impact on followers' attitudes such as their general satisfaction and trust in the leader (Bass, 1985; Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Day, 1971; Day and Hamblin, 1964; Farris and Lim, 1969; Lowin and Craig, 1968; Lowin, Hrapchack and Kavanagh, 1969; Misumi and Shirakashi, 1966; Pierce and Newstrom, 2000; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990; Sim and Manz, 1984; Yukl, 1998).

The positive relationships confirmed in the present study can be explained on the basis of three similar rationales to those advanced in previous studies. First, the pastors were considerate people who were perceived by church members to be responsive to their personal needs and understanding of their feelings attitudes and motives—a similar rationale to that advanced in the studies of Cartwright and Zander (1960); Fleishman and Harris (1962); Likert (1961); Pierce and Newstrom (2000); and Yukl (1998). Second, because the core of the pastor's transformational people-oriented behavior is to be supportive, their behaviors help to build and maintain effective interpersonal relationships and thus, win friendship, loyalty and trust of the church members—a similar rationale to that advanced in the studies of Bowers and Seashore (1966); House and Mitchell (1974) and Yukl (1998). Third, when problems arise in churches pastors are likely to engage in two-way communication (a people-oriented behavior) to assist

church members—a similar rationale to that advanced in the study of Ackfeldt and Coote (2000) and Netemeyer et al. (1997).

Hypotheses 3a and 3b

The verification of hypotheses 3a and 3b was consistent with Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) conclusion that affective commitment to change was positively correlated with followers' levels of general satisfaction and trust in the leader. The explanation of these correlations in the current research is likely to be that church members' levels of commitment to church changes were based on a positive inclination to support changes proposed by pastors. This explanation is similar to the rationale advanced by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002).

Hypotheses 4a–4d

The verification of hypotheses 4a–4d was consistent with the majority opinion of previous research—which states that a follower's attitudes such as trust and satisfaction are important mediators between a leader's behaviors and the followers' performance (Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Boal and Bryson, 1988; House, 1977; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Organ, 1988a and 1988b; Pierce and Newstrom, 2000; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1990; Yukl 1989a and 1989b). In the present study, it is likely that the pastor's transformational behaviors changed the basic values beliefs and attitudes of church members because church members trusted and respected the pastor.

As in any empirical work this study has some potential limitations. The sample was selected from pastors and members of six Chinese-speaking and three English-speaking churches in the USA. The research results might not therefore be applicable to other churches in the USA and elsewhere. Although the generalisability of the findings of the study to business settings could also have some potential limitations, the findings of this study on pastors' transformational leadership and followers' commitment to change in a church setting has potential implications for the growing research on spirituality-based transformational leadership.

IMPLICATIONS

A major implication of this research is that as countries such as the United States become more heterogeneous with an increasing Chinese population, leaders will need to develop a better understanding of the diverse values in the workplace. The Chinese culture is associated with strong high risk avoidance, medium femininity and long term orientation. In contrast, Western cultures such as the mainstream USA are associated with strong individualism, low risk avoidance medium masculinity and short-term orientation (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). These cultural differences could have influenced the findings of this study.

For instance, the results presented in this study suggest that Chinese-speaking followers perceive their leaders as demonstrating task-oriented behaviors to a greater degree than did the members of English-speaking followers. These findings could be as a result of the likelihood of the Chinese people depending more on groups or institutions to determine what they should do and emphasising loyalty to the group. Their value systems appreciate duty to the group and harmony among its members. Pursuing personal goals is viewed rather negatively. Moreover, the Chinese-speaking followers in the present study perceived their leaders as demonstrating people-oriented behaviors to a lesser extent than did the English-speaking followers. The Chinese are a highly relational-oriented culture in which people place great importance on personal relationship. In contrast, Westerners may encourage their group members to learn from each other to focus on task rather than on social and interpersonal relations (Sosik and Jung, 2002).

Although the context of this research was limited to a few church congregations in the St. Louise, Missouri area, this study raises important questions for future research on transformational leadership. First, this study was based on the perspective of church pastors and members of their church congregation. Future research could test the findings of this study in other institutional and societal settings such as corporations, government and academia. This inquiry could also be widened to include the spiritually motivated and spiritually indifferent transformational leaders and their followers, and interfaith and non-religious people in both Western and Eastern cultures.

Second, the data for this study was conducted at a given point in time. A longitudinal research study looking at transformational leader and follower behavior over a period of time should reveal how followers' trust and satisfaction and commitment to change vary in response to organizational and environmental changes.

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