

Theoretical framework

As suggested by several scholars (e.g., Lord & Hall, 1992; Zaccaro & Foti, 1991), a key competency of an efficient leader is the ability to understand what subordinates expect from them and to behave accordingly.

Yet, Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) noticed that most leadership scales measure leader's behaviors using frequency or magnitude Likert-type scales ranging from "never" to "always" and relying on the supposition that the more a leader displays such positive behaviors, the more efficient he/she is.

Clearly, frequency or magnitude scales do not capture whether the leader adapts the frequency of his/her behaviors to the needs of each subordinate.

The aim of the present study was twofold (a) to validate in French a measure of leader behavioral adequacy defined as the subordinates' perception that the leader meets their needs by behaving accordingly and (b) to test the impact of this measure of leader behavioral adequacy on well-known consequences of leadership (i.e., perceived supervisor support and affective commitment to supervisor), controlling for two classical dimensions of leadership (i.e., Initiating of Structure and Consideration).

Method

Sample

247 employees of an engineering company responded to a questionnaire (response rate: 76%).

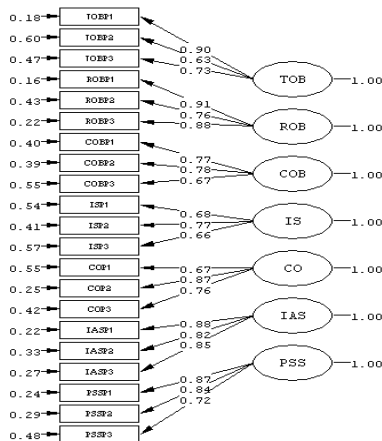
Measures

- Subordinates' perception of their supervisor/leader "initiating of structure" and "consideration": 6 items for each dimension from LBDQ XII (Stogdill, 1963) measured with a 5-point frequency Likert-type scale.
- Subordinates' perceived supervisor support : 4 items adapted from the SPOS (Eisenberger et al., 1986) measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale.
- Subordinates' affective commitment to the supervisor/leader: 6 items from Stinglhamber et al. (2002) measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale.

- Subordinates' perception of their supervisor/leader behavioral adequacy was measured through Yukl's hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior (1999). 4 items were used to measure Task-oriented behaviors, 6 items for Relation-oriented behaviors and 4 items for Change-oriented behaviors. The frequency Likert-type scale was replaced by an adequacy 5-point Likert-type scale. Respondents were asked whether their supervisor/leader performs each behavior "not adequately at all" to "completely adequately".

Results

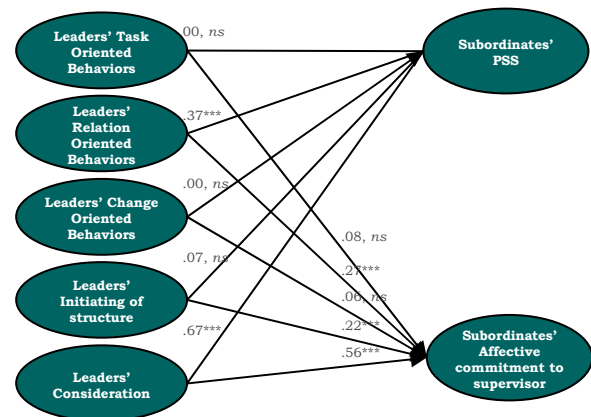
Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that a 7-factor measurement model distinguishing the 3 dimensions of Yukl's (1999) taxonomy (TOB=Task-Oriented Behaviors, ROB=Relation-Oriented Behaviors and COB=Change-Oriented Behaviors), the 2 dimensions underlying the LBDQ measure (IS=Initiating of Structure and CO=Consideration) and the two outcomes (PSS=Perceived supervisor support and IAS=Affective commitment to supervisor) shows a better fit to the data compared with any more constrained nested model.



Cronbach's α

TOB = .79
 ROB = .86
 COB = .81
 IS = .72
 CO = .80
 IAS = .90
 PSS = .85

$\chi^2(168) = 306.65^{***}$; RMSEA=0.06; CFI=0.98



Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Coefficients in the diagram are standardized β coefficients from multiple hierarchical regression analyses.

Multiple hierarchical regression analyses showed that relation-oriented behaviors, i.e one dimension of leader behavioral adequacy, predicts perceived supervisor support and affective commitment to the supervisor above and beyond the effects of initiating structure and consideration.

Discussion

Although future research is needed to show that an adequacy measure is a better predictor than a frequency or magnitude measure of leadership, this study provides evidence that leaders' ability to meet his/her subordinates' relational needs has an impact on perceived supervisor support and affective commitment to supervisor above and beyond the influence of Initiating of Structure and Consideration, two classical dimensions of leadership.

References

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