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Exploring Implicit Belief Alignment in Leaders and Followers

Submitted to Southeastern University

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

Candice F. Fast

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Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

Southeastern University

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by:

Candice F. Fast

titled

EXPLORING LIFT AND FIFT ALIGNMENT IN LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

Has been approved by her committee as satisfactory completion of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Through quantitative, nonexperimental research, this study focused on follower schemas among leaders and followers. The sample included 203 leaders and followers from Canada and the United States. The research addressed a literature gap through comparing leaders and followers' implicit beliefs. In followership literature, two prominent areas of study regarding followers' implicit beliefs are the implicit followership theory (IFT) and follower role orientation. Although many scholars have considered IFT and role orientation as the same construct, no scholar has ever compared the theories for correlation. Thus, the study addressed another literature gap through correlation and predictive analysis tests to compare between the two constructs, which were the instruments that measure IFT and role orientation: the implicit followership scale for IFT and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale for follower role orientation. The results showed no statistical difference between leaders and followers regarding IFTs and follower role orientations. The prototypes from the implicit followership scale showed no correlation to coproduction role orientation. There was, however, a correlation and a predictive relationship between the antiprototypes from the implicit followership scale and passive role orientation. The findings are valuable for individuals, teams, leaders, followers, and organizations.

Keywords: followership, implicit followership theory, implicit beliefs, the implicit followership scale, follower role orientation, schemas

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my nephews and nieces. They inspire me to lead a life of grace and kindness. Their unconditional love and gentle hearts make me work to be a better person every day. I hope my journey encourages each one of them to pursue their dreams and to believe that anything is possible.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my family. They have endlessly and enthusiastically supported me in chasing my dreams. Although we are separated by miles, time zones, and international borders, their prayers, love, and support touch me daily. As the first in our family history to complete a doctorate, I carry the distinction behind our family name with great pride and humility. Thank you for keeping faith, joy, peace, and love a mainstay in our relationship and our family.

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I am thankful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for paying the ultimate price at the cross. Faith sustained me through the most challenging times of my life and gave me wisdom, endurance, and peace to complete this study. Thank you to my family and close friends who supported me through my doctorate journey. You were there for me, whether it was phone calls, messages, conversations, or sharing and completing my survey. Each of you gave me words of wisdom and encouragement when I needed it. Your friendship and unending support were vital to my success. Thank you for believing in me.

To my friends, peers, and leaders at Walt Disney World and Iconium Media, thank you for your patience and flexibility during this journey. Thank you for completing my survey and being cheerleaders at my defense. Your work ethic and dedication to quality service and creativity motivate me to pursue excellence in everything I do.

Thank you to Dr. Henson for introducing me to followership and for being the chair of my committee. His steadfast patience as I worked through my topic and study focus allowed me to grow as a scholar and student. You lead with a servant heart and embody grace, humility, and kindness in every interaction. I am so appreciative of Dr. Gollery for his wisdom and expertise as my methodologist. Thank you for supporting me with such joy and enthusiasm. Dr. Klosterman, your research was instrumental for course projects and the topic for my study. Thank you for taking a leap of faith from across the country and being part of my committee. Thank you to Dr. Anderson for recommending me to the Ph.D. program.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

One important and often understudied aspect of leadership is the role of the follower (Bligh, 2011). Scholars have acknowledged the role of the follower for decades but as a recipient of leadership rather than an integral participant in the workplace (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). At the end of the 20th century, however, several authors identified the need to understand the follower half of the leader-follower relationship (Bjugstad et al., 2006). For example, Shamir (1995) called for scholars to "reverse the lens" of leadership to study the follower, and Kelley (1988) dedicated a book to the power of the follower. Followership research highlights the perspectives and viewpoints of a follower and the part the follower plays with the leader and in the workplace (Shamir, 2007, 2011). Successful organizations depend highly on the relationships between leaders and followers (Epitropaki et al., 2017). Dansereau et al. (1975) introduced the concept of leaders and followers in a vertical dyad or reciprocal social unit. Although leaders' behaviors and actions affect their followers, researchers have found that followers can significantly influence the behaviors of a leader and the workplace (Oc & Bashshur, 2013). Chaleff (2009) proposed that followers are active and influential partners with leaders in the workplace. The reciprocal interactions between leaders and followers influence role self-concepts and how the dyads relate in the organization (Lord et al., 1999). Thus, it is essential to understand the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers.

As followership research has progressed, many studies have uncovered role-based and behavioral-based theories about followers (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). One aspect of followership is how the beliefs and attitudes about the follower role impact leader and follower behavior (Alipour et al., 2017). Subconscious ideals, also called implicit beliefs or schemas, guide how the leader and follower relate in the workplace and affect performance, efficiency, task completion, coordination, cooperation, and workplace culture (Whiteley et al., 2012). Coupling leadership and social cognition research, scholars developed the implicit leadership theory (ILT; Lord et al., 1984) to understand the tendency of individuals to favor certain attributes that leaders should possess. As a result, individuals respond to leaders based on their preconceived beliefs about the leader

role (Carsten et al., 2018). Realizing that the theory was leader-centric, Sy (2010) initiated the implicit followership theory (IFT) to understand and interpret the intrinsic beliefs about the follower role. Both followers and leaders respond to internal schemas about the follower's role, impacting productivity, organizational behavior, and the relationship between them (Junker et al., 2016). At the same time, Carsten et al. (2010) explored a similar aspect of implicit beliefs by examining how followers perceive and define their organizational role. Sy (and Carsten et al. added to implicit belief literature, but Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) stressed that follower role orientation is a different perspective of schemas because the focus is on the follower's role orientations toward their role and the leader rather than on follower traits. Many scholars, however, consider both approaches to fall under the implicit theories surrounding the follower role (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Despite the vast number of studies on followership and implicit beliefs, several gaps in research exist. Many scholars have identified the need to examine the similarities and differences between implicit beliefs and how those differentiations affect the leader-follower dyad, team success, and the workplace environment (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). For example, Junker et al. (2016) posited that understanding congruency between leader and follower IFTs could improve leader-employee relations. Yang et al. (2020) recommended future research comparing how similarities and differences between implicit beliefs affect employee behavior. Klosterman (2021) called for researchers to explore IFT alignment in connection to leader-follower relationships and team success. In some recent studies, researchers have compared some aspects of leaders' and followers' implicit beliefs. For instance, Veestraeten et al. (2021) recommended that future researchers examine all dimensions of Sy's (2010) instrument between leaders and followers. Coyle and Foti (2021) used IFT to predict job satisfaction and suggested surveying leader and follower IFTs within the same study. Gifft (2019) used IFT as a theoretical basis for their dissertation to assess leader-follower relationships. Additionally, most IFT studies have either been leader-centric, examining leaders'

implicit perception of the follower role (LIFT; Sy, 2010), or focused on followers' cognitive understanding of their role and their relationship to a leader (FIFT; Sy, 2010) (Yang et al., 2020). No known study to date has been conducted to compare implicit schemas, either IFTs or follower role orientations, of leaders and followers in a single study. Therefore, IFT and role orientations served as the two constructs of the current study. No known research has been conducted to compare the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) with the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) to determine if a correlation and predictive relationship exist between the two constructs. This study followed the research recommendations to explore leaders' and followers' implicit beliefs about IFTs and follower role orientations in a single study and compare the two constructs through published instruments. The conceptualization of followership in the current research was through the lens of followership, IFT, and follower role orientation.

Statement of the Problem

Followership research began in the late 20th century when Kelley (1988) and Shamir (1995) called for scholars to value and study the role of the follower. Many theorists have examined different aspects of followership, including implicit theories. Scholars have found that the internal beliefs one holds about an organizational role impact how the individual responds to others and behaves in the workplace (Junker & van Dick, 2014). Followers' implicit perceptions directly affect organizational culture and structure (Foti et al., 2017; Liden et al., 2015). Acknowledging deeply held belief patterns is the common denominator in studying the leader-follower relationship (Lord et al., 2016). Whether innate or learned, followers' implicit beliefs about their role result in behavioral responses to leaders (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). To produce a follower-centric view of implicit theories, Sy (2010) developed IFT to explain how implicit beliefs about a follower influence how the leader and follower relate.

IFT research has split narratives in the literature. From a leader-centric perspective that most scholars have taken, how LIFT influences a leader's relationship with followers and their experience as a leader in the workplace can be identified (Goswami et al., 2022). Alternatively, FIFT is a follower-centric

perspective of IFT, focusing on followers' internal beliefs about their role (Yang et al., 2020). Despite the two veins of IFT research, one research gap remains. Several experts have called for more investigation to understand the alignment of leader and follower IFT beliefs and how the similarities or differences may affect the leader-follower relationship and workplace dynamics (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). No known scholar has compared LIFT and FIFT views in a single study. This study followed research recommendations to identify if there are statistically significant differences in IFTs between leaders and followers.

Carsten et al. (2010) and Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) developed studies on follower role orientations around the same time as Sy's (2010) IFT research. Although follower role orientation research originated as IFT research (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2009), several scholars have argued that the two constructs are not related (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2018; Gesang, 2022; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), whereas other researchers have reported more similarities than differences (Mohamadzadeh et al., 2015; Sy & McCoy, 2014). Thus, comparing the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) was imperative to determine if a correlation or predictive relationship existed. Furthermore, adding more research to support the role orientation scale was essential, as the instruments have been examined in only a few studies.

Purpose of the Research

Several scholars have called for more research to identify the similarities and differences between schemas of leaders and followers (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Many researchers have studied leader-follower dyads and examined LIFT and FIFT but not compared the two perceptions in a single study. In addition, Sy (2010) recommended that scholars develop IFT research to bring social cognition awareness to followership research. Thus, the current study

extended followership literature through the exploration of a holistic view of IFT, including both sides of IFT from a leader and follower perspective. The aim of this study was to investigate if there was a statistically significant difference between the IFTs of leaders and followers. Similarly, research comparing leader and follower responses on the coproduction and passive role orientation scale is lacking (Carsten et al., 2018). Therefore, in this study, I examined if there was a statistically significant difference between leader and follower responses to the follower role orientation scales. Finally, no known study has related two important aspects of implicit belief research—IFTs and follower role orientation. Therefore, this study focused on testing for a correlation and predictive relationship between the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018).

Research Questions

Previous studies have uncovered the psychological drive for implicit cognitive mechanisms that dictate follower behavior. This study connected several aspects of implicit beliefs research through an examination of statistical differences between leader and follower IFTs and follower role orientations. The current research furthered implicit belief literature by comparing the published scales of the two primary schema research constructs: the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The aim of the current study was to compare leader and follower responses to IFTs and follower role orientations and correlate the scales representing each construct. Four research questions guided the study.

LIFT versus FIFT

Despite the increasing number of IFT studies in recent years, most studies either take a leader-centric (LIFT) or follower-centric (FIFT) approach (Yang et al., 2020). No known study has been conducted as an answer to the numerous research calls to compare LIFT and FIFT in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al.,

2020). Similarities and differences in IFT perceptions impact the workplace dynamics between leaders and their followers. The first research question and hypothesis addressed the literature gap:

> RQ_1: Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?
>
> $H1_0$: No statistically significant difference exists in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers.
>
> H1a: Statistically significant differences exist in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers.

Follower Role Orientations

Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2009) originally developed the coproduction orientation scale to measure IFT. However, the scale was later connected to follower role orientation research rather than follower trait studies (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2018). Carsten et al. (2018) introduced another scale, passive orientation, as an additional scale to measure follower role orientation. Therefore, they combined both scales to measure follower role orientation (Carsten et al., 2022). Research comparing leader and follower responses using the coproduction and passive role orientation scale is lacking (Carsten et al., 2018). Understanding both perspectives will provide more understanding of the similarities and differences between leader and follower schemas surrounding the follower role. The second research question and hypothesis addressed the literature gap:

> RQ_2: Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?
>
> $H1_0$: No statistically significant differences exist in role orientations between study participants identified as leaders and followers.
>
> H1a: Statistically significant differences exist in role orientations between study participants identified as leaders and followers.

The Implicit Followership Scale and Follower Role Orientations

The two main avenues of implicit follower beliefs in literature are IFTs and role orientations (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Therefore, the two constructs for this study were IFTs and follower role orientations. Some experts consider the two constructs to be more similar than different (Mohamadzadeh et al., 2015; Sy & McCoy, 2014), whereas others determine vast differences between the two (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2018; Gesang, 2022; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) measures IFT and includes prototype and antiprototype trait factors. The coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) includes coproduction and passive role orientation factors. Whether a correlation or predictive relationship exists between the IFT and follower role orientation scales is not known. Therefore, the following research questions and hypotheses address this research gap:

RQ$_3$: To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?

H3$_0$: No statistically significant correlation exists between the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the coproduction orientation scale factors.

H3a: A statistically significant correlation exists between the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the coproduction orientation scale factors.

RQ$_4$: To what degree do the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?

H4$_0$: No statistically significant correlation exists between the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the passive orientation scale factors.

H4a: No statistically significant correlation exists between the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the passive orientation scale factors.

Significance of the Research

This study held several aspects of significance for literature. First, the research consisted of a follower-centric study, adding to followership literature.

Additionally, the research furthered the IFT literature. Current IFT research is either leader-centric (LIFT) or follower-centric (FIFT), and many scholars have called for a LIFT and FIFT comparison in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). No scholar has compared leader and follower responses using the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Furthermore, only a few studies have used the follower role orientation scale. Additional uses of the scales add validity and reliability to the instrument. Carsten et al. (2018) and Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) stated that IFTs and follower role orientations do not measure the same aspect of implicit beliefs in followership. Whether a correlation or predictive relationship exists between the constructs has not been determined. Therefore, the current study addressed a research gap by correlating the implicit followership Scale (Sy, 2010) to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018).

The study results have several practical implications for individuals, teams, and the organization. For example, the results include insight for leaders and followers to understand their IFTs and how their beliefs influence workplace behavior and expectations (Goswami et al., 2022). Foley (2015) advised organizations to adopt IFT training in their leader and follower development programs to improve individuals' understanding of how their IFTs influence interactions with others. Furthermore, when leaders and followers understand where their LIFT and FIFT differ, both parties can work toward reconciling those differences (Junker et al., 2016). The results from this study have several theoretical and practical applications.

Conceptual Framework

IFT was the conceptual framework for this research study. According to IFT, intrinsic cognitive beliefs about the follower role motivate how leaders and followers relate (Sy, 2010). Individuals have preconceived ideas of an ideal follower and hold a series of either negative or positive prototypes of the follower role (Ford & Harding, 2011). Implicit beliefs and perceptions affect the

organizational culture directly (Foti et al., 2017). Social norms and psychological belief systems drive collaborative behavior among individuals and an organization's social climate (Martin, 2019). Furthermore, socio-behavioral tendencies and beliefs dictate behavior in the follower-leader relationship (Hofstede, 2006, 2011). For instance, implicit assumptions about the role of the follower directly influence the interaction with leadership and the follower's actions in the workplace (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). A follower's perspective of their role impacts their leader's behavior and goal achievement by shaping their interaction with leadership and others in the workplace (Carsten et al., 2018). How a leader experiences their role heavily depends on the responsibility and cooperation from their followers (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Alternatively, leaders respond according to how followers adhere to their IFT (Whiteley et al., 2012). Therefore, internal belief systems about the follower's role will affect a leader and follower's workplace experience.

Methodology

This study had two main focuses. First, the study addressed research gaps by identifying if differences exist between leader and follower IFTs and follower role orientations. Second, the research addressed a research gap by testing if a correlation exists between implicit belief instruments. I used a quantitative approach to collect and analyze the data. Because the aim of this study was to identify differences between schemas and between instruments, quantitative research was the ideal methodology.

Population and Sample

In quantitative analysis, a sample must be large enough for a scientific study to be representative of the population and yield generalizable results (Terrell, 2015). I employed a census method to gain as many responses as possible to gather a large enough sample. I administered a survey to the entire population selected using a census method to garner as many responses as possible. The population included 1,200 individuals from the United States and Canada recruited through several personal networks. The sample for the study included 203 leaders (35%)

and followers (65%) from the United States (52%) and Canada (47%). Although the sample size was smaller than anticipated, 203 responses provided enough statistical support for the tests. Participant gender was collected but not used as a variable. Nationality was included and analyzed in the research but was not the main focus of this study. Future studies should include research questions considering other demographic variables and consider Klosterman's (2021) example of evaluating the effect of culture and nationality origin on implicit beliefs.

Instruments and Data Collection

I collected data through an online, self-administered questionnaire hosted on Google Forms. The entire population received the Google Forms link, which remained active for 3 weeks. The instruments used for data collection were appropriate for the study's two constructs: IFT and follower role orientation. The implicit followership theories scale is an effective tool for measuring IFT. Sy (2010) developed the instrument based on a previously tested ILT scale. Sy consulted the ILT scholars Epitropaki and Martin (2004) and Offermann et al. (1994) to create the scale to measure implicit characteristics from the follower perspective. The implicit followership theories scale has endured rigorous validity and reliability tests through multiple studies. This 18-item Likert-style questionnaire contains two categories of factors: positive and negative prototypes. Positive or prototypical prototypes represent productive, enthusiastic, and reliable followership beliefs. Negative or antiprototypes represent belief systems where individuals believe followers are rude, arrogant, and easily conforming (Sy, 2010). The coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) measures follower role orientations. Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2009) created the coproduction orientation scale to measure IFT; however, the scale was later connected to follower role orientation rather than follower traits (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2018;). Carsten et al. (2018) created the passive orientation as an additional scale to measure follower role orientation. In their study, Carsten et al. used both instruments to measure follower role orientation. The passive orientation

scale includes four Likert-style questions, whereas the coproduction orientation contains five.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for the study included relevant experiments for the four research questions. Data were processed through IBM's SPSS. I conducted two-tailed *t* test of independent means to test RQ_1 and RQ_2. For both research questions, the tests considered if there was a statistical significance of the mean score in IFT traits or orientation by study participant role (leader; follower) and group (United States; Canada). Although the research questions and study purpose focused on differences in participant roles, nationality added another layer of analysis. I calculated Cronbach's alpha (α) using a 95% confidence interval, showing internal reliability for both instruments. To answer RQ_3 and RQ_4, I used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the mathematical relationship (correlation) between the prototype and antiprototypes factors of the implicit followership scale and the coproduction and passive role orientations from Carsten et al.'s (2018) coproduction and passive role orientation scale. The analysis also included simple linear regression as a follow-up test to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT and orientation instruments. Finally, I conducted a factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA) to assess the degree of statistically significant differences in the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the degree of statistically significant differences in IFT traits and orientation by participant role (leader; follower) and group (United States; Canada).

Limitations

This study had several limitations. One limitation included aspects of the sample, such as sample size, nationality, and a lack of other demographic variables and access to leader-follower dyads. Though the sample size was adequate for the statistical tests used, the response rate from the population was low (17%). The sample included individuals from Canada and the United States. Although nationality was analyzed, culture and ethnicity were not the focus of this study.

Leaders and followers were separated into categories, but the study's parameters did not allow for the study of leader-follower dyads. Therefore, the results may not represent leader-follower units, and the findings may be subject to cultural, ethnic, gender, age, and experience predispositions. Another limitation is the focus on socio-cognitive responses based primarily on implicit theories. Other followership theories, such as situational-based experiences or longitudinal changes over time, could provide more substance and context to the results (Carsten et al., 2010, 2018; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Khan et al., 2019; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). A third limitation is that the instruments did not include qualitative questions that could provide more insight into the participants' understanding of the topic. Additional quantitative and qualitative research studies would add immeasurable strength to the study's findings.

Definition of Terms

Follower. A follower is an individual who shares in the leadership process as a co-producer with a leader (Shamir, 2007). Followers should not be identified as employees or subordinates; leaders and followers have an equal and ongoing exchange (Graen & Schiemann, 1978).

Leader-Follower Dyad. In the workplace, the leader and follower operate in a vertical, relational unit where both parties are necessary for the functioning of each role (Dansereau et al., 1975). Leaders and their followers work in a partnership in the organization by exchanging reciprocal behavioral dependencies (Graen & Schiemann, 1978; Lord et al., 1999).

Followership Theory. The study of followership stems from research on leadership and concentrates on the role of a follower (Alvesson & Blom, 2019; Thoroughgood et al., 2012). The aim of followership research is to understand followers' perspectives and viewpoints (Shamir, 2007, 2011). Although many definitions exist for followership (Crossman & Crossman, 2011), this study followed Carsten et al.'s (2010) definition: "Followership is a relational role in which followers can influence leaders and contribute to the improvement and attainment of group and organizational objectives" (p. 559).

Implicit Beliefs. Implicit beliefs are rooted in categorization theories, a branch of study in social cognition (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Implicit beliefs include the subconscious schemas or perceptions about oneself or one's role (Epitropaki et al., 2013). Schemas are dynamic, change over time, and often correlate to gender, position, context, situation, group norms, and culture (Shondrick & Lord, 2010).

Implicit Followership Theory (IFT). Sy (2010) developed IFT as a follower-centric approach to implicit theories already present in leadership research. The aim of IFT is to understand and interpret followers' intrinsic beliefs about their role (Sy, 2010). In addition, the theory addresses the cognitive tendencies of individuals to hold either negative or positive views of follower behaviors, attributes, and characteristics (Whiteley et al., 2012). Two branches of IFT have surfaced in literature over the last decade: a leader-centric focus on IFT (LIFT; Sy, 2010), and a follower-centric focus on IFT (FIFT; Sy, 2010). The leader-centric focus of IFT is, however, the most observed in IFT literature (Yang et al., 2020).

Follower Role Orientation. From a followership perspective, role self-perceptions of the follower role influence schemas and how the follower interacts with the leader (Carsten et al., 2014). The coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) measures follower role orientations.

Summary

This study focused on implicit beliefs about the follower role. The study addressed several research gaps. For example, whether differences exist between LIFT and FIFT has not been identified in a single study. Additionally, no scholar has examined if differences exist between leader and follower responses to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Finally, despite scholars stating fundamental differences between follower role and trait implicit belief research (Carsten et al., 2010, 2018; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012), no researcher has tested if a correlation or a predictive relationship exists between the follower role orientation scale and the implicit followership theory scale. The study results included insight into implicit beliefs about the follower role and added to followership, IFT, and role orientation literature.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

A follower is an individual willing to be led and follow under the influence of another (Bastardoz & Van Vugt, 2019). Followers have been the topic of leadership studies for decades, often seen as a position easily influenced and swayed by a leader through their actions and leadership style (Shamir, 2007). In many cases, the term follower has a negative connotation as a subordinate or lesser value than a leader (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Additionally, research has primarily been leader-centric, and followers have been neglected in the literature (Bjugstad et al., 2006). Chapter 2, Literature Review, contains a thorough description of followership, including the history of followership and common themes found in followership literature. The chapter then includes a discussion of implicit theories within the context of followership and a thorough analysis of the implicit followership theory. The literature review comprises literature from a combination of peer-reviewed academic journals, peer-reviewed practitioner journals, books, and published dissertations.

Followership

Followership in literature is often related to a role influenced by a leader (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Kelley, 1988). Many scholars take Kellerman's (2019) perspective that followers take the role of a subordinate or hold an opposite position to that of leaders. Despite the vast number of definitions for followership, this research follows Carsten et al.'s (2010) definition that followers have an upward influence on leaders and the organization (p. 559). Followers are not powerless subordinates but co-creators and equal participants with leaders (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Followership is a complete perspective reversal from traditional leadership theories (Shamir, 2011). After conducting a literature review on followership, Bjugstad et al. (2006) concluded that the transition from the industrial to the digital age encouraged a follower-centered focus. For example, moving from less hierarchical organizations to team-focused workplaces and providing access to information and autonomy for employees have placed more power in the hands of the followers. Parker Follett (1949), a management and leader theorist, was one of

the first cited scholars to write about the follower role. Although Parker Follett identified followers as subordinates, she explained the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers and noted that the follower role is often ignored. Parker Follett (1949) described the follower as essential in the workplace and indicated that they play an active role in the leadership process (p. 54). In the last several decades, scholars have reconsidered leadership theories and studies through the eyes of a follower (Alvesson & Blom, 2019). Researchers have sought to understand how followers influence leaders, peers, and organizational culture (Collinson, 2006; Thoroughgood et al., 2012). The following sections include a history of the seminal works on followership and a discussion on the representation of followership in literature.

Seminal Works of Followership in Literature

Followership is a relatively new topic in leadership literature (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Taylor & Hill, 2017). In the 1980s and 1990s, however, several authors produced studies on followership (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). The leading seminal authors of followership included James Meindl, Boaz Shamir, Robert Kelley, and Ian Chaleff. In the following sections, I will examine their work.

Meindl and Followership: The Follower Role

One of the first studies to acknowledge the follower role was by Meindl et al. (1985). The researchers assessed decades of leadership literature, popular press, and business journals and conducted three quantitative studies on undergraduate students. The researchers concluded that most literature placed leaders as the sole contributors to corporate success or failure without considering other aspects of leadership, such as the role of followers. Ten years later, Meindl (1995) wrote a theoretical paper stressing the importance of including follower-centric studies in leadership literature to identify how the follower influences the leader and organization. In his evaluation, Meindl suggested that leaders are shaped by followers' self-concepts of their role in the organization. Furthermore, groups of followers develop constructs of ideal leadership attributes that influence their

individual perspectives, leading to follower group norms. In followership literature, Meindl made headway for other scholars to examine the role of the follower.

Shamir and Followership: Reversing the Lens

Shamir (1995) is often recognized as the first seminal scholar of followership literature. Shamir noted the unique relationship between leaders and their subordinates in his charismatic and transformational leadership assessment. For example, a close relationship between a leader and a follower influences workplace behavior and trust. Shamir conducted a mixed study with 320 students to determine their relationship with distant and close leaders. The students assessed their association with close leaders, such as teachers, family, or friends, and considered their perspective of distant leaders such as public political and religious figures. Shamir concluded that a close relationship between leader and follower influenced followers' perceptions and emotions toward the leader and called for researchers to study leadership theories from a new perspective.

Over a decade later, Shamir (2007) dedicated a book full of follower-focused research. Shamir stressed that literature has historically focused on leaders and followers in a one-way relationship, where followers are simply bystanders and recipients who are shaped and influenced by the leader. He explained that many organizations take the same perspective and only focus on developing their leaders. Shamir suggested that leaders and followers are "co-producers" in leadership and that researchers must "reverse the lens" (p. xii) to give as much attention to the follower as they have to the leader. The scholar stressed that the leader and follower roles are equally important, as one cannot exist without the other, explaining that the two positions are fluid and reciprocal. Shamir called for scholars to investigate the follower side of the relationship to offset the imbalance of leader versus follower literature.

Shamir (2007) further developed followership literature in follow-up studies and papers. Shamir and his peers provided examples of reversing the lens in some studies. For instance, Dvir and Shamir (2003) reversed the lens of transformational leadership studies, which traditionally ignored the role of the follower. The researchers theorized that transformational leaders are influenced by followers'

values, empowerment, and motivation. Conducting a longitudinal quantitative study, the scholars studied military personnel and concluded that the level of soldier development directly affected transformational leadership behaviors. Howell and Shamir (2005) reversed the lens of charismatic leadership studies by proposing that the level of followers' dependency develops leader charisma. The more dependent a follower is on a leader or group, the more a leader can influence the follower.

Shamir (2011) wrote a theoretical paper on time and the leader-follower relationship. He suggested that followers influence a leader's behavior, performance, confidence, and organizational relationships over time. For example, leaders respond to group norms to keep trust and influence and respond to followers' behavior through their actions and reactions. The researcher stressed that organizational change heavily depends on followers' acceptance of change and suggested that organizations should give more attention to employees when making changes. Shamir (2012) produced a book featuring follower-centric literature as a tribute to Meindl's groundbreaking work. In his book, Shamir discussed how leaders and followers engage in the co-production of leadership and recommended that leadership theorists consider the follower's view in future studies. Though Shamir was instrumental in followership literature, other scholars contributed to followership research.

Kelley and Followership: Praising the Follower

Kelley (1988) was another seminal scholar in followership literature. Although Kelley did not conduct scientific research, he expounded on societal leadership-centric foci. In a *Harvard Business Review* article, Kelley maintained that everyone is a follower and participates in the role of the follower in some way. The author suggested that pinning an organization's performance on executives was dangerous and devalued the effort and importance of the company's followers. Kelley identified several qualities of effective followers: critical and independent thinkers who actively and positively participate in their role, show commitment to the organization, exhibit courageous and honest behaviors, and work to improve themselves and others. The author recommended that organizations provide

training and evaluation programs to educate employees about the importance of the follower role and encourage effective follower behaviors. Kelley also suggested rotating leadership and using reward systems to build strong and effective followers in a company.

Kelley (1992) followed his initial followership article with a groundbreaking book discussing the power of followers. In his book, Kelley described how society historically praised the role of the leader while downplaying and diminishing the follower. The author revisited his stance that leadership cannot exist without followers. Kelley encouraged readers to embrace the follower role and provided seven ways individuals could change their outlook on followers. For example, one could see themselves as an apprentice, first understanding the follower role on the journey to becoming an exceptional leader. Alternatively, a disciple could proudly embrace their follower role. Mentees could attempt to better themselves by learning from other followers. Comrades are groups of followers who develop relationally to improve team culture. A loyalist values organizational commitment by striving for the success of the leader, team, and company. As a dreamer, the follower adopts the vision of the leader and organization. Finally, some individuals may choose the role of the follower to serve others. Kelley also introduced follower styles and a questionnaire in his book for followers to understand their followership style. In his work, Kelley linked social theories to leadership theories and made way for other authors to examine the role of the follower (Ligon, 2016).

Chaleff and Followership: Courageous Followers

Leadership scholars Riggio et al. (2008) produced a book on different aspects of followership, including the definition and characteristics of followership and the leader-follower relationship. One of the authors, Chaleff (2009), authored a book on the courageous follower role in the leader-follower relationship. In his book, Chaleff advocated for followers to take pride in their position and view themselves as a partner who holds responsibility in the workplace. Courageous followers actively participate in the company's success and are enthusiastic about serving a leader and their organization, yet have the strength to challenge and

provide feedback to a leader. Additionally, a courageous follower supports organizational change and advocates for ethical behavior. Chaleff explained that understanding followership styles is the first step to becoming a courageous follower. He explained four follower styles, varying in the degree of support and challenge an individual has towards their leader: (a) partners support the leader yet provide feedback when necessary, (b) implementers are reliable but will not disagree with a leader, (c) individualists have no reservations confronting a leader, and (d) resource followers focus on their tasks and goals without much consideration for the team or leader. Following the book's release, Chaleff began consulting and teaching individuals to thrive as followers and have purpose and value in the workplace and society. After conducting seminars with Chaleff, Riggio (2014) shifted his focus from leadership to followership, stressing the importance of understanding and studying the follower role. A decade later, Riggio (2020) has continued encouraging scholars and experts to develop followership literature. Many authors have advanced the topic of followership, and Shamir, Kelley, Meindl, and Chaleff are among the seminal scholars (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

Other Aspects of Followers in Literature

One challenge with followership is identifying fresh concepts and conclusions without simply reinventing leadership findings (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). To avoid focusing on the leader perspective, experts have recommended a comprehensive look at organizational situations and settings (Kong et al., 2020; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). To be considered part of followership literature, studies must be follower-centric. Although many aspects of followership have been examined, the leader-follower dynamic is one of the most studied areas.

Leader and Follower Role Development

Leadership is a shared experience between leaders and followers to work together to accomplish goals (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Several scholars have produced work on the development of the leader-follower dynamic. After reviewing 25 years of leadership literature, Collinson (2006) concluded that a

follower plays a crucial role in shaping a leader's identity. Leaders and followers help shape one another's self-concept; however, followers also derive their identity from their environment, peers, and background, which affect how they perform in the workplace and interact with the leader. Bastardoz and Van Vugt's (2019) analytical and theoretical examination considered the leader-follower relationship from an evolutionary perspective. The researchers suggested that followers evolved from survival necessity as individuals worked cooperatively and cohesively to maintain safety and growth. Leaders emerged from a willingness to lead, the ability to persuade, and the capacity to attract followers. The scholars concluded that some are not motivated to lead and that followership was based on pay-off, rewards, perceived fairness by cooperating, personal preferences, dispositions, and motivations. Similarly, Garfield et al. (2019) offered a social science perspective, suggesting that followers willingly give leaders authority and make the personal allowance to be ruled by another. Pietraszewski (2020) surmised that workplace roles are a byproduct of information processing and sharing; cooperation and coordination are based on pay-off and bargaining mental viewpoints.

The term follower is familiar within religious works and literature. For example, in Christianity, the term follower is used throughout the Bible to describe disciples of Jesus Christ (Bonnet & Henson, 2022). Some scholars view the role of the follower as a divine calling (Hanes, 2018). For others, spiritual formation relates to values, ethics, meaning, and purpose (Devendhiran & Wesley, 2017; Obregon et al., 2021). Fry (2003) associated the term follower with an individual motivated by a personal calling to show altruistic care to others, have hope and faith in work, and live by a unique vision. Frye et al. (2007) further developed the spiritual follower concept by suggesting that followers derive purpose and meaning from their relationship with God and view their role as a place to serve peers, leaders, and others in the workplace. According to Pietraszewski (2020), followership is the willingness to be led, act as a disciple, and be part of a larger purpose. Many experts have written about and studied the leader-follower dynamic and the evolution of each role.

Follower Behaviors

As followership research progressed, many researchers focused on follower roles, traits, and behaviors (Bjugstad et al., 2006). For example, Kelley (1992) considered ineffective followers as those who are passive, critical, alienated, and pragmatic, whereas active followers engage with leaders, peers, and the organization. Analyzing several decades of followership literature, Crossman and Crossman (2011) identified ideal follower behaviors in the workplace and with a leader. In their review, Crossman and Crossman reported that negative follower actions are associated with words like "isolated," "passive," "toxic," or "alienated" (p. 489). Ideal follower styles included descriptions such as "partner," "independent," "loyal," "disciple," and "cooperative" (Crossman & Crossman, 2011, p. 489). According to Schneider et al. (2014), passive versus active followers cause either negative or positive emotional responses from a leader. Others have identified that supportive and active followers lead to more positive responses from the leader (Carsten et al., 2010; Epitropaki et al., 2013; Junker & van Dick, 2014).

The discussion of followership behavior is associated with ethics (Aidoo, 2017). Thomas et al. (2016) considered toxic followers to be individuals who are self-seeking, undermine leaders, and do not take responsibility. Buford (2018) suggested that courageous followership means supporting leaders and standing up for virtue in the workplace. Both Chaleff (2009) and Quick and Goolsby (2013) highlighted the importance of a follower acting ethically and challenging unethical behaviors in the workplace. Followers who feel empowered to be co-producers with leaders are likelier to stand up to unethical behavior (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013). For Christians, followers act ethically because of their higher calling to be more like Christ (Bunch, 2012; Ganu, 2018). Banks et al. (2021) sought to illuminate the follower side of ethical leadership. Followers interpret ethical signals according to their values and may receive, interpret, and respond to those signals differently compared to a leader. How followers decipher ethical signals will influence their behavior and performance, leader acceptance, and affect group dynamics. Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2013) studied followers' unethical behavior and willingness to follow a corrupt leader. After surveying groups of students for their experiment, the scholars found that the less a follower felt they had power in the

co-production of leadership, the greater their chance to follow a leader's unethical requests. Over the last several decades, several researchers have identified how the roles and traits of followers impact the leader-follower relationship.

Dyadic Leader-Follower Relationship

The relationship between a leader and follower is fluid rather than one-way and vertical (Meindl et al., 1985). Furthermore, followers influence leaders and the organization (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013). A manager's effectiveness is often subject to the attitudes and beliefs of their followers because leaders rely on follower and group cooperation and support (Alvesson & Blom, 2019; Oc & Bashshur, 2013). Likewise, followers' behaviors and engagement are directly related to their relationship with a leader (Schweizer & Patzelt, 2012; Shamir, 2007). When followers are empowered to co-produce with leaders, they are likelier to exhibit desirable behaviors, including improved morale and performance (Epitropaki et al., 2017). Carsten et al. (2010) reported that empowered followers are more participative and engaged. Followers respond more positively when leaders are fair, sacrificial, and sensitive to group norms and emotions (Tee et al., 2013).

The dyadic relationship between a leader and follower influences self-concepts and behaviors (Collinson, 2006; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). Graen and Schiemann (1978) tested their hypothesis that a dyadic relationship exists between a leader and follower, concluding that leaders and followers' roles are reciprocal and connected. The greater the strength of the relationship, the more reciprocal the interaction. Oc and Bashshur (2013) reviewed the leader-follower social exchange and discovered that followers who are supportive, interactive, and close to a leader could exert more influence over them. Furthermore, groups of followers sharing the same perspectives have more power over a leader than one follower. Shahzadi et al. (2016) focused on trust in their follower-centric study on the leader-follower relationship. The researchers endeavored to identify what follower behaviors directly impact the leader's confidence in a follower. For their research, Shahzadi et al. surveyed 300 leader-

follower dyads, concluding that proactive behavior and political skills resulted in positive interactions with their leader and improved trustworthiness.

Khan et al. (2019) considered the follower aspect of transformational leadership in their quantitative study on trustworthy follower behavior and trustworthiness with the leader. The researchers discovered a positive relationship between follower engagement and leader transformational behavior. Khan et al.'s conclusion supported followership research that followers' behavior influences leaders. Baird and Benson (2022) discussed that shared leadership can improve team dynamics and conflict. The scholars studied over 400 students from over 100 teams and found that followers respond to leaders based on their subconscious ideals of an effective leader. Additionally, proactive follower behaviors are linked to decreased conflict in groups. The researchers recommended that scholars and organizations recognize that follower behavior is equally essential to leader behavior regarding team dynamics. Since followership studies began, many different aspects of the follower have been studied but most research has focused on the leader-follower relationship.

Followership literature began in the 1980s and 1990s, with several seminal scholars highlighting the follower's role in research studies. Shamir (2007) established that followers are co-producers with leaders, and followers' attitudes, characteristics, and engagement levels directly affect leader behavior. Since then, numerous followership studies have been published that focus on the follower. The study of followership often connects to the quality of the relationship between a leader and a follower. Leadership does not exist without followers (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Some of the most common areas studied in followership are traits of followers and the leader-follower relationship (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014). Although many aspects of followership have been studied, this study focused on the implicit followership theory.

Implicit Followership Theory

The implicit followership theory (IFT) is a relatively new concept in followership literature. The approach is based on implicit beliefs or the subconscious schemas one has about oneself or one's role (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

Schemas are dynamic; change over time; and often correlate to gender, position, context, situation, group norms, and culture (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Although IFT is part of followership literature, the concept has a background in social cognition theories and other popular leadership theories, such as leader-member exchange and ILT (Lord et al., 2020). IFT has been a topic of interest amongst researchers since its inception in 2010 (Foti et al., 2017). In recent years, however, many researchers have conducted experiments on this theory that have added to the literature. The following section covers the theoretical background and development of the IFT and the most recent research in the literature.

Theoretical Background on Implicit Followership Theory

The main theories behind implicit theories are cognition and categorization theories and leader-member exchange (Lord et al., 2016, 2020). The following section includes a discussion of the theoretical development of the implicit followership theory, including categorization theory, leader-member exchange, and ILT.

Categorization Theory, Prototypes, and Schemas

Implicit theories have their basis in categorization theories, a branch of study in social cognition (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Many social cognitive neuroscience theorists and scientists believe human social interactions are a combination of explicit or conscious choices and implicit or unconscious beliefs and patterns (Frith & Frith, 2008). In 1928, F. N. House (1928) wrote a theoretical paper on personality and the social being. House theorized that personality develops from one's social environment and implicit beliefs about themselves. Furthermore, social exchanges depend on one's attitude about himself and his view of where he fits in society. Wernimont (1971), a social cognition expert, compared the cognitive expectations of leaders and followers. The scholar found that subordinates wanted independence, justice, leadership, vision, and communication from their leader. Alternatively, leaders valued their followers' cooperation, integrity, initiative, and communication. Wernimont advocated for leaders to make an effort to understand followers' expectations. One categorization theorist, Rosch

(1975), conducted several experiments and determined that words may conjure certain emotions or mental pictures in the human brain. Rosch (1978) suggested that human brains use implicit cognitive means to process information. Individuals create prototypes, also called categories, implicit beliefs, or schemas, to process the environment around them. The brain develops prototypes about a subject or situation and assigns attributes to the prototype. Once a prototype is developed, individuals make assumptions about their interactions with others. If a social interaction matches their prototype, the person experiences a positive emotion. Conversely, negative emotions or reactions may occur if the situation or encounter mismatches their internal schema. Rosch indicated that subconscious prototypes often stem from childhood upbringing, cultural influences, and previous personal experiences.

Several social cognition scholars based their studies on Rosch's (1978) schema insights. From the basis of Rosch's theories, Barsalou (1985) produced research that individuals form concepts or assumptions about others based on their upbringing, and the schemas solidify with frequency, relevance, similarity, and association over time. According to Barsalou, there is immediate verification and acceptance when someone fits an individual's schema. Wofford and Goodwin (1994) identified schemas as a factor in leadership behavior and follower performance. A few years later, Wofford et al. (1998) reexamined their original study and provided further evidence that a leader's follower schema influenced their leadership style and perspective of followers. Later, Goodwin et al. (2000) tested follower feedback on management style. According to Goodwin et al., follower feedback engages the leader's cognition leading to specific behavioral responses. The authors reported that managers responded to positive follower feedback with transformational leadership behaviors, whereas negative feedback produced stricter management actions.

Studies on self-concepts and the workplace also laid the groundwork for implicit theories by highlighting the power of internal assumptions and beliefs. Rush and Russell (1988) linked categorization theories to the workplace and the follower-leader relationship. The authors noted that followers would cooperate and

interact with leaders according to how the leader adheres to their leader prototype. The Pygmalion effect is a theory about self-fulfilling prophecies acted out in behavior (Eden, 1990). According to Eden, an individual's current behavior is based on the expectation of an event to occur in the future. For example, employees anticipate leaders' expectations about their job performance and behave accordingly through motivation, effort, and performance. Likewise, leaders have expectations of their staff and judge, interact, and react according to how they perform to those expectations. Reinforcement on both ends keeps the Pygmalion effect going.

McGregor (1960) postulated that motivation to work comes from employees' assumptions about the work and their role in it. Lord et al. (1999) outlined how the relationship between the leader and follower is influenced by concepts they hold about self, their role in society, and the organization. From the followership perspective, Epitropaki and Martin (2005) discovered that implicit assumptions about the role of the follower influence the leader and follower's actions in the workplace. Later, Epitropaki et al. (2013) indicated that leaders who believe that followers should be hardworking and submissive would expect their followers to be hard workers, act submissively, and judge subordinates according to that prototype. Likewise, a follower's level of engagement and commitment is directly associated with their leader prototype. Followers have perceptions of leadership, compare leaders to the set beliefs, and respond according to how the leader lived up to their predisposed expectations (Lord et al., 1984, 2016). A match between a leader's behavior and the follower's prototype of the leader means the follower will be more likely to support the leader (Scott et al., 2018).

Some authors have noted the difficulty in measuring schemas and implicit beliefs. Lord et al. (2020) discussed the challenges in their literature review, describing how measuring implicit theories is difficult because they are based on memory and subconscious prototypes. Accessibility, word descriptions, or association-based measures and tests may more accurately help identify true implicit beliefs. Others have echoed some concerns, including Epitropaki et al. (2013), who stated that self-reported data could hamper interpreting deeply held

perspectives and beliefs, noting that individuals' responses may be skewed by bias or fears. Hansbrough et al. (2015) also reviewed accuracy issues when relying on self-reported data in their study on leader-follower feedback and suggested that researchers studying implicit beliefs use scripts to gather generalized responses and avoid personal bias in responses. Despite some accuracy concerns over self-reported data, implicit theories have been studied for several decades, rooted in social cognition and categorization research.

Leader-Member Exchange

Another theory behind the implicit followership theory was the leader-member exchange. According to leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, developed by Dansereau et al. (1975), the emotional relationship between a leader and a follower, often termed a "vertical dyad," is reciprocal (p. 47). Rather than viewing leadership as a one-way impartation from leader to subordinate, the LMX approach holds that the supervisor and the subordinate have an equal and ongoing exchange (Graen & Schiemann, 1978). The LMX theory was further advanced by Mintzberg (1985), determining that a follower is influenced by a leader's attitudes, expectations, and actions. Furthermore, a follower's attitude towards and expectations of the leader directly influences and affects the leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The dyadic relationship between leader and follower also impacts the organization because a follower decides how to execute the leader's directions based on the follower's perceptions and relationship with the leader (Terry, 2019). From the viewpoint of LMX, the reciprocating behaviors between a leader and follower will foster trust, respect, and an obligation to serve (Shamir, 2007). A positive leader-member relationship leads to positive interactions between the leader and the follower (Lee et al., 2019). Acknowledging deeply held belief patterns is the common denominator in the study of LMX and the leader-follower relationship (Lord et al., 2016).

Most implicit theories studies have been conducted on students or within organizations through the lens of LMX (Lord et al., 2020). Engle and Lord (1997) studied leader-follower dyads to see how attitudes influenced LMX. The scholars identified that the more positive attitudes towards the other party, the better the

LMX relationship. After conducting a follower-centric quantitative study on three groups of participants, Van Quaquebeke et al. (2011) reported that followers' perceptions of a leader are related to their leader prototype. Later, Van Quaquebeke et al. (2014) reanalyzed their original study and confirmed that subordinates use their ideal leadership prototype to assess and respond to leaders. Riggs and Porter (2017) conducted a quantitative experiment on leader-follower dyads and found that prototypes on both sides influenced the LMX relationship. When the other individual portrayed actions congruent with the ideal prototype, a positive LMX relationship occurred. Likewise, Tsai et al. (2017) studied LMX from the social exchange of leader-follower dyads and confirmed that alignment with schema led to a more positive LMX. The advance of the LMX theory laid the groundwork for more studies on implicit theories.

Implicit Leadership Theory

A theory that followed LMX literature and categorization theories was the implicit leadership theory (ILT). In the 1980s and 1990s, leadership literature shifted to employees' perspectives of leadership and the workplace (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Lord et al. (1984) first established the concept of the ILT, suggesting that followers hold implicit perspectives of an ideal leader and their subsequent behavior. According to Lord et al., when a follower encounters someone who aligns with their mentally categorized prototype of an ideal leader, the follower is comfortable calling that individual a leader. Furthermore, followers hold leaders accountable to those preconceived prototypes after the leaders assume a leadership position. Lord and Maher (1991) expounded on the effect of socio-cognitive perceptions on the leader-follower relationship in their book, identifying that leaders respond to followers' expectations and group norms. Meindl et al. (1985) further developed ILT by investigating how leaders' schemas of leader and follower roles influence organizational behavior and performance. According to Meindl et al., leaders behave according to followers' perceptions and expectations; likewise, leaders have idealistic prototypes of followers and treat followers according to how the follower compares to their implicit beliefs. Followers' implicit beliefs about leaders are dynamic and change over time, based on context,

and are also closely associated with group norms and in-group association (Lord et al., 2020). ILT is the precursor to the IFT and was developed by leadership theorists seeking followers' views on leadership and organizational behavior.

Many studies have developed a greater understanding of ILT in the last few decades. ILT was one of the main components of the internationally acclaimed Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project by R. J. House et al. (2002). The GLOBE studies encompassed a comparison of cross-cultural leadership dimensions, including preferred leadership prototypes (R. J. House et al., 1997). R. J. House et al. confirmed that ILTs or leadership prototypes are typically consistent within cultures. Bass and Avolio (1989) tested the ILT perspectives of employees and found that participants felt transformational leadership characteristics were the most effective leadership traits. Offermann et al. (1994) created a scale to measure ILT, noting that dedication, charisma, intelligence, and sensitivity were employees' most preferred leadership traits. Epitropaki and Martin (2004) produced a shorter version of Offerman et al.'s scale and presented leadership prototype and antiprototype attributes. The authors recommended that organizations use the scale to identify employees' perspectives and ensure leaders know how their behavior is viewed among staff. Conducting a quantitative study on 235 students, Eden and Leviatan (1975) proved that implicit theories play a role when subordinates answer questions about leadership. Nichols and Cottrell (2014) acknowledged the power of implicit beliefs when investigating ideal leadership traits. However, although ILT literature was one of the first to credit the follower's perspective (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), the emphasis of ILT is still leader-focused rather than follower-focused.

Theoretical Development of the Implicit Followership Theory (IFT)

IFT began as an endeavor to keep the focus on the follower in alignment with building followership literature (Sy, 2010). In 2017, *The Leadership Quarterly* published a special edition on the IFT when it gained more prominence in the literature, yet the concept had been around for several years (Foti et al., 2017). IFT addresses how internal beliefs about the follower role influence both the leader and follower (Coyle & Foti, 2021). One seminal IFT scholar, Sy (2010), sought to

extend leadership literature by reversing the lens of ILT to understand the leader's internal schema of the follower. Sy worked with ILT theorists Epitropaki and Martin (2004) and Offermann et al. (1994) to develop an IFT instrument to measure how a leader categorizes effective and ineffective follower behaviors. The research results came from five consecutive studies that included seven samples of over 1,300 leaders. The team of experts developed a scale for identifying six follower behaviors: industry, enthusiasm, good citizen, conformity, insubordination, and incompetence. The first three factors represented effective follower traits or prototypes, and the latter three behaviors were associated with ineffective follower attributes or antiprototypes. According to Sy, the leader-follower relationship heavily depends on how the leader categorizes the follower, with either prototype or antiprototype tendencies. Although other IFT scales have been developed, Sy's remains the most used, validated, and cited (Kruse & Sy, 2011; Lord et al., 2020; Whiteley et al., 2012). The following is a discussion of the theoretical development of the IFT.

Follower Traits Versus Roles

Other scholars have examined aspects of implicit beliefs and their connection to IFT. For example, Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2009) developed a five-question, Likert-style scale to measure IFT, called coproduction orientation. The focus for the scholars, however, changed from IFT to follower role perceptions when Carsten et al. (2010) produced a study on follower role orientations. Drawing from the role theory, the scholars focused on how social constructs influence the followers' role perception (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). According to role theory, developed by Katz and Kahn (1966), individuals are influenced and developed by the roles they hold in a group. Norms, interactions with others, responsibilities, and expectations of the role influence self-perceptions in the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). From a followership perspective, self-perceptions of the follower role influence schemas and how the follower interacts with the leader (Carsten et al., 2014).

Carsten et al. (2010) identified a gap in the literature: previous studies primarily focused on leaders' views of the follower role but no on followers'

perspectives of their role in the organization. The experts explained how followers subconsciously hold schemas or prototypes of follower role expectations, and those views dictate their behavior in the workplace. The researchers conducted a qualitative study by interviewing 31 followers in Canada and the United States, asking participants about their interactions with leaders and how they viewed their role as a subordinate. The researchers concluded that followers categorize follower roles as passive, active, or proactive. In this study, passive followers saw themselves as subordinates who obeyed leaders' commands, were agreeable, and avoided confrontation. Proactive followers were the opposite, expressing the tendency to take the initiative and feeling comfortable questioning the boss. In the middle ground were active followers who supported the leader, openly expressed opinions, and actively took responsibility. The authors concluded that internal schema, leader behavior and style, and workplace climate ultimately influenced the follower's response to the leader and workplace behavior.

Later, Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) conducted a quantitative version of Carsten et al.'s (2010) original study, focusing on the relationship between followers' role beliefs and interactions with the leader. Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) used the coproduction orientation scale in their study. The coproduction orientation scale was an instrument initially created to measure IFT (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2009). However, with the later use of their scale, Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) highlighted key differences between their research and IFT. The researchers explained that IFT centers on the traits of a follower, whereas their focus was follower role orientation. For their study, Carsten and Uhl-Bien surveyed 206 followers to measure followers' belief in the co-production of leadership by measuring employee voice, resistance tendencies with leaders, and overall quality of relationship with a leader. The study provided further evidence to support Chaleff's (2009) theory that the more followers believe they are co-producers with a leader, the more likely they will be to speak up to the leader. Carsten and Uhl-Bien urged future researchers to explore the role beliefs of leaders and followers to provide a holistic view of the co-production of leadership.

Carsten et al. (2018) furthered the role orientation focus on followers by conducting a quantitative study in China. The authors posited that follower behavior reflected either co-production or passive beliefs of the follower role. Carsten et al. created a new scale for their study to test for passive follower role orientation. The researchers used two scales to measure follower role orientation: the coproduction orientation scale originally developed by Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2009) and a new scale, passive orientation. The scholars theorized that follower orientation influenced followers' upward interaction with the leader and the leader's behavioral outcomes. The researchers confirmed the scholars' hypothesis that followers with co-production beliefs were more likely to speak up to the leader and take responsibility, garnering a positive response from the leader. Carsten et al. (2022) used the same scale to test 260 adult workers' role orientation when leaders were distant. The scholars found that followers with higher coproduction beliefs exerted more effort and performance when leaders were present, whereas passive followers showed less effort and performance as interaction with leaders increased. Since 2010, Carsten and colleagues (Carsten et al., 2010, 2018, 2022; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012) have developed studies investigating how a follower's role orientation impacts their workplace behavior and relationship with a leader. Role orientation is an important aspect of implicit beliefs about the follower role.

IFT and Role Orientation Measurement

Some authors have sought to develop another tool to measure IFT apart from Sy's (2010) original instrument. For instance, Tram-Quon (2013) focused their dissertation on creating other options for measuring IFT. After conducting two separate experiments to determine if an association test could measure FIFT, both studies revealed no validity in using association tests for IFT. Similarly, Junker et al. (2016) created another method of measuring follower attributes, stating that Sy's focus was on typical follower characteristics rather than ideal follower traits. The research included three studies, surveying 377 followers and 201 leaders with a modified version of Sy's (2010) instrument. The researchers recommended future research to validate their measurement tool. Junker et al. (2016) also suggested that researchers compare leader and follower IFT, which is another basis for the current

study. Despite other measurement attempts, the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) has been used in most IFT studies.

Mohamadzadeh et al. (2015) answered Carsten et al.'s (2010) research call to examine more follower characteristics from the follower perspective and implicit theories in their qualitative FIFT study in Iran. Using phenomenological research, the researchers interviewed 12 participants and identified five overarching prototypes and antiprototypes for followers from the follower perspective. The research presented five prototypes: support, competence, initiative, constructive team player, and moral behavior. The antiprototypes were disobedience, incompetence, indifference, deception, and ineffectiveness. Mohamadzadeh et al. focused on role orientation and based their study on Carsten et al.'s (2010) original research. Although not exclusively IFT or trait-related, the study was still significant.

Trait and role orientation studies are vital to understanding the follower role. Both role orientation and IFT focus on schemas about the follower role that influence individuals and their interactions with others (Gesang, 2022). The connection between IFT and follower role orientation is closer than some scholars have suggested. According to Sy and McCoy (2014), IFT is an antecedent to organizational role-switching. Role switching refers to the fluidity of individuals possessing and taking on either leader or follower schemas and behaviors depending on situations and contexts (Sy & McCoy, 2014). Both IFT and role orientation focus on the implicit beliefs about the follower role but come from different approaches (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Role orientation centers on followers' schema and perception of their role, whereas IFT focuses on how attitudes about the follower impact behavior in the workplace (Carsten et al., 2018). Gesang (2022) is the only scholar to compare IFT and role theory in the same study, finding no correlation between IFT and role theory. Another aspect of IFT and role theory, however, remains unresearched: if a correlation or predictive relationship exists between IFT antiprototypes and passive role orientation and between IFT prototypes with coproduction orientation. Furthermore, the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) has never been connected to the coproduction and

passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Therefore, because of the close connection between IFT and role orientation and the identified research gap, one purpose of this study was to correlate the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018).

Leader-Centric IFT Literature

Many IFT studies have taken a leader-centric perspective of the theory (LIFT), focusing on the leader's schemas of followers (Matshoba-Ramuedzisi et al., 2022). The following is a discussion of IFT studies with a leader-centric focus.

Pygmalion Effect and LIFT. For example, Whiteley et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative LIFT study in the United States on 151 leader-follower dyads investigating leaders' performance and relationships with followers using the Pygmalion effect as a theoretical basis. According to the Pygmalion effect, a theory developed by Rosenthal (1963), an individual's expectations about another turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy behaviorally. The approach, first tested on teachers and pupils (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), has been applied to leaders and followers in the workplace (Whiteley et al., 2012). Whiteley et al. (2012) studied IFT with the Pygmalion effect. The authors found that positive LIFTs influenced the leader's expectations of the follower and the quality of the leader-follower relationship—positive LIFTs correlated with positive leader-follower relationships and improved follower performance. In a similar quantitative study on self-fulfilling prophecy, Goswami et al. (2022) surveyed 260 leader-follower dyads in the United States to determine how LIFTs impacted leader expectations and employee performance. The researchers reported that agreeable personality traits positively correlated with positive LIFTs, corresponding to improved follower performance. The researchers concluded with a suggestion to study IFT from both leader and follower perspectives, a basis for the current study. In their literature review of ILT, Junker and van Dick (2014) explained that a leader's assumptions of ideal follower prototypes influenced their behavior toward followers. For example, if a follower fits a leader's expectations for what a follower should be, the leader is more likely to exhibit more of a dyadic relationship. Thus, psychological belief systems are the driving force behind collaborative behavior among individuals in the workplace.

LIFT Antecedents. Derler and Weibler (2014) used Sy's scale to study 182 leaders in the United States. The scholars sought to understand the association between LIFT preferences and marketplace and organizational circumstances. The study showed that LIFTs change based on the context of role, industry, and market condition. P. -M. M. Thompson et al. (2018) answered research calls for determining antecedents of LIFTs. The researchers connected LIFTs to the attachment theory to see if leaders embody the characteristics of their primary caregivers. After surveying 258 leaders in Norway, P. -M. M. Thompson et al. concluded that leaders' attachment styles from childhood correlated with IFTs; the scholars noted that leaders with high avoidance tendencies held negative IFTs. Gesang and Süß (2021) interviewed 21 leaders in their qualitative study, using Sy's (2010) scale to determine how LIFTs impact a leader in the organization. The researchers reported that LIFTs and subsequent follower behavior affect leaders' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. In many IFT studies, scholars have focused on the leader's perspective of the follower role.

LIFT and LMX. Several IFT studies, such as LMX, have focused on the connection between implicit theories and organizational behavior. For example, Xiao et al. (2020) completed a quantitative experiment on over 300 leaders and followers and found a positive relationship between LMX scores and positive prototype matches. Specifically, when followers' implicit prototypes of their leader or leaders' schemas of their followers matched, there was an increase in proactive workplace behavior. Peng and Wang (2018) also focused on organizational behavior and implicit theories. The researchers conducted a LIFT study to determine how leader prototype and antiprototype perspectives of followers implicated the leaders' interaction with their followers. Through a quantitative survey of 132 followers, Peng and Wang concluded that positive matches between leader behavior and prototypes resulted in follower satisfaction and well-being. Kong et al. (2019) surveyed 267 leader-follower dyads to determine if LIFT impacted followers' creativity, LMX, and motivation. The study showed that a LIFT alignment between leader expectations and follower behavior correlated to greater LMX, creativity, and followers' motivation. Liang et al. (2020) examined

the influence of IFTs and culture on the leader-follower relationship. After measuring 268 leader-follower groups in a longitudinal study, the scholars determined that IFT differences between leader and follower prototype beliefs negatively impacted innovative behavior. Furthermore, the more empowered and fit the follower feels in an organization, the more their innovative behavior increases. Liu et al. (2020) found that LIFTs moderated LMX and leader-follower liking among Chinese leader-follower dyads.

Comparing IFT and ILT

Another aspect of IFT in literature is comparing IFT and ILT to understand the implicit beliefs leaders and followers hold of one another (Lord et al., 2020). Most of the comparisons between IFT and ILT have been leader-centric and are covered in literature reviews. The comparison is an essential area of study because a follower's implicit beliefs correlate with their relationship with the leader and the leader's leadership style (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Shondrick and Lord (2010) authored a book on the effects of IFT and ILT as a dynamic and reciprocal exchange process between leaders and followers. The authors reviewed how leaders respond positively when encountering followers who exhibit behaviors that match their existing prototypes of ideal followers. In the book, the authors discussed the same effect with followers. In their literature review, Alipour et al. (2017) considered how consistencies between IFT and ILT affected leader-follower coordination. The scholars identified that a match of ideal prototypes dictates leader-follower dyadic behavior, and inconsistencies between LIFT and ILT cause coordination breakdown in the workplace. According to van Gils et al. (2010), the difference between ILTs and IFTs impacts LMX and the relationship between leaders and followers.

Schematic differences are usually based on context, relationships, and past experiences. Junker and van Dick (2014) described the importance of culture, working environment, and bias on ILTs and IFTs in their literature review. Lord et al. (2020) provided an extensive literature review of ILT and IFT. Social-cognitive processes and followers' perceptions of themselves and the leader significantly impact the workplace and organization. Individuals associate their leader with their

ideal leader prototype (ILT); likewise, a leader behaves toward their followers according to their LIFTs. For example, a leader who conceptualizes followers as hardworking and competent would give them more independence and freedom. Lord et al. identified that a comparison of the congruence between leader-follower schemas is lacking in the literature and recommended studying the comparisons. Likewise, Junker and van Dick (2014) suggested future research on the similarities and differences in implicit beliefs between leaders and followers. Therefore, this study is based on the authors' recommendations.

In a few studies, researchers have compared LIFT and ILT. For example, Petruş (2018) surveyed 269 Romanian employees to test Epitropaki and Martin's (2004) ILTs scale and Sy's (2010) IFTs scale. The researcher concluded the study by discussing the problem of using self-reported scales to adequately assess true implicit beliefs, noting that innate views are often contextual and situational-based. Similarly, Kong et al. (2020) investigated how matching leader-follower expectations improve organizational development and creative output by surveying 231 leader-follower dyads in China. The researchers compared followers' ILT with leaders' IFT and reported that a match of implicit beliefs positively resulted in higher workplace engagement. In their quantitative dissertation, Patel (2018) compared the ILT and IFT patterns of 281 leaders and followers. The researcher concluded that most individuals hold general ideals of how people should act in the workplace instead of differing attributes for leaders versus followers. Patel explained that an implicit co-worker theory exists, where employees and leaders expect all workers to behave with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Many authors have compared IFT and ILT but their focus primarily remains on the leader and the leader's role. The aim of this study was to bring more awareness to the follower aspect of leadership.

Follower-Centric IFT Literature

The follower-centric approach to IFT (FIFT) focuses on the follower's implicit beliefs about their role (Yang et al., 2020). Social norms of teams, groups, or organizations influence followers' internal belief systems of themselves and their role with a leader and within the workplace (Matshoba-Ramuedzisi et al.,

2022). Followers' schemas affect their relationship with a leader, workplace culture, and organizational performance. Whether negative or positive, internal beliefs guide a follower's performance, efficiency, task completion, coordination, and cooperation (Alipour et al., 2017; Gesang & Süß, 2021). Furthermore, a follower's perspective of their role impacts the leader's behavior and goal achievement (Howell & Shamir, 2005) and their relationship with leaders and peers (Guo, 2018). Ultimately, the decision to comply or cooperate is not that of the leader but of the follower (Hayes et al., 2015). When followers feel they have more freedom, motivation increases, leading to behavior such as cooperation, persistence, and other synergistic behaviors (Chou et al., 2017). The following is a summary of FIFT literature.

FIFT Antecedents. Several follower-focused FIFT studies have considered antecedents and causes of follower implicit beliefs. In Medcof's (2012) dissertation, the student conducted an exploratory qualitative study on 54 Indian and Canadian followers to determine antecedents of FIFT. The research proved that cultural background and personality change IFTs and followers' perceptions of their roles. In another dissertation, Evans (2022) conducted two experiments on students and employees across Canada and the United States to determine how personality traits, social experiences, and external factors shape IFTs. In the first cross-sectional quantitative experiment on 382 students and 304 workers, Evans tested how self-construal, self-identity within social relationships, and external workplace factors affect IFT. Evans noted that individuals with more group-oriented dependencies had more positive views of followers than independent-focused individuals. Also, Evans reported that independent individuals tend to hold more negative opinions of followers as work pressure increases. In Evans' second cross-sectional quantitative experiment of 852 students and 760 workers, the research centered on the relationship between follower IFTs and social development and learning. Evans reported that students viewed followers as having more of a passive role than employees. Additionally, people with management experience or from high power distance cultural backgrounds held more negative

views of the follower. In conclusion, Evans noted that role type, experience, and social norms are a factor in the development of IFTs.

FIFT and Organizational Culture. Followers' implicit perceptions also directly affect organizational culture because the accepted social norms of followers determine an organization's culture (Liden et al., 2015; Martin, 2019). Organizations with performance measurement systems have a more robust organizational culture that results in commitment and cooperation because individuals see themselves as co-producers in organizational goals (Hayes et al., 2015). Pastor et al. (2002) concluded that follower groups and the shared social norms of the individuals shape the organizational culture and the leader. Therefore, a follower group's internal belief system influences an organization's social climate. Zhang et al. (2021) considered how FIFTs related to organizational behavior, including followers' views of supervisor support and feedback. The researchers surveyed 207 employees in China using Sy's (2010) IFT scale. The study findings showed that followers who held more positive IFTs about their role felt more supported by their leaders and were more apt to seek supervisor feedback. The researchers recommended that organizations create supportive environments to encourage positive IFTs and employee feedback.

FIFT and Organizational Commitment. Sheng-Wen et al. (2022) conducted a FIFT study involving 360 virtual workers. The scholars identified that follower self-perceptions of their role were as powerful as leadership style on workplace behaviors, such as organizational commitment, trust, and active followership. Yang et al. (2020) compared follower attitudes with FIFTs and examined how those schemas affected peer relationships, job satisfaction, trust, and organizational commitment. Participants were asked to associate positive or adverse reactions to words about the follower role and answer Likert-style questions about follower behavior to determine their follower schemas. The researchers reported a significant relationship between positive follower schemas and increased job satisfaction, trust, and commitment. This study followed Yang et al.'s recommendations to compare LIFT and FIFT of leaders and followers. Much of the recently published literature on IFT has focused on implicit beliefs and

organizational behavior. Estorge's (2020) dissertation focused on FIFT and organizational commitment, including LMX and job performance. Based on Sy's (2010) original research, the student surveyed 207 followers from various industries across the United States to determine how FIFT influenced employee behavior in the workplace and with the leader. Estorge reported a positive relationship between organizational commitment and positive follower prototypes. The current study followed Estorge's call to compare leader-follower IFT research.

FIFT and Role Performance. Belief systems about the follower's role, whether innate or learned, affect the followers' implicit beliefs about their role, thus resulting in behavioral responses to leaders (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). Foley (2015) conducted a quantitative FIFT study by surveying 1,610 business students in the United States on beliefs about leadership and followership. The researcher reported that the more a student believed there was a dyadic relationship with leaders, the more positive they saw their role as a follower. Foley recommended that business schools adopt followership as part of the curriculum for a balanced view of leadership training. In Germany, Gesang (2022) compared how followers view their role relative to their workplace behavior. Gesang applied a quantitative method to Carsten et al.'s (2010) original IFT study and described that followers might view their role differently based on context. Although Gesang's study focused on role and was not trait specific, the study is worth highlighting. Inderjeet and Scheepers (2022) studied 287 followers in a quantitative FIFT experiment in South Africa. The researchers found that followers' FIFTs affect their level of co-production and workplace behaviors. Those with positive FIFTs had co-production beliefs, were more communicative with their leader, and did not engage in upward delegation, such as avoiding responsibility or accountability. Stegmann et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study on 379 employees in Germany and the United States to identify if age and FIFT influenced LMX, psychological health, and job performance. The scholars found a gap between employees' ideal FIFTs and actual behavior, which correlated with low LMX relationships, mental health, and performance.

A couple of qualitative studies also considered FIFT and the follower role. Klosterman (2021) conducted a phenomenological study with 10 participants across several cultures and countries to understand the FIFTs of virtual workers. The scholar found that implicit beliefs influence how followers see themselves and their peers. For example, if a peer behaves according to their follower prototype, that individual considers their peer a desirable follower. After identifying several desirable and undesirable follower characteristics from the data, Klosterman reported that some follower qualities of virtual employees differed from those in previous studies on co-located individuals. The current study followed Klosterman's recommendations to consider leader-follower IFT alignment. Constanza's (2022) dissertation focused on the IFT perspectives of six employees in Christian higher education organizations through a qualitative case study. The student reported that although the followers perhaps did not fully understand their role, they were motivated to behave as engaged and ethical followers and held a favorable view of being a follower.

Comparing LIFT and FIFT

Many studies have recommended future research on comparing the IFTs of leaders and followers (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Only three known studies to date have included a thorough examination and report on both sides of the leader-follower relationship. Most studies focus either a follower- or a leader-centric viewpoint (Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). In a quantitative study, Veestraeten et al. (2021) compared the LIFT and FIFT of 445 leaders and followers in a longitudinal quantitative study in Belgium. With the Pygmalion effect of self-fulfilling prophecy as a theoretical basis, the researchers tested how IFTs influence leader expectations and, thus, employee engagement. Veestraeten et al. chose one of Sy's (2010) prototypical, positive follower dimensions, industry, as the focus of their study. Sy's industry dimension reflects productivity and above-and-beyond behavior. The study had several conclusions: leaders' expectations matched their LIFTs, and followers who scored high on

industry were more sensitive to leaders' expectations and had higher work engagement rates. The researchers recommended that future researchers examine all dimensions of Sy's instrument between leaders and followers. Thus, this study followed Veestraeten et al.'s recommendations for studying LIFT and FIFT alignment for all dimensions.

Coyle and Foti (2021) used LMX as a theoretical basis to understand leader and follower job satisfaction. The researchers aimed to determine if IFT and work-related affect predicted job satisfaction. Coyle and Foti used Sy's (2010) IFT tool for their study that included 482 leaders and followers in the United States. The researchers created the work-related affect measurement by combining several instruments: upward communication (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), individualized consideration (Stogdill, 1963), autonomous work climate (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012), and LMX (Graen et al., 2004). Job satisfaction was highest among followers with negative FIFTs yet high work-related affect. The researchers, however, found no correlation between IFT, work-related affect, and job satisfaction for leaders. For future research, the scholars suggested examining leaders' and followers' IFT within the same study. Although the researchers used several measurement tools and focused on job satisfaction, it was worthwhile to include the research in the review of IFT literature.

Considering the implicit beliefs of leader-follower dyads, Gifft (2019) conducted a qualitative single-case study on 29 leaders and followers in the United States manufacturing industry. Gifft used both IFT and LMX as a theoretical basis for the dissertation. The research showed several dominant themes, including congruence, personal qualities, contextual factors, behaviors, and performance and evaluation. In conclusion, Gifft reported that implicit prototypes heavily influenced the leader-follower relationship. The researcher stressed the importance of leaders and employees understanding their implicit beliefs to improve relationships with each other and job performance and satisfaction.

IFT has been developed and researched for over two decades, yet it is still a relatively new concept. Although many aspects of IFT have been uncovered, one research gap needed to be addressed. Several scholars and authors have called for a

LIFT and FIFT comparison in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Therefore, the study is a response to these research calls to fill the literature gap.

Summary

Followership is the study of the follower, the individual who holds the position opposite to a leader (Lord et al., 2020). Although some scholars had acknowledged the follower's role in the leadership process, seminal scholars such as Shamir (1995) called for scholars to reverse the lens to identify leadership principles from the follower's perspective. Since followership literature began, many aspects have been studied, including implicit theories. Implicit theories address the innate beliefs that dictate behavior (Epitropaki et al., 2013). Implicit theory research came from social cognition and categorization theories and expanded into the LMX, ILT, and IFT (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Sy (2010) spearheaded the study of the IFT. Since then, many scholars have studied IFT from both leadership-centric and followership-centric perspectives. In recent years, IFT research has expanded globally, both published in journals and as dissertations. Published research on IFT in recent years has added validity and importance to the literature. Many articles and dissertations published in recent years on IFT provided a basis for this study. Despite the research on IFT, one gap remained. Experts called for an IFT study to examine both the leader's and follower's implicit views of the follower role (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). The current study is a response to the research calls and includes valuable insight into followership, IFT, and implicit belief literature.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The aim of this study was to explore if there was a statistically significant difference between the implicit beliefs of leaders and followers. The research is from the theoretical viewpoint of the implicit followership theory (IFT), based on the scientific foundation that individuals have subconscious implicit beliefs or schemas that guide behavior toward others in the workplace (Whiteley et al., 2012). Specifically, subconscious beliefs about the follower role influence both a leader and follower (Coyle & Foti, 2021; Junker et al., 2016). For instance, a leader's behavior toward their followers is dictated mainly by their implicit assumptions of the ideal follower (Sy, 2010). Alternatively, followers' beliefs about their role influence their performance, efficiency, task completion, coordination, and cooperation with others (Alipour et al., 2017; Gesang & Süß, 2021). Implicit beliefs are also associated with follower role orientation perceptions and how the follower interacts with a leader (Carsten et al., 2014).

I used a nonexperimental, quantitative methodology to test four research questions in this study. Four research questions addressed several gaps in the literature. First, this study aimed to test if there was a statistically significant difference between the IFTs of leaders and followers. A second aim was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the follower role orientations of leaders and followers. Finally, the study aimed to correlate standard implicit belief instruments that measure IFTs and follower role orientation. The following includes the research rationale and significance, purpose of the study, research design, sample and participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Rationale and Significance

This study adds to the literature on followership and IFT. First, this research furthered followership literature by producing a follower-centric study (Shamir, 2007). Seminal followership scholars Kelley (1988) and Shamir (1995) urged researchers to explore the role of the follower further to expand leadership literature and provide a complete analysis of the leadership process. Additionally, the

research extended the IFT literature. Sy (2010) developed the IFT as a follower-centric version of the ILT. The purpose of the IFT theory is to understand how implicit beliefs influence followers and leaders in the workplace (Goswami et al., 2022). Most IFT research either takes a leader-centric (LIFT) perspective or a follower-centric viewpoint (FIFT) (Goswami et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2020). Over the last few decades, many researchers have considered both sides of IFT, although one research gap remains. Experts have suggested further research to compare LIFTs and FIFTs in leader-follower dyads (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Before this research, no known research had been conducted to analyze LIFT and FIFT views in a single study.

Some scholars suggest IFT is fundamentally different from role orientations (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2018; Gesang, 2022; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), whereas others identify the constructs as measuring a similar aspect of followership differences (Mohamadzadeh et al., 2015; Sy & McCoy, 2014). I added this construct to the research design because role orientation measures followers' implicit beliefs. The instrument that measures follower role orientation is the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Despite the theoretical similarities or differences between IFT and follower role orientation, no scholar has compared the instruments measuring follower implicit beliefs. Therefore, the current study involved correlating the prototype and antiprototype factors from the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) with the coproduction and passive orientation factors from Carsten et al.'s (2018) coproduction and passive role orientation scale.

Research Purpose

Many experts have called for more research on the leader and follower schemas of the follower role in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). The study extended followership, IFT, and role orientation literature. First, I

examined if there was a statistically significant difference between the IFTs of leaders and followers. Likewise, I investigated if there was a statistically significant difference between the follower role orientations of leaders and followers. Finally, I correlated the prototype and antiprototype factors from the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) with the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The research was a nonexperimental, quantitative study of leader and follower implicit beliefs of the follower role. Four research questions guided the study:

RQ_1: Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

RQ_2: Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

RQ_3: To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?

RQ_4: To what degree do the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?

Research Design and Methodology

Though many researchers have surveyed or interviewed leaders and followers in their research, most scholars report from either a follower- or a leader-centric viewpoint (Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Qualitative approaches involve an in-depth discovery of an issue or human situation, whereas quantitative research is appropriate to test hypotheses and identify correlations between variables through instruments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both approaches have unique methodologies, and researchers can develop a study from many angles. A quantitative research approach was, however, ideal for this study because the focus was examining the differences in implicit belief perspectives of leaders and followers and comparing the two instruments. Four research questions guided this quantitative, nonexperimental study.

The study methodology and design followed research recommendations to compare LIFT and FIFT in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014;

Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Previous research examples that reported both sides of the leader-follower relationship in IFT literature guided the research design. For example, Veestraeten et al. (2021) compared LIFT and FIFT by testing how Sy's (2010) follower dimension, industry, leads to work engagement. The scholars found that leaders act in alignment with their LIFT beliefs, and followers who were more sensitive to leaders' expectations had higher work engagement. Veestraeten et al. suggested that future researchers should examine all dimensions of Sy's instrument between leaders and followers. One instrument used in the study was the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010), which contains IFT prototype and antiprototype factors. The research also furthered the literature on follower role orientation as it entailed examining differences between leader and follower responses to follower role orientation instruments. The coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) measured follower role orientation. Finally, the current research is the first known study to compare the implicit followership scale to the follower role orientation scale to determine if any relationship exists between the two instruments.

A nonexperimental, quantitative methodology was the research design for this project. Data were gathered through a census survey, a suitable approach for ensuring that every member of the population is surveyed (Fowler, 2009). Census surveys are effective when the researcher can access an entire population to gather as many responses as possible (Fowler, 2009). I used a census survey method because I had access to the whole population. The survey was cross-sectional in design (Creswell, 2014) because all data were collected at one point in time. Cross-sectional data represent a population at one point in time but may not showcase changes in mindsets or attitudes over time (Gay et al., 2012). Overall, online surveys have many advantages for gathering data, such as lower barrier of entry, low cost, easy distribution, high accessibility, and the ability to mitigate bias and produce quick results (Coughlan et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Fowler, 2009). A nonexperimental, quantitative survey approach was ideal for this research on schemas from the data collected.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

For data collection, I used a single-stage sampling procedure with a one-time questionnaire (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Single-stage sampling is appropriate when the researcher can access an entire population (Creswell, 2014). The population received a link to an online, self-administered questionnaire hosted on Google Forms. Choosing instruments that measure the study's different aspects is critical to designing the survey (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I used the implicit followership theory scale, developed by Sy (2010), to measure IFTs. Sy provided written permission through e-mail correspondence to use the tool for this study. The study also included the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Participants completed a questionnaire consisting of 30 total items: 18 questions from the implicit followership scale; nine questions from the coproduction and passive role orientation scale; and three demographic questions about gender, role (leader; follower), and country of residence (United States; Canada). Although gender was not included as a variable in the analysis, nationality yielded additional insights during data analysis and was recorded in reporting findings. Assigning participants according to role allowed me to analyze the difference in leader and follower responses for RQ_1 and RQ_2. The following is a detailed description of the instruments used in the study.

The Implicit Followership Scale

Measuring implicit followership perspectives was the cornerstone of the study. The implicit followership theory scale is an effective tool for measuring IFT. Sy (2010) developed the instrument based on a previously tested and validated ILT scale. Sy worked with ILT scholars Epitropaki and Martin (2004) and Offermann et al. (1994) to create an instrument with valid and reliable standards to measure implicit characteristics from the follower perspective. The implicit leadership scale, tested and developed by Epitropaki and Martin and Offermann et al., had already undergone rigorous validation and reliability tests through previous studies (Sy, 2010). Sy (2010) used the same rigor from the implicit leadership scale development when creating the implicit followership theory scale (Guo, 2018). Validity indicates relevance, and reliability means results are consistent across

multiple studies (Gay et al., 2012). Together, validity and reliability result in trustworthy research. The implicit followership theory scale has proven validity and reliability when measuring IFT (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

In Sy's (2010) five concurrent studies for his research on IFT, the scholar measured different aspects of validity. Reported validity measures were content, convergent, discriminant, criterion, and incremental (Sy, 2010, p. 81). Content or construct validity was present because the instrument items consistently measured the implicit beliefs of the follower role across all five tests. The instrument had criterion validity for correlating to the other sample tests in the experiment. Sy assessed convergent validity with a statistical test of the six factors of the IFT instrument, which demonstrated statistical significance and correlated with other implicit theories and tests. However, the implicit followership theory scale adequately measured implicit followership beliefs instead of different constructs, revealing discriminant and incremental validity (Sy, 2010). The five studies also proved the scale's reliability as their results were consistent throughout the experiment. Many other scholars have since tested the implicit followership theory scale and established its validity and reliability (Goswami et al., 2022; Kong et al., 2019; Kruse & Sy, 2011; Whiteley et al., 2012). Although the implicit followership theory scale has proven reliability tests over multiple studies, I ran a reliability test to add to the literature, which furthered the robust testing of the instrument.

A few authors have criticized the implicit followership theory scale. For example, Tram-Quon (2013) argued that the IFT instrument measures explicit behaviors, not implicit beliefs. However, after conducting two separate association experiments as a different way to measure IFT, Tram-Quon demonstrated that the instrument had no validity in both studies. Similarly, Junker et al. (2016) criticized the implicit followership theory scale for measuring typical and not ideal traits. The authors developed a different instrument, but further testing is needed to show its validity and reliability. Despite these other measurement attempts, Sy's (2010) original instrument continues to be used for most IFT studies. Furthermore, a search of scholarly journals and dissertations in the ProQuest database yielded over 500 authors who have used or referenced the implicit followership theory scale.

Therefore, the implicit followership theory scale was the instrument of choice for the study because it is widely used for IFT research and has been extensively tested for validity and reliability.

The implicit followership theory scale contains 18 Likert-style questions. Sy (2010) categorized the instrument responses into six followership categories: industry, incompetence, conformity, enthusiasm, insubordination, and good citizen. The six categories of the scale are either IFT trait prototypes or antiprototypes. Industry, enthusiasm, and good citizen are positive follower prototypes, representing productive, enthusiastic, and reliable follower behaviors. Alternatively, incompetence, conformity, and insubordination are categorized as negative prototypes. Negative prototypes include follower behaviors of being rude, arrogant, and conforming easily. When completing the instrument, the implicit prototypes individuals select internal belief systems about the follower role, which influences workplace attitudes and relationships between leaders and followers (Guo, 2018). In the current study, I used the implicit followership scale to analyze four research questions.

Role Orientation Scale

Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2009) created a scale to measure IFT called coproduction orientation. The scholars presented the instrument concurrent to Sy's (2010) design of the implicit followership theory scale. Shortly after, Carsten et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study to research a different aspect of implicit beliefs by studying how followers' social environments influence their schemas. Later, Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) used the coproduction orientation scale to survey 206 employees. The researchers aimed to analyze the co-production of leadership and how individuals are influenced by their implicit beliefs of the follower role. The coproduction orientation scale (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2009) measures implicit beliefs with a 6-point Likert-style questionnaire, ranking respondents' views about the follower role relative to leaders. Carsten and Uhl-Bien identified reliability, construct validity, and predictive validity for the instrument. Carsten et al. (2018) used the coproduction orientation and created a secondary measure of follower role orientation, the passive orientation scale.

Carsten et al. combined both instruments to test follower role orientation. In their study, both orientation scales provided reliability and content validity evidence. Carsten et al. (2022) confirmed that the instrument measures follower role orientations with coproduction and passive factors.

The implicit followership theory scale and role orientation scales measure implicit beliefs from different angles. Compared to Sy's (2010) instrument, only a few studies have used the follower role orientation scale to test implicit beliefs. Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) used the coproduction orientation scale in their research. Both Carsten et al. (2018) and Carsten et al. (2022) applied the full nine-item instrument in their research studies. Mohamadzadeh et al. (2015) conducted phenomenological research based on Carsten et al.'s (2010) study. The researchers reported five prototype and antiprototype codes. Mohamadzadeh et al. aligned all the themes to both Sy's follower prototype and antiprototype traits and the role beliefs reported by Carsten et al. (2010). Gesang (2022) conducted a factor analysis to determine if the factors from the implicit followership scale correlated with the main themes identified in the qualitative study by Carsten et al. (2010). Although Gesang did not use the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018), the researcher reported a weak correlation between IFTs and role orientation. Overall, the role orientation scales require more testing. Therefore, I used both scales to measure follower role orientation in the current study. To answer RQ_2, I compared leader and follower responses on the coproduction and passive role orientation scale. For RQ_3 and RQ_4, I tested the correlation between the prototype and antiprototype factors on the implicit followership scale and the coproduction and passive factors on the coproduction and passive role orientation scale. The purpose of RQ_3 and RQ_4 was to further the literature on the two scales, as the implicit followership scale has never been connected to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale.

Participants and Sampling

Because the study involved comparing IFTs of leaders and followers, the ideal population would have been all leaders and followers in the United States and Canada. When surveying the target population is unrealistic, an accessible

population can be used to generalize results to the overall population (Gay et al., 2012). For the current research, I chose participants from several accessible groups in my network. The accessible population totaled approximately 1,200 individuals, but only 203 responded. Although the response rate was relatively low (17%), the sample size was large enough for the statistical tests required for the study. The population covered the United States and Canada from various industries: nonprofit, entertainment, hospitality, trades, finance, media and communications, healthcare, and education. The groups chosen for the accessible population provided varied opinions and perspectives from as many industries as possible. The sampling procedure was single-stage because I could access all individuals in the population directly (Creswell, 2014). All individuals in the population received the study questionnaire to gain as many perspectives and responses as possible (Fowler, 2009; Gay et al., 2012). Surveying the entire population also prevented sampling bias because the whole population was represented and could respond.

To ensure leaders and followers were separated, I added a demographic question in the survey requiring participants to choose if they were a leader or a follower. Then, during data analysis, I categorized the two groups for comparison. Research on team size reported that typical teams range from five to nine individuals to one leader (Rodríguez et al., 2012; B. M. Thompson et al., 2015). The actual response breakdown was 35% leaders and 65% followers. Individuals were divided into two roles (leader; follower) according to the following criteria:

- Leaders were direct supervisors of one or more individuals, and
- Followers were individuals in a position or on a team with an immediate supervisor.

Access and Confidentiality

Access to participants is essential in conducting research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants in the study acknowledged a consent form before completing the questionnaire. The consent form included details about the research purpose, confidentiality, anonymity, foreseen risks, and anticipated study benefits. Participants could opt out of the survey with no judgment or recourse. To avoid

cases of attrition, responses were required to all questions to complete the questionnaire. Ethical considerations in research ensure respect, justice, and confidentiality are present through data collection and reporting and remain for years after a study ends (Bloomberg, 2023). The data for the study will remain on a password-protected external device and be destroyed after 5 years. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the questionnaire was hosted on Google Forms, where anyone with the hyperlink could access the survey. Responses were recorded in a Google Sheet and assigned a number without any identifying association to the respondent. I recorded and saved Google Form and Google Sheet in a private account on a password-protected computer for security. Participants and their association to their responses will remain anonymous. The institutional review board at Southeastern University approved the research before the survey was sent (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Several variables were part of the data analysis of the study. The implicit followership scale measured LIFTs and FIFTs. The coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) measured leader and follower perspectives about follower role orientation. Demographic variables included group (United States; Canada) and role (leader; follower). Although the questionnaire included a question on gender, the variable was not used in the data analysis. The overall analysis focused on two constructs: IFT traits and orientation. The IFT traits comprised the 18 questions from the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010). The traits included two categories of IFT factors: IFT prototypes and IFT antiprototypes. I also categorized nine questions from the coproduction and passive role orientation scale as passive orientation and coproduction orientation and organized participants by role as either leaders or followers to compare responses.

Collected data were cleaned and processed through IBM's SPSS using specific tests appropriate for the study. A two-tailed *t* test of independent means was ideal for answering the first two research questions:

RQ_1: Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

RQ_2: Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was the appropriate test for the last two research questions:

RQ_3: To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?

RQ_4: To what degree do the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient helped predict relationships between variables for RQ_3 and RQ_4. I used simple linear regression to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT prototype and the coproduction orientation and the predictive relationship between the IFT antiprototype and the passive orientation. The correlation test results helped identify if there was a relationship between the IFT traits and orientations, with a statistical significance of $p < .05$. I used factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA) to determine if a statistical difference existed in the linear combinations of traits and orientations. Finally, a follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) helped determine the level of statistically significant differences in both IFT traits and orientations by group and role.

Limitations and Delimitations

Both external limitations and internal research delimitations must be discussed and identified before conducting research (Bloomberg, 2023). The study has several limitations and delimitations. One delimitation is that the research only focused on leaders and followers from an accessible population throughout Canada and the United States. Another delimitation is that the findings may be subject to cultural, ethnic, gender, age, and experience predispositions of the populations. A limitation of this study is that the research only focused on socio-cognitive responses and implicit theories. Using other followership theories to understand leader-follower could include other aspects, such as role-based or situational-based experiences or longitudinal changes over time (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Khan et al., 2019; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Although the implicit followership theory scale has

been widely used and tested, Tram-Quon (2013) argued that the instrument did not adequately measure implicit beliefs and feelings but rather assessed external behaviors. Likewise, the coproduction and passive role orientation scale also focuses on schemas of the follower role. Adding further quantitative and qualitative research techniques to the research problem will add immeasurable strength to the study findings.

Although both delimitations and limitations exist, the study addressed a research gap identified by numerous authors (Carsten et al., 2010; Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). The study also addressed other research gaps by being the first study to capture leader and follower responses to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The study is also the first study in which the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) was compared to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018).

Summary

The methodology for the research was a nonexperimental quantitative study. A quantitative design was ideal for examining the implicit beliefs of the follower role among leaders and followers in a single study. I used a survey method on two populations across Canada and United. Data sources were the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The instruments have validity and reliability and are used to test implicit beliefs in followership literature. The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms, and participants' identities were kept anonymous. Data analysis occurred through SPSS using various scientific tests. I used two-tailed *t* test of independent means to analyze RQ_1 and RQ_2 and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, simple linear regression, a factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA), and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to predict relationships between the instruments for RQ_3 and RQ_4. Several tables with detailed analysis information for the four research questions are provided in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 – Results or Findings

The need for formal research in the professional literature comparing the LIFT and FIFT perceptions in a single study was the rationale for conducting the current study. The research design for this study was a quantitative, nonexperimental research and the methodology was a survey research approach. The study included two standardized research instruments to elicit participant perceptions within the two constructs featured in the study: the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) to measure IFT and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) to measure follower role orientation. For reporting, factors from the implicit followership scale are called "IFT Traits" and categorized by overall value into IFT prototypes, and IFT antiprototypes (Sy, 2010). Factors from the coproduction and passive role orientation scale are identified as "orientation" and are listed as overall value, coproduction orientation, or passive orientation unless otherwise specified (Carsten et al., 2018). Four research questions were formally stated to address the study's purpose. The analysis of the data encompassed descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The following represents the reporting of findings achieved in the study.

Descriptive Statistical Findings

Descriptive Statistics: Demographic Information

I analyzed the study's demographic information using descriptive statistical techniques of frequencies (*n*) and percentages (*%*). Table 1 shows a summary of the findings for the demographic variables of study participant gender, group (United States; Canada), and role descriptor (leader: direct supervisor; follower: position/team member with a direct supervisor).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: Demographic Variables (Gender, Group, and Role)

Variable	*n*	%	Cumulative %
Gender			
Female	135	66.50	66.50
Male	67	33.00	99.51
Missing	1	0.49	100.00
Group			
United States	105	51.72	51.72
Canada	96	47.29	99.01
Missing	2	0.99	100.00
Role			
Leader	71	34.98	34.98
Follower	132	65.02	100.00
Missing (Follower)	0	0.00	100.00

Descriptive Statistics: Study Construct IFT Traits

The study included descriptive statistical techniques to assess the study's response set data within one of the study's two constructs: IFT traits and orientation. The study's survey response data were specifically addressed using the descriptive statistical techniques of frequencies (*n*), measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability (minimum/maximum; standard deviations), standard errors of the mean (SE_M), and data normality (skew; kurtosis). Table 2 shows a

summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with IFT traits and the overall value.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: IFT Traits and Overall Value

IFT trait	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
IFT overall	5.73	0.80	203	0.06	2.83	8.89	0.04	1.33
IFT prototypes	7.48	1.31	203	0.09	1.44	10.00	-0.66	1.35
IFT antiprototypes	3.98	1.43	203	0.10	1.00	8.89	0.41	0.01

Table 3 shows a summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with IFT Traits and overall value by group (United States; Canada).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: IFT Traits & Overall Value by Group (USA; Canada)

Group/IFT Trait	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
United States								
IFT overall	5.73	0.80	105	0.08	3.50	7.56	-0.28	0.11
IFT prototypes	7.70	1.35	105	0.13	4.11	10.00	-0.46	-0.36
IFT antiprototypes	3.77	1.45	105	0.14	1.00	7.56	0.36	-0.40
Canada								
IFT overall	5.73	0.81	96	0.08	2.83	8.89	0.38	2.52
IFT prototypes	7.24	1.24	96	0.13	1.44	9.67	-1.10	3.65
IFT antiprototypes	4.23	1.37	96	0.14	1.78	8.89	0.55	0.44

Table 4 shows a summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with IFT traits and overall value by role (leader; follower).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: IFT Traits & Overall Value by Role (Leader; Follower)

Role/IFT Trait	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
Leader								
IFT overall	5.61	0.85	71	0.10	3.72	8.89	0.85	1.93
IFT prototypes	7.31	1.19	71	0.14	4.56	10.00	-0.04	-0.69
IFT antiprototypes	3.92	1.57	71	0.19	1.56	8.89	0.73	0.32
Follower								
IFT overall	5.80	0.76	132	0.07	2.83	7.56	-0.50	1.37
IFT prototypes	7.57	1.37	132	0.12	1.44	10.00	-0.93	2.16
IFT antiprototypes	4.02	1.35	132	0.12	1.00	7.56	0.16	-0.31

Descriptive Statistics: Study Construct Role Orientation

The study included descriptive statistical techniques to assess the study's response set data within the study's two constructs: IFT traits and orientation. The study's survey response data were specifically addressed using the descriptive statistical techniques of frequencies (*n*), measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability (minimum/maximum; standard deviations), standard errors of the mean (SE_M), and data normality (skew; kurtosis). Table 5 shows a summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with orientation and the overall value.

Table 5

Descriptive Summary Table: Orientations and Overall Value

Orientation	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
Overall	3.62	0.63	203	0.04	1.22	5.44	-0.43	1.31
Coproduction	4.57	0.98	203	0.07	1.40	6.00	-0.59	0.06
Passive	2.44	1.02	203	0.07	1.00	5.00	0.53	-0.59

Table 6 displays a summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with orientation and overall value by group (United States; Canada).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: Orientations & Overall Value by Group (United States; Canada)

Group/Orientation	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
United States								
Overall	3.57	0.68	105	0.07	1.22	5.44	-0.51	1.46
Coproduction	4.53	1.08	105	0.11	1.40	6.00	-0.66	0.06
Passive	2.35	1.05	105	0.10	1.00	4.75	0.61	-0.55
Canada								
Overall	3.68	0.56	96	0.06	2.00	5.00	-0.09	0.15
Coproduction	4.58	0.87	96	0.09	2.60	6.00	-0.32	-0.54
Passive	2.54	0.99	96	0.10	1.00	5.00	0.47	-0.60

Table 7 shows a summary of the findings for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data associated with orientation and overall value by role (leader; follower).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics Summary Table: Role Orientations & Overall Value by Role (Leader; Follower)

Role/Orientation	*M*	*SD*	*n*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leader								
Overall	3.54	0.64	71	0.08	1.22	4.78	-0.71	1.37
Coproduction	4.57	1.00	71	0.12	1.40	6.00	-0.53	-0.16
Passive	2.24	1.05	71	0.12	1.00	5.00	0.76	-0.26
Follower								
Overall	3.67	0.62	132	0.05	1.44	5.44	-0.27	1.16
Coproduction	4.56	0.98	132	0.09	1.40	6.00	-0.62	0.18
Passive	2.55	0.98	132	0.09	1.00	5.00	0.46	-0.67

Inferential Statistical Findings

The study included the internal reliability of study participant responses to survey items represented on the study's research instrument for the IFT traits and orientations constructs using Cronbach's alpha (α). I used the conventions of interpretation for Cronbach's alpha proposed by George and Mallery (2020) to interpret the internal reliability achieved in each analysis.

Internal Reliability: IFT Traits

Cronbach's alpha (α) was productive for assessing the internal reliability of study participant responses to survey items represented on the study's research instrument for the IFT Traits construct. Table 8 displays a summary of the findings

for the internal reliability of study participant responses to the 18 survey items featured on the implicit followership theory scale (Sy, 2010) associated with the overall value for the construct of IFT traits.

Table 8

Internal Reliability Summary Table: Overall IFT

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
IFT	18	.87	.85	.89

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Table 9 contains a summary of the findings for the internal reliability of study participant responses to the implicit followership theory scale associated with the value for the construct of IFT Traits for participants from the United States.

Table 9

Internal Reliability Summary Table: IFT for USA Participants

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
IFT (United States)	18	.88	.86	.91

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Table 10 shows a summary of the findings for the internal reliability of study participant response to the implicit followership theory scale associated with the value for the construct of IFT traits for participants from Canada.

Table 10

Internal Reliability Summary Table: IFT for Canadian Participants

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
IFT (Canada)	18	.84	.80	.88

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Internal Reliability: Role Orientations

The study covered the internal reliability of study participant responses to survey items represented on the study's research instrument for the construct orientation using Cronbach's alpha (α). Table 11 displays a summary of the findings for the internal reliability of study participant responses to the nine survey items featured on the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) associated with the overall value for the construct of orientation.

Table 11

Internal Reliability Summary Table: Overall Orientations

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Orientations	9	.78	.74	.81

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Table 12 shows a summary of the findings for the internal reliability of study participant responses to the nine survey items featured on the research instrument associated with the overall value for the construct of orientations for United States participants.

Table 12

Internal Reliability Summary Table: Role Orientations for USA Participants

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Role orientations (United States)	9	.80	.75	.85

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Table 13 shows a summary of the findings for the internal reliability of study participant responses to the nine survey items featured on the research instrument associated with the overall value for the construct of orientations for Canadian participants.

Table 13

Internal Reliability Summary Table: Role Orientations for Canadian Participants

Scale	# of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Role orientations (Canada)	9	.75	.69	.81

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Findings by Research Question

Four research questions guided this study. The probability level of $p < .05$ represented the threshold value used in the study for findings achieved in the analyses of research questions to be considered statistically significant. The following is the reporting of the study's findings by research question stated in the study.

Findings: Research Question One

The first research question for the study was "Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?" The study included a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of IFT traits by study participant role, as Banda (2018) suggested. The statistic used to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances was Levene's *F.* The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 201) = 0.75, p = .39) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. As a result, the mean score difference of 0.19 favoring the follower role was not statistically significant ($t_{(201)}$ = 1.58; p = 12). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the follower role was small at d = .23. Table 14 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for overall IFT traits by study participant role.

Table 14

Summary Table: Overall Comparison of IFT Traits by Study Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
IFT Traits	5.61	0.85	71	5.80	0.76	132	1.58	.12	0.23

Note. N = 203. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 201. *d* represents Cohen's *d.*

IFT Traits Comparison by Country of Participant: United States. I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of IFT traits by United States study participant role (Banda, 2018). The statistic for assessing the assumption of homogeneity of variances was Levene's *F.* The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 103) = 0.13, p = .72) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The mean score difference was 0.44, indicating that the follower role

was statistically significant ($t_{(103)} = 2.82$; $p = 006$). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the follower role was medium at $d = .57$. Table 15 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for IFT Traits by United States study participant role.

Table 15

Summary Table: Comparison of IFT Traits by USA Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
IFT Traits	5.46	0.79	39	5.90	0.77	66	-2.82	.006**	0.57

Note. $N = 105$. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 103. *d* represents Cohen's *d.* **$p < .01$.

IFT Traits Comparison by Country of Participant: Canada. I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of IFT traits by Canadian study participant role (Banda, 2018). The statistics I used to assess he assumption of homogeneity of variances was Levene's *F.* The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 94) = 0.93, $p = .34$) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The mean score difference was 0.11, indicating that the leader role was not statistically significant ($t_{(94)} = 0.63$; $p = 53$). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the leader role was small at $d = .13$. Table 16 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for IFT traits by Canadian study participant role.

Table 16

Summary Table: Comparison of IFT Traits by Canadian Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
IFT traits	5.81	0.92	31	5.70	0.76	65	0.63	.53	0.13

Note. N = 96. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 94. *d* represents Cohen's *d.*

Findings: Research Question Two

The second research question for the study was "Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?" The study included a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of orientation by study participant role (Banda, 2018). I used Levene's *F* to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 201) = 0.13, p = .72) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. As a result, the mean score difference of 0.13 favoring the follower role was non-statistically significant ($t_{(204)}$ = 1.45; p = 15). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the Follower role was small at d = .21. Table 17 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for Orientation by study participant role.

Table 17

Summary Table: Overall Comparison of the Orientation by Study Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Orientation	3.54	0.64	71	3.67	0.62	132	1.45	.15	0.21

Note. N = 203. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 201. *d* represents Cohen's *d.*

Orientation Comparison by Country of Participant: United States. I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of orientation by study participant role in the United States (Banda, 2018). The statistic used to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances was Levene's *F.* The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 103) = 0.02, p = .89) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The mean score difference of 0.26 favoring the follower role was statistically significant at a borderline level of statistical significance ($t_{(103)} = 1.94$; p = 06). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the follower role was between small and medium at d = .39. Table 18 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for orientation by United States study participant role.

Table 18

Summary Table: Comparison of Orientation by United States Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Orientation	3.40	0.67	39	3.66	0.67	66	1.94	.06[t]	0.39

Note. N = 105. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 103. *d* represents Cohen's *d*. [t] $p < .10$.

Orientation Comparison by Country of Participant: Canada. I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score comparison of orientation by Canadian study participants' role (Banda, 2018). I used Levene's *F* to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The non-statistically significant Levene *F* value (F (1, 94) = 0.03, p = .86) in the analysis satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The mean score difference of 0.03 favoring the leader role was non-statistically significant ($t_{(94)}$ = 0.23; p = 82). The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the leader role was trivial at d = .05. Table 19 shows a summary of the findings for the statistical significance of mean score comparisons for orientation by Canadian study participant role.

Table 19

Summary Table: Comparison of Orientation by Canada Participant Role

	Leader			Follower					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Orientation	3.70	0.56	31	3.67	0.57	65	0.23	.82	0.05

Note. N = 96. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 94. *d* represents Cohen's *d.*

Findings: Research Question Three

The third research question for the study was "To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?" The study included the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the mathematical relationship (correlation) between the IFT trait prototype and the coproduction orientation. The results showed that the mathematical relationship between the IFT trait prototype and the coproduction orientation was non-statistically significant (r = .11; p = .12), reflecting a small associative effect. Table 20 shows a summary of the findings for evaluating the mathematical relationship between the IFT trait prototype and the coproduction orientation.

Table 20

Correlation Summary Table: IFT Trait Prototype and Coproduction Orientation

Combination	*r*	95% CI	*n*	*p*
Prototype: Coproduction	.11	[-.03, .24]	203	.12

Follow-up Predictive Analysis. I used a simple linear regression to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT trait prototype and the coproduction orientation. The predictive model was non-statistically significant ($F(1,201) = 2.42$, $p = .12$, $R^2 = .01$), indicating that the IFT trait prototype did not explain a statistically significant proportion of variation in the coproduction orientation. Because the overall model was not significant, I did not examine the individual predictors further. Table 21 shows a summary of the findings for the predictive model.

Table 21

Predictive Summary Table: IFT Trait Prototype and Coproduction Orientation

Model	*B*	*SE*	95% CI	β	*t*	*p*
(Intercept)	3.95	0.40	[3.17, 4.74]	0.00	9.90	< .001
Prototype: Coproduction	0.08	0.05	[-0.02, 0.19]	0.11	1.56	.12

Findings: Research Question Four

The fourth research question for the study was "To what degree do the anti-prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?" The study included the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the mathematical relationship between the IFT trait antiprototype and passive orientation. The results showed that the mathematical relationship (correlation) between the IFT trait antiprototype and passive orientation was statistically significant ($r = .23$; $p < .001$), reflecting a medium associative effect. Table 22 shows a summary of the findings for evaluating the mathematical relationship between the IFT trait antiprototype and passive orientation.

Table 22

Correlation Summary Table: IFT Antiprototype and Passive Orientation

Variables	*r*	95% CI	*n*	*p*
Antiprototype: Passive Orientation	.23	[.10, .36]	203	< .001

Follow-up Predictive Analysis. I used a simple linear regression to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT trait antiprototype and passive orientation. The predictive model was statistically significant (F (1,201) = 11.23, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .05$), indicating that 5.29% of the variance in the passive orientation could be explained by the IFT trait antiprototype. The IFT trait antiprototype was statistically significant in predicting the passive orientation ($B = 0.16$, $t_{(201)} = 3.35$, $p < .001$), indicating that, on average, a one-unit increase in the IFT trait antiprototype trait will increase the value of passive orientation by 0.16 units. Table 23 shows a summary of the findings for the IFT trait antiprototype predicting the passive orientation.

Table 23

Predictive Summary Table: IFT Antiprototype and Passive Orientation

Model	*B*	*SE*	95.00% CI	β	*t*	*p*
(Intercept)	1.79	0.21	[1.38, 2.20]	0.00	8.64	< .001
IFT Trait Antiprototype	0.16	0.05	[0.07, 0.26]	0.23	3.35	< .001

Follow-Up Analyses

Due to the statistical significance found among several factors, including group, role, IFT traits, and orientations, I conducted an ancillary and post hoc analysis to gain helpful insights into additional relationships among the data. The following section includes a discussion of the results from the follow-up analyses.

Follow-up Ancillary Analysis: 2 x 2 Factorial MANOVA

A factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA) was an instrumental test to evaluate the degree to which there were statistically significant differences in the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations between the levels of study participant group (United States; Canada) and role (leader; follower). The results showed that the interaction effect between participant group and role was statistically significant (F (2, 196) = 3.77, p = .03, η^2p = 0.04), indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations was significantly different between the factor level combinations of participant group and role. The main effect for the participant group was non-statistically significant (F (2, 196) = 1.44, p = .240, η^2p = 0.01), indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations was similar for each level of the participant group. The main effect for participant role was non-statistically significant (F (2, 196) = 1.67, p = .191, η^2p = 0.02), indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations was similar for each level of participant role. Table 24 shows a

summary of the findings for the follow-up factorial MANOVA analysis using participant group and role for effect upon IFT traits and orientations.

Table 24

Factorial MANOVA Summary Table: IFT Traits and Orientations by Group and Role

Variable	Pillai	*F*	*df*	Residual df	*p*	$\eta_p 2$
Group	0.01	1.44	2	196	.24	0.01
Role	0.02	1.67	2	196	.19	0.02
Group x Role	0.04	3.77	2	196	.03*	0.04

*$p < .05$

Follow-up Ancillary Analysis: MANOVA

One main focus of the study was to determine if a difference existed in implicit belief perspectives between leaders and followers, represented by both IFT traits and orientations. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was an appropriate tool to analyze IFT trait and orientation pairs (IFT prototype and coproduction orientation; IFT antiprototype and passive orientation) by participant role (leader; follower). The following outlines the analysis for both areas.

IFT Prototype and Coproduction Orientation by Role. The main effect for the participant role (leader; follower) was non-statistically significant (F (2, 200) = 0.95, p = .39, $\eta^2 p$ = 0.01), indicating that the linear combination of IFT prototype and coproduction orientation was similar for each level of study participant role (leader; follower). Table 25 shows a summary of the findings for the follow-up MANOVA analysis using IFT prototype and coproduction orientation pair for effect upon participant roles.

Table 25

MANOVA Summary Table: IFT Prototype/Coproduction Orientation by Role

Variable	Pillai	*F*	*df*	Residual df	*p*	$\eta_p 2$
Role	0.01	0.95	2	200	.39	0.01

IFT Antiprototype and Passive Orientation by Role. The main effect for participant role (leader; follower) was non-statistically significant (F (2, 200) = 2.27, p = .11, $\eta^2 p$ = 0.02), suggesting the linear combination of IFT antiprototype and passive orientation was similar for each level of study participant role (leader; Follower). Table 26 shows a summary of the findings for the follow-up MANOVA analysis using IFT antiprototype and passive orientation pair for effect upon participant roles.

Table 26

MANOVA Summary Table: IFT Antiprototype/Passive Orientation by Role

Variable	Pillai	*F*	*df*	Residual df	*p*	$\eta_p 2$
Role	0.02	2.27	2	200	.11	0.02

Post hoc Analyses: IFT Traits

A follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) was effective in determining the degree to which there were statistically significant differences in IFT traits by group and role. The results showed that the finding was statistically significant (F (3, 197) = 2.67, p = .049), indicating there were significant differences in IFT traits among the levels of participant group and role (Table 27). The interaction effect between the participant group and the role was statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 5.50, p = .02, $\eta^2 p$ = 0.03), indicating there were significant differences for IFT traits for each factor level combination of participant group and the role interaction term. The main effect for the participant group was non-statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 0.40, p = .53), indicating there were non-statistically significant differences

for IFT traits by participant group levels. The main effect for participant role was non-statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 1.95, p = .16), indicating there were non-statistically significant differences for IFT traits by participant role levels. The means and standard deviations of the follow-up ANOVA analysis are summarized and presented in Table 28.

Table 27

ANOVA Summary Table: Effects of Group and Role Upon IFT Traits

Model	*SS*	*df*	*F*	*p*	η_p^2
Group	0.25	1	0.40	.53	0.00
Role	1.23	1	1.95	.16	0.01
Group x Role	3.45	1	5.50	.02*	0.03
Residuals	123.67	197			

*$p < .05$

Table 28

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size for IFT Traits by Group and Role

Group/Role	*M*	*SD*	*n*
United States: Leader	5.46	0.79	39
Canada: Leader	5.81	0.92	31
United States: Follower	5.90	0.77	66
Canada: Follower	5.70	0.76	65

Post hoc Analyses: Orientations. A follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) was instrumental in determining the degree to which there were

statistically significant differences in orientations by group and role. The results showed that the finding was non-statistically significant (F (3, 197) = 2.00, p = .12), indicating that the differences in orientations among the levels of participant group and role were similar (Table 29). The interaction effect between participant group and role was non-statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 2.49, p = .12, η^2p = 0.01), indicating that the differences for orientations were similar for each factor level combination of participant group and role. The main effect for the participant group was non-statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 2.60, p = .11), indicating there were non-statistically significant differences for orientations by participant group levels. The main effect for participant role was non-statistically significant (F (1, 197) = 1.61, p = .21), indicating there were non-statistically significant differences for orientations by participant role levels. The means and standard deviations of the follow-up ANOVA analysis are summarized and presented in Table 30.

Table 29

ANOVA Summary Table: Effects of Group and Role Upon the Orientations

Term	*SS*	*df*	*F*	*p*	η_p^2
Group	1.02	1	2.60	.11	0.01
Role	0.63	1	1.61	.21	0.01
Group x Role	0.97	1	2.49	.12	0.01
Residuals	76.91	197			

Table 30

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size for the Orientations by Group and Role

Group/Role	*M*	*SD*	*n*
United States: Leader	3.40	0.67	39
Canada: Leader	3.70	0.56	31
United States: Follower	3.66	0.67	66
Canada: Follower	3.67	0.57	65

Summary

The source of data for this quantitative, nonexperimental research design study was a survey tool, which yielded 203 responses. I used descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to analyze study data. The study included two standardized research instruments to elicit participant perceptions within the two constructs featured in the study: the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Descriptive findings included demographic variables of the study by participant gender, group (United States; Canada), and role descriptor (leader; follower). I used descriptive statistical techniques to assess the response data set within the study's two constructs: IFT traits and orientation. The analysis included summaries of prototype and antiprototype IFT traits and coproduction and passive orientations by group and role.

Cronbach's alpha (α) was an effective test for the internal reliability of the overall instrument and according to the group (United States; Canada). Overall, the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) had higher internal reliability than the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). For both instruments, United States participants' responses had more internal reliability than responses from Canadian participants.

The analysis resulted in findings for each of the four research questions. The probability level of $p < .05$ represented the threshold value used in the study for findings achieved in the analyses of research questions to be considered statistically significant. A two-tailed *t* test of independent means was an appropriate test to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score for both IFT traits and orientation instruments. For RQ_1, comparing IFT traits by role and group showed that the results were not statistically significant. Similarly, comparing orientation by role and group for RQ_2 produced non-statistically significant results for role and Canadian participants. For United States participants, however, the mean score difference favoring the follower role was statistically significant at a borderline level of statistical significance, and the magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the follower role was between small and medium.

For RQ_3, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was a helpful test to assess the mathematical relationship (correlation) between the prototype IFT trait and the coproduction orientation. To evaluate a predictive relationship, I used a simple linear regression, which revealed a small associative effect, reflecting a non-statistical relationship between the two categories. I ran the same tests for RQ_4 to assess the mathematical relationship between the antiprototype IFT trait and passive orientation. The predictive model was statistically significant; therefore, the antiprototype IFT trait was statistically significant in predicting the passive orientation. Though the prototype IFT trait and the coproduction orientation have no statistical relationship, responses to the antiprototype IFT trait and passive orientation do have a predictive relationship.

The factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA) was an effective tool to evaluate the degree to which there were statistically significant

differences in the linear combination of IFT traits and orientation between group and role. The analysis indicated that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientation significantly differed between the factor level combinations of participant group and role. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests of IFT trait and orientation pairs (IFT prototype and coproduction orientation; IFT antiprototype and passive orientation) by participant role (leader; follower) revealed no statistically significant differences. A follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences in IFT traits among the levels of participant group and role but not for levels of group and role orientation.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Followership reverses the lens of leadership literature by uncovering the role of the follower (Shamir, 1995). Many aspects of followership have been examined in the last few decades, including the implicit followership theory (IFT), or the study of the subconscious belief systems of the follower. The purpose of the study was twofold. First, to answer the research gap of investigating IFT of leaders and followers in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Second, to compare two instruments commonly used in IFT literature by correlating the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). I used descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to analyze study data and answer the four research questions. This chapter contains a discussion of the research findings by research question, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Descriptive Findings

This quantitative, nonexperimental research design study included a survey tool with data from 203 responses. I collected survey data from an extensive network of my personal connections. Participants were from various industries across Canada and the United States. Of the 1,200 individuals in the population, 203 (17%) responded. The study's demographic information was organized into the demographic variables of participant gender, group (United States; Canada), and role descriptor (leader: direct supervisor; follower: position/team member with a direct supervisor). Among the 203 participants, 135 were female (66%), 67 were male (33%), and one chose not to answer. Of the respondents, 105 were from the United States (51%), 96 were from Canada (47%), and two responses were missing a nationality (1%). The participants included 71 leaders (35%) and 132 followers (65%). I analyzed the study's demographic information using descriptive statistical techniques.

Two standardized research instruments were used to elicit participant perceptions within the two constructs featured in the study: the implicit followership Scale (Sy, 2010) and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The scales provided the study's two constructs: IFT traits and orientation. I tested internal reliability on the overall instrument and according to the group (United States; Canada). Overall, the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) had higher internal reliability than the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Both instruments have sufficient reliability scores, as demonstrated in the literature. However, because the study encompassed comparing the instruments, I conducted an internal reliability test. An internal reliability test furthered the literature on reliability for the implicit followership scale and the coproduction and passive role orientation scale. For the instruments, responses from United States participants had more internal reliability than those from Canadian participants. Because the nature of the study included pre-created instruments with Likert-style questions, respondents had no opportunity to offer qualitative responses. Therefore, no statistical data can verify why the group responses differed by nationality.

Findings by Research Questions

The following four research questions were answered through the findings:

RQ_1: Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT Traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

RQ_2: Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?

RQ_3: To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?

RQ_4: To what degree do the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?

I used descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to analyze study data. Descriptive findings included demographic variables of the study by participant gender, group (United States; Canada), and role descriptor (leader; follower). I used statistical techniques to assess the study's response set data within the study's two

constructs: IFT traits and orientation. The analysis included summaries of prototype and antiprototype IFT traits and coproduction and passive orientation by group and role.

Research Question One

Sy (2010) developed IFT as a response to reverse the lens of the implicit leadership theory. The aim of this theory is to identify the perceptions individuals hold about the role of the follower. Since the inception of IFT, many scholars have studied the theory's leader (LIFT) and follower (FIFT) aspects. Although some experts surveyed both leaders and followers to gather data, one research gap remained. One purpose of this study was to answer a research gap in the literature by comparing LIFT and FIFT in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). The first research question was "Will there be a statistically significant difference in IFT traits between study participants identified as leaders and followers?" To gather data for the question, study participants answered Sy's instrument, the implicit followership scale, containing 18 Likert-style questions using a 10-point rating scale (1 = *not at all characteristic* to 10 = *extremely characteristic*). According to Sy's research, the responses fall into IFT prototype or antiprototype traits. Therefore, the analysis in the study included summaries of prototype and antiprototype IFT traits according to group and role.

To answer the first research question, I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means. Overall, there was a non-statistically significant difference between LIFTs and FIFTs among leaders and followers. A follow-up test by group (United States; Canada), however, yielded additional insights. For United States leaders and followers, the mean score difference of 0.44 favoring the follower role was statistically significant with a medium effect ($d = .57$). In contrast, for Canadian leaders and followers, the mean score difference of 0.11 favoring the leader role was non-statistically significant with a small effect ($d = .13$). Despite the group IFT differences among United States participants, the $H1_0$ was satisfied for

RQ_1, that there were no significant differences between leaders' LIFTs and followers' FIFTs.

Research Question Two

From the role theory perspective, experts examine how social constructs influence the followers' role perception and how the follower interacts with a leader (Carsten et al., 2014). Although initially intended to measure IFT (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2009), Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) demonstrated that the critical difference between their research and Sy's (2010) was that they focus on follower role orientation rather than follower traits. Since 2010, Carsten and colleagues (Carsten et al., 2022; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2010, 2018) have developed and furthered the literature on follower role orientations. To measure follower role orientations, I used the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) in this study. Research question two answers Carsten and Uhl-Bien's (2012) research call to explore the role beliefs of leaders and followers in a study. The instrument has not been used to compare leader and follower responses in any known study. Therefore, RQ_2 answered the research gap. The second research question also adds to the literature on follower role orientations, as the instrument has only been used in a few published studies, and many are from the original instrument creators (Carsten et al., 2022; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2010, 2018).

The second research question for the study was "Will a statistically significant difference in role orientations exist between study participants identified as leaders and followers?" Like for RQ_1, I used a two-tailed *t* test of independent means for RQ_2. The test revealed that overall, there was a non-statistically significant difference in follower role orientations between leaders and followers. Similar to RQ_1, there was a different result with the group breakdown (United States; Canada). For United States leaders and followers, the mean score difference of 0.26 favoring the follower role was statistically significant at a borderline level of statistical significance between small and medium effect ($d = .39$). For Canadian leaders and followers, the mean score difference of 0.03 favoring the leader role was non-statistically significant with a trivial effect ($d = .05$). Although a difference

existed for United States participants, for the overall study results, the $H2_0$ was satisfied for RQ_2, that there were no significant differences between leader and follower role orientations.

Research Question Three

Understanding traits and role orientations is essential when researching IFT, as both search for the schemas surrounding the follower role (Gesang, 2022) and provide different perspectives on followers' implicit beliefs (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Research question three is an answer to a research gap. Gesang (2022) is the only scholar to compare IFT and role theory in the same study. No scholar to date has correlated IFT traits or prototypes from the implicit followership scale to the orientations from the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Therefore, the study included a correlation of the IFT prototype and antiprototype traits from the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) to the coproduction and passive role orientation factors from the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018).

Research question three was, "To what degree do the prototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the coproduction orientation scale factors?" To answer RQ_3, I used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the mathematical relationship (correlation) between the IFT prototype and the coproduction orientation. The results showed a non-statistically significant relationship between the IFT prototype and the coproduction orientation. I conducted a simple linear regression as a follow-up test to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT prototype and the coproduction orientation. The predictive model was non-statistically significant, indicating that the IFT prototype did not predict coproduction orientation. Therefore, the $H3_0$ was satisfied for RQ_3, that there was no significant correlation between prototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the coproduction orientation scale factors.

Research Question Four

For RQ_4, I took a similar perspective, except this time I looked at IFT antiprototype traits to passive role orientation. Research question four was, "To what degree do the antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale correlate with the passive orientation scale factors?" The study included the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the mathematical relationship between the IFT Antiprototype and the passive orientation. Compared to RQ_3, the results for the question showed a statistically significant mathematical relationship (correlation) between the IFT Antiprototype and the passive orientation with a medium associative effect. I used simple linear regression to evaluate the predictive relationship between the IFT antiprototype trait and the passive orientation. The predictive model was statistically significant, indicating that 5.29% of the variance in the passive orientation could be explained by the IFT antiprototype trait. Therefore, the IFT Antiprototype trait was statistically significant in predicting the passive orientation. On average, a one-unit increase in the IFT antiprototype trait will increase the value of the passive orientation by 0.16 units. Therefore, the H4a was satisfied for RQ_4, indicating a significant correlation between antiprototype factors of the implicit followership scale and the passive orientation scale factors.

Follow-up Analysis and Predictive Tests

Although not originally part of the study hypotheses, a factorial multivariate analysis of variance (2 x 2 MANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the degree to which there were statistically significant differences in the linear combination of IFT traits and the role orientations between the levels of study participant group (United States; Canada) and role (leader; follower). The results showed that the interaction effect between the participant group and role was statistically significant, indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and the orientations significantly differed between the factor level combinations of the participant group and role. The main effect for the participant group was non-statistically significant, indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations was similar for each level of the participant group. The main effect for the participant role was non-statistically significant, indicating that the linear combination of IFT traits and orientations was similar for each level of the participant role. Because identifying if

leaders and followers held different implicit beliefs about the follower role was a cornerstone aim of this study, I used multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to investigate the relationship between IFT traits and orientations by participant role. Specifically, the MANOVA test aimed to determine if differences existed among IFT trait and orientation pairs (IFT prototype and coproduction orientation; IFT antiprototype and passive orientation) by role (leader; follower). The MANOVA tests showed no statistically significant differences between the IFT trait and orientation pairs and role.

I conducted a follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the degree to which there were statistically significant differences in IFT traits by group and role. The finding was statistically significant, indicating substantial differences in IFT traits among the levels of participant group and role. The interaction effect between the participant group and role was statistically significant, concluding there were significant differences for IFT traits for each factor level combination of participant group and role interaction term. The main effect for the participant group and role was non-statistically significant, indicating non-statistically significant differences for IFT traits by participant group or the participant role levels.

The study included a follow-up ANOVA to determine the degree to which there were statistically significant differences in the orientation by group and role. The finding was non-statistically significant, indicating that the differences in the orientations among the levels of participant group and role were similar. The interaction effect between the participant group and role was non-statistically significant, indicating that the differences in the orientations were similar for each factor level combination of participant group and role. The main effect for the participant group and the participant role was non-statistically significant, indicating non-statistically significant differences for the orientation by participant group and participant role levels. Although these tests were not part of the original study hypotheses, the results show valid findings for differences among nationality (group) and role (leader or follower).

Implications

The study yielded insightful results that can be applied to both theoretical and practical settings. The following section includes a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the research.

Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical implications are provided from the research and analysis. First, the research added to followership literature by producing a follower-centric study (Shamir, 2007). Examining both leaders and followers provided a holistic analysis of the leadership process (Kelley, 1988; Shamir, 1995). The study added to the IFT literature. First, this research consists of another IFT study that supports the IFT by providing a follower-centric analysis. Most importantly, the study addresses the research gap of comparing LIFTs and FIFTs among leaders and followers in a single study (Constanza, 2022; Coyle & Foti, 2021; Estorge, 2020; Goswami et al., 2022; Junker et al., 2016; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Klosterman, 2021; Lord et al., 2020; Veestraeten et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Few scholars have tested and used the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). The research adds to the literature on follower role orientation using the role orientation scales. Additionally, no scholar has compared leader and follower responses on the coproduction and passive role orientation scale. Carsten et al. (2018) stated that follower role orientation and IFT are different constructs; however, many scholars have reported that the two are more similar than different when measuring follower implicit beliefs. Furthermore, the theories and instruments have not been compared to date in a study to determine if there is a correlation or a predictive relationship. The research showed that IFT antiprototypes correlate to and predict the presence of passive role orientation beliefs. The results do not indicate that the two theories are the same; rather, the two may have similarities rather than differences and both constructs measure follower implicit beliefs.

Practical Implications

The study also has practical implications for individuals, teams, and organizations. Understanding the core theory of implicit beliefs provides practical implications for individuals. Followers who understand their own IFTs and role

orientations have a revelation of how their schemas impact their behavior in the workplace and towards peers and leaders. The awareness will also help followers as they progress into leadership with an appreciation of how their perceptions of the follower role may impact them as a leader. Offering schema training for employees will guide individuals to comprehend how their belief patterns impact their workplace behavior, with their teams, and with their leader.

The study results have practical implications for teams. Implicit beliefs about the follower role will differ for each team member. When conducting team building exercises or training, adding tutorials about follower role perceptions will offer additional insights to help team dynamics. By comprehending their implicit beliefs, team members will be equipped with the knowledge of where team behaviors and beliefs stem from. Team members will also better understand one another's expectations of others. When leaders and followers identify their implicit beliefs about the follower role, they will understand how the schemas influence their behavior toward each other (Goswami et al., 2022). Using the research for leader-follower dyads is imperative. Although the study showed no statistical differences between leader and follower IFTs and role orientations, differences may exist outside the sample and could affect the leader-follower relationship. Therefore, if leaders and their followers know their IFTs and role orientations, they will better understand their expectations of followers, their team members, or themselves. Once leaders and followers acknowledge one another's perceptions and expectations of how followers should behave, they can better manage their emotional and professional exchange and workplace expectations.

Researchers have identified positive organizational behaviors, including improved performance, communication, relationships, and job satisfaction, when leaders and followers know and understand their IFTs (Gifft, 2019; Junker et al., 2016). Schemas also influence workplace culture and social norms (Liden et al., 2015; Martin, 2019). Carsten (2017) recommended organizations adopt IFT training into leader and follower development programs so that individuals understand how their IFTs influence their behavior and interactions with others. Therefore, the study results are also practical at the organizational level.

Organizations of all sizes are advised to adopt implicit belief training to help their staff fully understand how their schemas influence the organization's climate and culture. Incorporating followership training into employee and leadership training programs is imperative to helping all employees understand and appreciate the role of the follower.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

The study had several limitations that can be turned into future research recommendations. Several limitations concern the sample. First, although the sample size ($N = 203$) was sufficient for the statistical tests, the response rate was low (17%). More participants would have made the study more robust for reporting statistical considerations; therefore, the results may not represent other leader-follower units or teams and are therefore, only generalizable to the sample. I selected the sample from my network and contacted the population primarily over social media and email. Social media algorithms and email inboxes could have hindered capturing the total population's attention. Another sample limitation was not having the capacity, resources, or contacts to consider leader-follower dyads. Although the study encompassed an evaluation of both follower and leader responses and perspectives, having dyads respond to the study questions would provide a sound analysis of the leaders and followers relative to one another.

Another sample limitation was the demographic variables of the sample. Though data on gender and role were gathered in this study, the data analysis did not include gender. The decision to omit the gender variable was made to keep the study focused on role differences rather than other demographic factors. A similar study considering other demographic information, such as culture, age, gender, industry, country of origin, and tenure, is recommended. Additionally, the participants were leaders and followers in Canada and the United States; therefore, the findings may be subject to cultural, ethnic, and experience predispositions. The data analysis included two nationality groups (United States; Canada), although no discussion included nationality as a key variable. Introducing nationality constructs, biases, and perspectives would give the nationality results more context and provide a more robust analysis. A recommendation is to follow Klosterman's

(2021) example and consider the GLOBE studies when studying IFTs from different countries. Additionally, after dividing the sample between the two nationalities, the sample size for each country became quite small. Although still large enough to satisfy the statistical tests used in the study, conducting a study on a homogenous nationality group would have provided more substantial conclusions. By focusing on only one culture or country, the sample would have been larger, more demographic variables could have been considered, and the analysis could have used structural equation modeling to provide more insight.

A second area of limitations relates to the instruments. Although the implicit followership theory scale has been used and tested in many studies, the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018) has been used in only a few studies. Using the follower role orientation scale in future studies would build more validity and reliability. Another instrument limitation was how accurate the questions were at gathering subconscious beliefs. Tram-Quon (2013) argued that survey-style instruments do not adequately measure implicit beliefs but rather identify external behaviors and traits. Considering other techniques, such as association, may help gather different aspects of schemas. Because the survey in this study only included questions from the two instruments, there was no option for qualitative responses that could expound on participants' beliefs about the follower role. Adding qualitative and mixed research techniques to the research problem will add immeasurable strength to any findings relating to the implicit beliefs of leaders and followers. Further investigation is necessary because the data analysis between IFT antiprototypes and passive role orientation showed a correlation and predictive assumption.

Other limitations surround the topic of implicit theories. The study focused on socio-cognitive responses based primarily on implicit theories. Incorporating other followership theories, such as situational-based experiences or longitudinal changes over time, would broaden the understanding of schemas and leader-follower relationships (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2010, 2018; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Khan et al., 2019; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Comparing other follower instruments, such as Kelley's (1992) followership questionnaire, with

either of the two instruments from the study would add more dimension to understanding how individuals perceive the follower role. Implicit beliefs have been linked to social neuroscience and cognition, and further developing the association would be fruitful (Bohl & van den Bos, 2012). For example, researchers could evaluate the correlation between implicit belief and social cognition theories, such as theory-theory, simulation theory, or theory of mind (Bohl & van den Bos, 2012). Exploring more of the similarities and differences between IFT and role orientation theories would clarify these theories, which are often grouped as one (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Summary

The purpose of the study was twofold. First, to answer research calls comparing leader and follower implicit beliefs in a single study. Specifically, to date, a study that involves comparing the responses of leaders and followers to the implicit followership scale in one single study is lacking. The overall results of this study showed no statistical difference between leader and follower responses to either the implicit followership scale or the role orientation scales. Upon closely examining the literature, most scholars consider IFT and follower role orientation as the same construct. Although both IFT and follower role orientations consider the follower's schemas and implicit beliefs, correlating the instruments and theories provided statistical backup to the argument by Carsten et al. (2018) that the two are different theories and do not measure the same thing. The overall results of this study showed that the IFT prototype traits do not correlate to or predict the presence of coproduction beliefs when leaders and followers consider the follower role. The results, however, showed a statistical significance that IFT antiprototypes correlate to and predict assumptions about passive follower orientations. The study was the first in which the IFTs of leaders and followers were reported in the same study and the implicit followership scale (Sy, 2010) was compared to the coproduction and passive role orientation scale (Carsten et al., 2018). Therefore, further research is necessary to validate and cross-reference the results.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE:	August 18, 2023
TO:	Candace Fast, Joshua Henson
FROM:	SEU IRB
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Exploring Implicit Belief Alignment in Leaders and Followers
FUNDING SOURCE:	NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	23 BE 11
APPROVAL PERIOD:	Approval Date: August 18, 2023 Expiration Date: August 17, 2024

Dear Investigator(s),

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled, Exploring Implicit Belief Alignment in Leaders and Followers. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol pending the following change:

Please add IRB contact information to the informed consent: irb@seu.edu

Any changes require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. If your study requires any changes, the proposed modifications will need to be submitted in the form of an amendment request to the IRB to include the following:

Description of proposed revisions;
If applicable, any new or revised materials;
If applicable, updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions

If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the IRB within 24 hours of the event or problem.

At present time, there is no need for further action on your part with the IRB.

This approval is issued under Southeastern University's Federal Wide Assurance 00006943 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the IRB's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Rustin Lloyd
Chair, Institutional Review Board
irb@seu.edu