

The Awestruck Effect: The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Follower's Emotion Suppression

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Emotion Suppression:

"inhibition of one's own emotional expressive behavior while emotionally aroused"

Cognitive performance loss

Job dissatisfaction

Decreased well-being



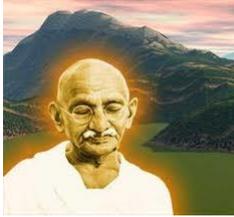
emotional exhaustion

Memory loss

Low-quality exchange of information



Paradox of charisma



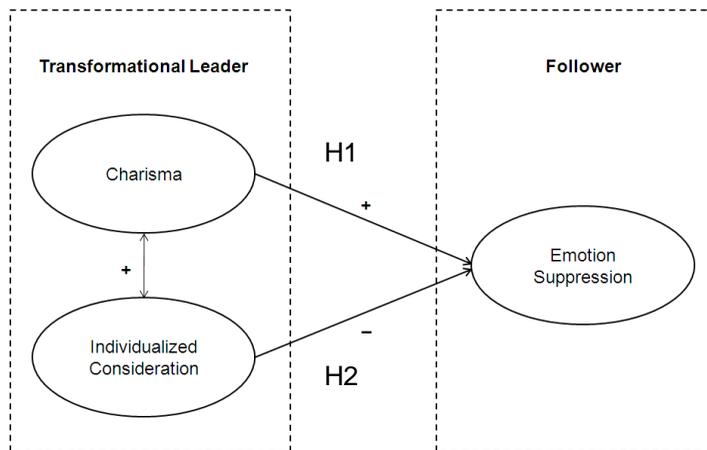
Leaders and followers

Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985)

Dimensions:

- Idealized Influence
 - Inspirational Motivation
- } Idealized-inspirational influence (**charisma**)
- Intellectual Stimulation
 - Individualized Consideration

Homeostatic model of leadership



Charismatic Leaders

perceived as “supernatural, superhuman”



“ideal”



“symbols of success”

“heros”



Followers feel “exceptionally strong admiration”

“In the case of a person whom we intensely admire, we become shy like a child...”

Charisma implies: High status difference between leader and follower

Social status: “the extent to which an individual ... is admired by others” (Magee & Galinsky, 2008: 39).



High status → emotion expression,
low status → emotion suppression (Keltner et al., 2003).

- *H 1: Leader's charisma → follower's emotion suppression.*



Individualized consideration: allows followers to speak up



- Individually considerate leaders “pay special attention to each follower’s needs” (Bass & Riggio, 2006: 7)
- “Emotion expression communicates unique information about needs” (Monin et al. 2009: 102).
- leaders rely on follower’s emotion expression.

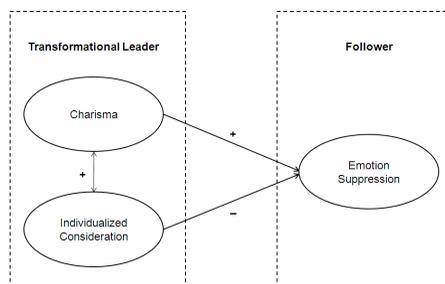
Individualized consideration reduces the status difference between leader and follower



- Individually considerate leaders share power, increase follower's status.
-
- *H 2: Leader's individualized consideration negatively → follower's emotion suppression.*

Homeostasis

2 factors correlated
but opposite effects



H 3: To the extent that a leader provides followers with individualized consideration, the inhibitory effect of the leader's charisma on followers' emotions will be suppressed

Study Overview

Study 1: Priming experiment: inhibit both negative *and* positive emotions?

Study 2: Vignette experiment

Study 3: Survey study in German health insurance company

Study 4: Survey study in multi-national company producing automotive components

Study 1 Method

Design

- Priming study with a 2 x 2 between subjects design

Sample

- N = 140 participants (46 male, 94 female; mean age = 23)

Procedure

- First, participants are primed (charismatic leader priming vs. no priming) .
- Second, participants watch an emotional movie clip (positive vs. negative).
- Third, participants respond to a brief questionnaire.

Coding

- Participants are recorded on video while watching the movie clip.
- 2 male and 3 female coders (mean age = 39, DANVA score > 75%) rate the participants' emotional expression.

Priming Manipulation

1. Think of a leader you had previously worked with, who was a true role model, someone looked up to and perceived as inspiring.
2. age, area, working relationship
3. write 10 minutes
4. guiding questions:



"Why is that person a role model for you?"

"What do you admire about this person and what could you learn from this person?"

Check: 90% use "admired," "inspired," or "fascinated;"
"enthusiasm" or "optimism."

no charisma control condition: participants go to next step.

Emotion manipulation



Significantly
happier

90 sec. movie clip



Significantly
sadder

The higher the emotion suppression score → the less participants expressed emotions

140 video recordings presented independently, random order

- baseline expressions
- expressions during happy or sad movie clip.
- 5 coders blind to the purpose of the study
- pre-tested for emotion recognition ability
- Rated each recording for the expression of negative or positive emotions 7-point Likert scale
- Negative emotion expressive behavior inter-rater reliability = .73
- Positive emotion expressive behavior = .86
- Add 2 emotion expression scores, multiply by -1, add 7

Control variables

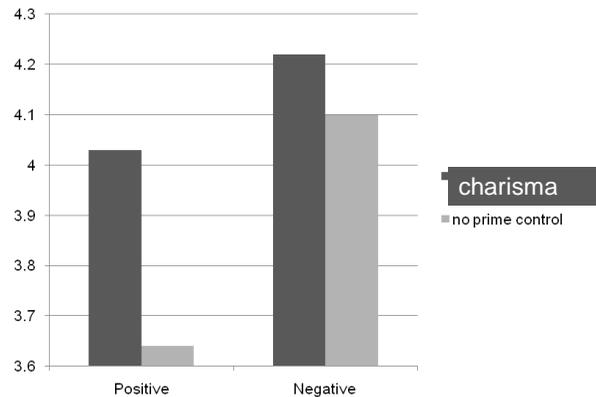
- Extroversion
- neuroticism

Study 1 Results: just thinking about a charismatic leader causes people to suppress emotions

Analyses:

- Univariate ANCOVA

Results:



Study 2: vignette of typical business leadership case

260 participants (174 male, 86 female; mean age = 22) ,
students at Swiss university
read 1 of 8 randomly chosen versions

Vignette

Supervisor is

high vs. low on charisma

high vs. low on individualized consideration

Charisma and individualized consideration manipulation

Charisma

....a truly inspiring role model. You can learn a lot from him, you admire [him] and one day you want to do your work like him.

No charisma

....an ordinary supervisor. ...you do not feel any special admiration for him....

Individualized consideration –high

...a good, friendly relationship

Individualized consideration – low

...a polite, distant relationship

Study 2: vignette of typical business leadership case, cont'd.

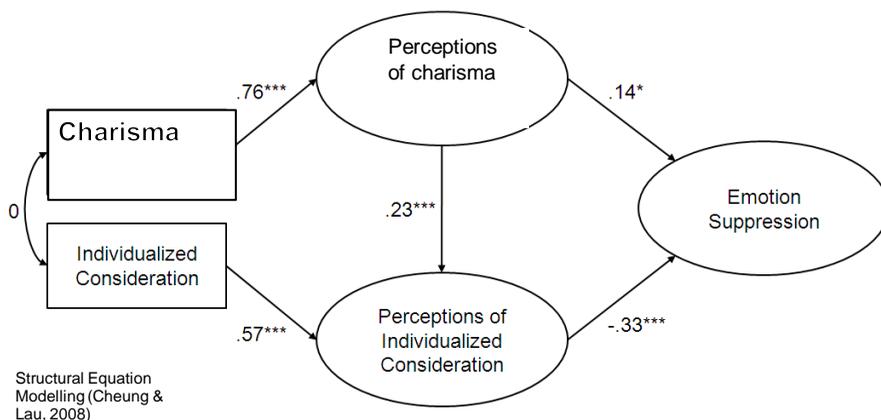
- 6 items from Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory to reinforce salience of leadership manipulation and assess its success
- E.g., “My supervisor behaves in a manner that is thoughtful of my personal needs”
- Project is a success, or project is “not possible”
- 6 items from Pos. and Neg. Affect Scale 5-point Likert scale to measure how strongly people felt emotions following success or failure
- E.g. “excited” , “distressed”

Study 2, cont'd.

- 4-item Emotion suppression scale: e.g., “I keep my emotions to myself”
- Controls:
extroversion, neuroticism, habitual emotional suppression

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Study 2: Opposite effects of leadership components on emotion suppression



But what about the real world?

Study 3 Method

Design

- Cross sectional web-based survey study

Sample

- N = 667 employees (120 male, 547 female) of a large German health insurance company; response rate = 28%.

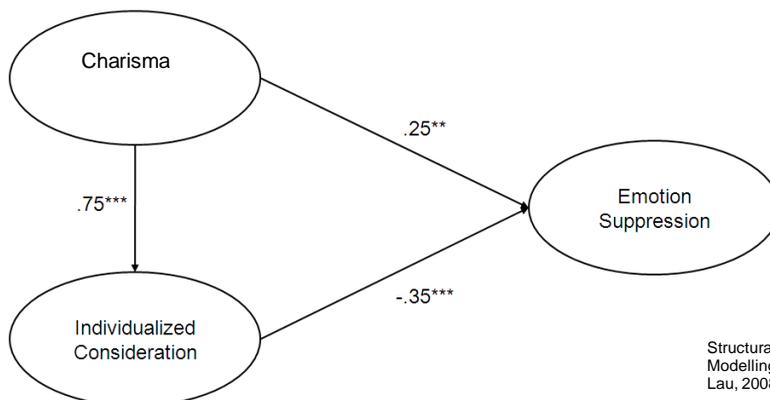
Procedure

- Employees received link to online questionnaire via e-mail.

Measures

- Transformational leadership (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996)
- Emotion suppression (ERQ, Gross & John, 2003)
- Control variable: employee's sex

Study 3 Results



Structural Equation Modelling (Cheung & Lau, 2008)

But: Common method variance?

Study 4: emotion suppression at the team level

Design

- Cross sectional web-based multi-level survey study

Sample

- N = 186 team members and N = 54 team leaders in 54 teams of a multi-national company producing automotive components

Procedure

- Employees received link to online questionnaire via e-mail.

Measures

- Transformational leadership (MLQ 5X – short; Bass & Avolio, 2000)
- Emotion suppression (ERQ, Gross & John, 2003)
- Control variables: Team member's sex, team member's language, team's country location.

Study 4: Team leadership, individual emotion suppression

Team leadership = mean values for each team

charisma :12 items ($\alpha = .94$)

individualized consideration: 4 items ($\alpha = .76$)

Median r_{wg} values: .88 for charisma and .83 for individualized consideration
-- strong agreement among team members

ICC(1) values of .18 for charisma and .17 for individualized consideration
-- team member assessments were reliable.

Emotion suppression

4 items ($\alpha = .81$) from the ERQ used in Studies 2 and 3 (Gross and John, 2003).

-- the extent to which you suppress emotions at work
-- 5-point scale: 1 (strongly disagree), 5 (strongly agree).

Study 4 Predicting emotion suppression

Variable	Step 1		Step 2 A		Step 2 B		Step 3	
	Estimate	s.e.	Estimate	s.e.	Estimate	s.e.	Estimate	s.e.
Level-1 Variables:								
Sex	-.14	.14	-.15	.14	-.14	.14	-.13	.14
Language	-.08	.16	-.08	.16	-.18	.15	.00	.16
Level-2 Variables:								
Country	-.19	.16	-.20	.16	-.18	.15	-.20	.15
Charisma			.08	.11			.51**	.17
Individualized consideration					-.09	.11	-.47**	.17

Hierarchical Linear Modelling: Intercepts-as-Outcomes Model (following procedures of Mathieu & Taylor, 2007; Paulhus et al., 2004)

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Summary

Across all four studies, we find:

- Leaders' charisma makes followers suppress their emotions (the "awestruck" effect).
- Leaders' individualized consideration reduces followers' emotion suppression.
- Transformational leaders combine charisma and individualized consideration, despite the opposite impact on followers' emotion suppression.
- Transformational leaders balance the emotionally suppressive effect charisma with the emotionally permissive effects of individualized consideration.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations:

- No longitudinal study revealing the homeostatic dynamic
- No performance linkage.

Future research:

- Showing the within-person flexibility of emotion suppression/expression in response to varying leadership behaviors.
- Linking this flexibility (rather than suppression/expression) to outcomes of leadership.
- Linking unique TFL behaviors to specific outcomes

Conclusion:

Leaders should strive a balance between charisma and individualized consideration.

Questions?

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