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**Leadership in Workplace Meetings:
The Intersection of Leadership Styles and Follower Gender**

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Abstract

Meetings are ubiquitous across organizations, yet researchers have paid scant attention to the role of meeting leaders in affecting meeting outcomes. Because meetings are important discursive sites, the style of a meeting leader may influence subordinate views of the meeting and leader. Using a sample of working adults, we first demonstrated that meeting attendees who perceived their leader as participative viewed the leader as more warm, competent, and satisfying than meeting attendees who had a directive leader. We explain this finding through the framework of social exchange theory. In Study 2, we conducted an experiment to further probe the relation between meeting leader style and subordinate perceptions of the leader. Participants perceived participative leaders to be more warm, competent, and satisfying than directive leaders. Interestingly, working adults preferred participative leaders over directive leaders across every type of work meeting. We further found that participant gender interacted with leader style, such that men rated directive leaders as warmer than did women, but men and women did not differ in their assessments of participative leaders.

Keywords: Leadership, meetings, gender, warmth, competence

Leadership in Workplace Meetings: The Intersection of Leadership Styles and Follower Gender

Bringing together employees in a work organization can potentially be a great strength (Melton & Hartline, 2013). If a work team is guided in an effective manner, such sage advice indeed holds true. Under effective leadership, members of a team can utilize their unique perspectives to analyze information from different approaches, generate strong discussion, and produce high-quality decisions (Collins, Ross, & Ross, 1989). In contrast, there are other occasions in which employees come together with no clear purpose or structure and look back on such time as a waste (Leach, Rogelberg, Warr, & Burnfield, 2009). A key purpose of an organizational leader is to recognize what guidance is likely to be most effective in a given situation. One such situation is workplace meetings. The primary purpose of this paper is to determine what leadership style is most effective across a variety of workplace meeting types, from the perspective of meeting participants, as well as what participant-specific factors may influence their preferred leadership style.

For example, a common distinction among researchers is that leaders often decide to be more participative by seeking feedback and ideas from members or more directive by placing greater emphasis on providing clear directions and ensuring follower obedience (de Vries, Pathak, & Paquin, 2011). Leaders who adopt a directive or autocratic style may do so to elicit much needed organizational change that was hampered by previously existing bureaucracy (Bass & Bass, 2008). In contrast, there are some organizations in which the need for information sharing and collaboration is central to effective decisions. However, a given leader need not be constrained to one leadership style; different situations may call for different styles (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). The dominant perspective in the academic literature appears to be that many positive outcomes accompany the participative leadership style, as long as the work

environment is suitable for its use (Bass & Bass, 2008). Some of the many known benefits of participative leadership include greater perceptions of satisfaction and effectiveness (Collins, Ross, & Ross, 1989).

Regardless of a leader's style, one of the most ubiquitous constants in organizational life is the workplace meeting. Leach and colleagues (2009) have defined workplace meetings as prescheduled gatherings of at least three people who intend to discuss work-relevant topics. However, the characteristics of a work meeting, including its specific purpose, length, and number of attendees, can vary substantially (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015). Allen and colleagues (2015) suggested that approximately 25 million meetings take place every day in the United States alone. Over three-fourths of managers' time in large organizations is spent on activities related to meetings, such as engaging in preparation, leading a meeting, or developing post-meeting notes (Allen, Beck, Scott, & Rogelberg, 2014).

Within modern organizations, evidence of the importance of leadership may be especially abundant in the context of workplace meetings. In addition to interactions with a leader over the phone, face to face, or via email, the meeting context is often one of the occasions in which leadership style is on display to a wide range of subordinates. Indeed, there are many organizations in which leader-follower interactions are most salient in meeting settings (Allen et al., 2015). Thus, meetings research has increasingly been used as a "container" to study a wide variety of different phenomena.

A key point concerning meetings leaders is that such individuals are not necessarily leaders of the organization at large. For the purposes of this paper, no assumption of organizational leadership is necessary; the term *meeting leader* refers specifically to the individual designated as leader of a meeting group. Meeting leaders possess a responsibility for

designing and facilitating their meetings to be as effective in achieving their organization's goals as possible. Even relatively simple efforts, such as showing kindness, asking thoughtful questions, and seeking knowledge from others regarding an unfamiliar topic can help the meeting leader achieve desirable outcomes (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). Previous research also suggests that participation in decision making in meetings may have a positive impact on employee engagement (Yoerger, Crowe, & Allen, 2015). Furthermore, past studies have suggested the importance of impressions of meeting events and subsequent work attitudes and behaviors (Allen & Rogelberg, 2013).

The main purpose of the studies reported in this paper is to examine the effect of leadership style on subordinates' perceptions of their meeting leaders. We propose that meetings are primarily the sites in which subordinates and leaders interact in meaningful, face-to-face ways. As suggested by Wodak and colleagues (2011), meetings can offer a critical opportunity for discursive strategies to be utilized by leaders, but a variety of features, such as meeting leader characteristics, may influence how meeting attendees interpret such strategies. Given that many work meetings are poor in quality and in some way falling short of their objectives, which often leads to even more meetings being called, we believe there is strong reason to investigate meeting leader style that may improve the quality and effectiveness of meetings.

In the present series of studies, we build upon integrated cognitive and behavioral theories suggesting that subordinates consider leadership styles based on the degree to which the leader's behavior adheres to situation-specific prototypes or scripts of appropriate leadership behavior (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). This comparison between actual behavior and expected leader behavior can shape interpretations of events and experiences dominated by leaders (Lord & Maher, 1993). Specifically, we propose that meeting leadership style has a

meaningful impact on attendees' perceptions of their meeting leaders. For example, some styles of leadership may elicit helpful, challenging feedback whereas others may tend to stifle discussion. In addition to examining the relationship between leader style in meetings and subordinate perceptions of the meeting leader in terms of warmth and competence, we also examine how follower gender relates to their assessment of the meeting leader. In Study 1, we gathered a sample of working adults and examined perceived meeting leader warmth and competence with the meeting leader as a function of leader style in meetings. We discuss how research on norms of reciprocity operate within social exchange theory (Homans, 1961) helps explain the relationship between participative leadership and perceptions of warmth. In Study 2, we built upon our findings in Study 1 and developed an experiment to test the effects of meeting leader style on attendee perceptions of the leader.

Styles of Leadership

Leaders generally use a style of leadership that fits best with their personal characteristics, suits the nature of the work, and receives acceptance or support from others within the organization (Bass & Bass, 2008). The leadership style utilized may vary from situation to situation or change in a single setting over time. A key to successful, effective leadership is knowing what type of guidance a situation calls for and possessing the flexibility and skills to make changes as needed (Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims, 2013). In fact, having the ability to utilize a variety of leadership styles tends to be quite beneficial (Yukl, 1989; 2012). Although there are many leadership styles discussed in the academic literature, one of the most basic distinctions is the degree to which a leader includes subordinates in the decision-making process or excludes others to minimize disagreement and ensure quick decision making

(Lorinkova et al., 2013). Having been classified as either the participative or directive style of leadership, these two approaches will be further examined here.

Participative leadership involves viewing employees as critical informational resources who comprise the heart of an organization (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998). Participative leaders focus on interpersonal relationships and socializing (Bijlsma & van de Bunt, 2003), by, for example, eliciting thoughts and opinions from subordinates, allowing the pros and cons of different options to be discussed (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998), or by providing an opportunity for subordinates to explain their reasons for supporting or not supporting a particular course of action (e.g., Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010). Participative leadership is similar to empowering leadership (Hassan et al., 2013), in that both focus on trusting subordinates to make decisions and offer feedback. Benefits of participative leadership include enhanced job performance and mental well-being (e.g., Miao, Newman, & Huang, 2014). Additionally, participative leaders enable employees to contribute thoughts or concerns freely, which may improve the quality of decisions and acceptance of the decisions (Scully, Kirkpatrick, & Locke, 1995).

In contrast to participative leadership, directive leadership consists of a leader assuming the ultimate power and control over all decision making (Bass & Bass, 2008). The thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of subordinates are largely inconsequential. A directive leader feels no obligation to include subordinates in the process of making decisions and expects subordinates to do as instructed (De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015). Directive leaders utilize a variety of methods to maintain control over subordinates, such as rewarding, punishing, or intimidating others (Martin, Liao, & Campbell, 2013). Directive leadership ensures that employees have little task ambiguity and crystalizes the chain of command, which may potentially reduce communication difficulties by removing opportunities for them to occur (Cruz, Henningsen, &

Smith, 1999). However, subordinates lack autonomy and may be fearful or distrusting of the leader, which can harm job performance (Dwivedi, 1984). We propose that as these two leadership styles are manifested by meeting leaders, participants' evaluations of the leader and their meeting experience will be affected in a meaningful way. It is to these evaluations we now turn.

Leader Warmth and Competence

People make judgments of other individuals, groups, and cultures across two dimensions: warmth and competence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). An established stream of research indicates that warmth and competence are highly redundant with other two-dimensional representations of personality or trait judgments (see Cuddy et al., 2008 for a review). Descriptions of warmth include good-natured, trustworthy, friendly, and sincere, whereas competence includes capable, skillful, intelligent, and confident (Cuddy et al., 2008). Warmth and competence are not only theoretically redundant with other dimensions of personality judgments—they also present a parsimonious paradigm with which to examine a person's judgment of others. Research indicates that judgments of warmth and competence account for about 82% of the variance in people's perceptions of others (Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998), and some authors have found that people judge consumer brands, such as McDonald's and Tylenol, along the warmth and competence dimensions (Bennett & Hill, 2012).

The degree to which meeting attendees believe their meeting leader to be warm and competent may affect a variety of subordinate perceptions regarding meeting quality. In one of the few studies to examine leadership styles within the context of warmth and competence, Tjosvold (1984) examined leader actions that promote subordinates' motivation on future work tasks using the directive/participative paradigm. In this 2 (meeting leader directiveness: high or

low) x 2 (meeting leader warmth: high or low) experiment, a confederate acted as a manager and either gave detailed instructions to participants on how to complete a task or, in the non-directive condition, asked the participants to help generate ways to complete the task. The “warm” leader smiled frequently, spoke in a pleasant voice, and made eye contact when speaking with participants, whereas the “cold” leader avoided direct eye contact, maintained a serious expression, and spoke crisply. Interestingly, Tjosvold (1984) found that leader warmth and directiveness interacted on participant task performance, such that participants performed about the same in the cold condition regardless of leadership style, but that performance improved in the warm, directive condition and *decreased* in the warm, participative condition. Participants viewed warm leaders, regardless of style, as more approachable, helpful, and likely to be a friend outside of work.

The theoretical foundation for the expected relationship between participative leadership and perceptions of warmth is found in research on norms of reciprocity and social exchange theory (Homans, 1961). Social exchange theory addresses the nature of give-and-take relationships among individuals, including workplace employees (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Such an exchange can involve the transfer of either tangible or intangible resources. When expectations in give-and-take relationships are fulfilled, the relationship is reinforced, making a continuation of the relationship likely with all else being equal. When organizational leaders try beyond what they are required to do and provide an extra focus on involving employees in meeting dialogue, this behavior may serve as an indication of psychological safety and support for the employee. An employee who feels that such a work environment is in place may be more likely to associate positive characteristics with the leader, based on the indication

that an exchange relationship exists and that the leader's expected contribution is fulfilled (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Given the benefits associated with perceptions of leader warmth and other factors influenced by leadership style, further investigation is needed into the degree to which such behaviors affect perceptions of meeting quality, as well as the specific causal mechanisms responsible for this phenomenon. As previous research suggests, the impressions of leaders generally are focused on dimensions of warmth and competence (Chemers, 1997; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Once a preliminary examination of the influence of leadership styles and corresponding behaviors has been completed, research can then focus more narrowly on how leaders can most effectively utilize communication to reinforce the effectiveness of specific leadership styles. Because meetings are primarily a space where subordinates and leaders interact, meetings are an appropriate context to study subordinate ratings of leaders.

Building from existing literature on warmth and competence, we hypothesize that working adults who view their meeting leader as participative will rate that leader more highly in warmth and competence than respondents who believe their meeting leader is directive. Our expectation of a positive relationship between the participative leadership style and perceptions of leader warmth is in part guided by social exchange theory and norms of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). That is, participatory behaviors, such as spending time cultivating relationships by promoting the sharing of ideas, may elicit positive feelings toward the leader. In other words, we propose that attendees may perceive a participatory style as an indication that a leader is willing to be a party to an exchange relationship and provide rewards when appropriate.

Hypothesis 1a: Participative leadership will be positively related to perceptions of leader warmth.

Additionally, we expect a positive link between participative leadership in meetings and meeting leader competence, and this expectation is, in part, based on social exchange theory. As previously mentioned, perceptions of leaders tend to be influenced by the activation of relevant leader scripts or cognitive categories, and these schemas tend to be widely shared (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). When the gathering of ideas and listening to others is emphasized as an important skill in meetings that should be promoted by leaders, we believe meeting attendees who observe this skill being emphasized will perceive their leader as competent. That is, in the context of a meeting, we hypothesize that a participative style may be positively related to competence, as the specific skill of seeking feedback in a meeting context may constitute a demonstration of meeting leader competence.

Hypothesis 1b: Participative leadership will be positively related to perceptions of leader competence.

Leadership and Gender

In the last several years, social scientists, managers, consultants, and popular press authors have increasingly directed attention to the role of gender in all areas of leadership (e.g., Ko, Kotrba, & Roebuck, 2015). Although findings are mixed regarding whether female leaders substantially differ from male leaders in terms of leader behaviors (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003), a substantial body of evidence suggests that some leadership styles are more stereotypically masculine or feminine than others (Eagly et al., 2003). In this study, we focus on how subordinates of different genders interpret a meeting leader's style. For example, leader styles characterized by participative or communal aspects are typically viewed as more

feminine than leader styles typified by assertiveness and autocracy (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). However, leadership roles in general are viewed as more masculine than feminine (Eagly et al., 2003).

Role congruity theory (RCT), developed by Eagly (1987), has been used extensively to explain why leadership is generally associated with masculinity. According to RCT, people expect men and women to behave consistently with the stereotype associated with their gender (Eagly, 1987; Ko et al., 2015). Men are stereotyped per agentic characteristics, such as aggressiveness, decisiveness, independence, and self-confidence, which emphasize the male actor as a free-acting agent (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Women, on the other hand, are expected to be communal (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Communal behaviors include being kind, sympathetic, sensitive, and helpful (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

Role incongruity occurs when women are in leadership roles because individuals expect leaders to exemplify agentic, and therefore masculine, characteristics (Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995). Indeed, Koenig and colleagues (2011) found that men shared a greater number of stereotypical personality traits of successful leaders than women, and that people rate leaders as more agentic than communal. The ensuing conflict that arises between stereotypic female traits and the characteristics that people ascribe to leaders may explain why people often consider men are as more effective leaders than women (Ko et al., 2015).

However, researchers have identified many situational factors that may moderate the relation between leadership and masculinity. For instance, a particularly robust moderator is the masculinity or femininity of the organization or industry. Members of stereotypically masculine industries (e.g., construction, natural resources extraction, manufacturing, etc.) and organizations, or those largely comprised of men, tend to rate male leaders more highly than

female leaders, whereas the opposite is sometimes true of individuals in female-dominated organizations or industries (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Additionally, Smith (2012) found that that gender diversity of the workplace can influence the perceptions of male and female employees and leaders. Although women in male-dominated spaces are often at a disadvantage, men in female-dominated teams or workplaces are frequently at an advantage, meaning that men more quickly attain positive workplace outcomes and leadership positions.

Due to the general tendency for leadership to be viewed as more masculine than feminine (Eagley et al., 2003) and women's tendency to be in the out-group in terms of placement in leadership positions, women may tend to not rate leaders as being as high on warmth, competence, and participativeness. Such a finding would be consistent with the stereotype activation model (e.g., Devine, 1989). Essentially, the stereotype activation model refers to the increased accessibility of a series of attributes that are commonly associated with members of a particular social category (Wheeler & Petty, 2001). This model suggests that following an activation of stereotype information, a controlled processing stage can result in individuals choosing to either accept or disregard that information. Especially considering that female subordinates may tend to be treated a bit differently compared to their male counterparts, and previous research suggesting differences in perceptions of leadership styles (e.g. Linimon, Barron, & Falbo, 1984), we believe women may not rate leaders as highly on warmth and competence.

Hypothesis 2: Women, compared to men, will rate leaders lower on traits such as warmth and competence regardless of meeting leader style.

Based on norms of reciprocity and social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), we believe that leaders who engage in participative behavior will tend to be viewed as

helping build an environment in which people feel that efforts to share their thoughts and ideas are supported and that their contributions are valued and rewarded. Based on role congruity theory and previous research suggesting that participative leadership tends to be associated with femininity, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3: Participative meeting leaders will be rated more highly in warmth (a), competence (b), and femininity (c) than directive meeting leaders.

Furthermore, based on existing literature suggesting differences between the perceptions and cognitions of men and women regarding leadership, we propose that there will be a gender difference between ratings of participative and directive leaders on warmth, competence, masculinity, and femininity based on the leadership style demonstrated in the context of a workplace meeting. As suggested by Berscheid and Reis (1998), individuals tend to show favorability to those most like themselves; therefore, we expect that women will tend to rate directive leaders less favorably than participative leaders.

Hypothesis 4: Meeting leader style and participant gender will interact on ratings of warmth, such that men compared to women will rate directive leaders as warmer, but men and women will not differ in their ratings of participative leaders.

Given the extant literature on leader warmth, leader competence, and the interaction of gender and leadership, we endeavored to identify how leadership style in real-world meetings influences subordinate perceptions of the meeting leader (Study 1). Then, building from these results, we developed an experiment to further understanding of leadership style and leader warmth and competence in addition to participant gender (Study 2). We created a series of vignettes that described an ambiguously gendered workplace meeting leader conducting a meeting and asked participants to rate the leader in terms of warmth, competence, masculinity,

and femininity. Although, to our knowledge, no research exists that examines leadership or gender, or the combination of the two, in the context of a workplace meeting, we anticipate that findings within the broader gender and leadership literature will translate to the meeting context.

Study 1

In Study 1, we sought to examine the role of leadership style in participant ratings of their meeting leader's warmth and competence using a sample of working adults (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). Additionally, we investigate the extent to which women and men rate their meeting leaders differently in terms of leader style, warmth, and competence (Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants and Procedure

In exchange for course credit, students in an undergraduate psychology course recruited working adults to participate in the study through Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Participants were informed that the study examined workplace meetings. A total of 22 students sent invitations to potential participants, 125 of whom finished the survey. Thus, the final sample consisted of 125 well-educated adults (59% held a four-year degree) who ranged from 19 to 68 years old ($M = 38.72$, $SD = 13.03$). Men were 32% of the sample and 68% were women. Respondents worked in a variety of industries such as healthcare, education, and the military. Workers who supervised at least one employee comprised 48% of the sample.

Upon entering the survey, participants read the definition of a workplace meeting and were instructed to try to remember as much as possible about the last meeting they participated in at work within the last 7 days. Participants then provided information on various aspects about the meeting. Relevant to this study, participants were asked to recall how their meeting leader

behaved, who the meeting leader was, and then participants completed the measures described in the following section.

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the design, we implemented several procedures to mitigate concerns of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Adhering to the recommendations proposed by Podsakoff and colleagues (2003), which are aimed at reducing demand characteristics and evaluation apprehension, participants were assured that they would be provided with anonymity, and that their responses would not be considered right or wrong. We also followed recommendations suggested by Conway and Lance (2010), which include utilizing counterbalancing of measures and demonstrating adequate evidence of measure reliability. In an effort to mitigate concerns of item-context-induced mood states, priming effects, and biases related to the order of measures or individual items, all measures and items were counterbalanced via randomization. Furthermore, each item utilized simple and precise language, addressing one concept, as suggested by Tourangeau and colleagues (2000).

Measures

Leader style in meetings. Participants reported on the leadership style utilized by their meeting leader using a modified version of Arnold and colleagues' (2000) participative decision-making scale. The scale consists of six statements of leader behaviors (e.g., "Encouraged work group members to express ideas/suggestions"). Participants were asked to think of their meeting leader and rate how much they agree that their leader did each of the behaviors in the meeting using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).

Leader warmth. Leader warmth was measured using a modified version of a 12-item interpersonal warmth scale (Conn & Rieke, 1994). Participants thought of their meeting leader in meetings and indicated the extent to which each statement reflects their leader's behavior using a

5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all like my meeting leader*; 5 = *just like my meeting leader*).

Sample statements include “Knows how to comfort others” and “Takes time out for others.”

Leader competence. Leader competence was measured using a modified version of an 8-item competency measure (Hofstede, de Raad, & Goldberg, 1992). Participants read each statement and indicated the extent to which the behavior represents how their meeting leader behaves in meetings using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all like my meeting leader*; 5 = *just like my meeting leader*). Sample behaviors include, “Learns quickly” and “Excels in what they do.”

Results

The descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations, can be found in Table 1. Complete results are displayed in Table 2. Hypothesis 1a suggested that participative leadership would be positively related to perceptions of leader warmth. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this relationship. Gender ($\beta = -.08, p = .31$) and leadership style ($\beta = .52, p < .001$) were entered, resulting in a significant model which accounted for approximately 28% of the variance in leader warmth, $F(2, 119) = 6.16, p < .001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a was supported.

Hypothesis 1b proposed that participative leadership would be positively related to perceptions of leader competence. To test this relationship, a multiple regression analysis was also conducted, controlling for gender. Gender ($\beta = -.17, p = .01$) and leadership style ($\beta = .27, p = .002$) were included in the full model and explained 18% of the variance in leader competence, $F(2, 119) = 8.11, p = .001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1b was supported. Higher scores on the leadership style measure indicated participative leadership so the results indicated that participants believed participative meeting leaders to be more competent than directive leaders.

We used two *t*-tests to assess Hypothesis 2, which stated that men and women would differ in their ratings of their meeting leader's warmth and competence. Men ($M = 3.81$) compared to women ($M = 3.58$) rated their meeting leaders as warmer, $t(120) = 2.02$, $p = .04$, $d = 0.37$, and more competent ($M_{\text{men}} = 4.45$; $M_{\text{women}} = 4.12$), $t(120) = 2.49$, $p = .01$, $d = .45$. Therefore, results supported Hypothesis 2.

Study 1 Discussion

Using a broad sample of working adults in many industries and job levels, we found that meeting attendees who viewed their meeting leader as more participative than directive rated their meeting leader more highly on warmth and competence. Furthermore, we discovered that men viewed their meeting leaders as more participative, warm, and competent than women.

Study 2 Summary

In Study 2, we used an experimental vignette methodology to test Hypotheses 3a-c and 4. Hypotheses 3a-c proposed that participative leaders will be rated more highly on warmth (a), competence (b), and femininity (c) than directive leaders. Hypothesis 4 suggested that meeting leader style will interact with follower gender, such that men compared to women will rate directive leaders as warmer, but men and women will not differ in their ratings of participative leaders.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited through Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) service, an online panel of workers. Some studies indicate that users of the service are more representative and diverse than typical samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Landers & Behrend, 2015; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). The study was advertised as "a study on workplace

meetings” on MTurk. Respondents were compensated \$0.40 for completing the study. The full sample consisted of 331 adults who ranged in age from 19 to 66 years old ($M = 20.03$, $SD = 17.00$), and the sample was split evenly between men (49.8%) and women (50.2%). To ensure data quality, we embedded four validation questions throughout the study to ensure participants were reading items. Validation items were instructional in nature (e.g., “Select ‘agree’ for this question”). Participants who failed more than 50% of the validation items were flagged for removal, resulting in the identification of 23 individuals. Results were analyzed with the 23 participants who failed the validation checks removed as well as when those participants were included. Conclusions remained constant across the sets of analyses so the analyses we report herein exclude the 23 participants who failed to meet the quality control threshold.

We utilized a 2 (leadership style: directive or participative) x 3 (meeting type: decision-making, information sharing, or problem-solving) x 2 (participant sex: male or female) between-participants design. However, meeting type was excluded from analyses so there were four groups.

Participants were randomly assigned to read one of the six vignettes that described a meeting leader conducting a workplace meeting. Participants imagined that they had just left a meeting with their new boss and three other people. The boss, who is also the meeting leader, called the meeting for decision-making, information sharing, or problem-solving purposes. Then, in the meeting, the boss used a participative (e.g., asked for everyone’s opinion, listened to suggestions, etc.) or a directive (e.g., made decisions without asking for input, initiated a lot of structure, etc.) leadership style. Participants read the vignette and then completed a series of scales concerning their perceptions of the leader. The vignette appeared above each scale that pertained to the meeting scenario. The order in which participants completed measures was

randomized, as was the order of items within each measure. Vignettes are included in the appendix. To maintain the focus on the meeting leader's style, we purposefully did not specify to participants the gender of the meeting leader, which is similar to work conducted by Glickson, Cheshin, and van Kleef (2017) that examined the effects of participant gender on text-based communications writing by a gender-ambiguous sender.

Measures

Participants completed the same measures of leader warmth, leader competence, and leadership style as were utilized in Study 1. The leadership style scale was utilized as a manipulation check for the leader style manipulation. Further, to examine the meeting type manipulation, participants were asked to indicate the type of meeting described in the vignette as informational, recognition (bogus), decision making, or problem solving. The frame of reference for all measures was changed from the last meeting the participant attended to the meeting scenario described in the vignette.

Leader masculinity and femininity. In addition to the scales from Study 1, participants also indicated how masculine and feminine they perceived the meeting leader described in the vignette to be. Modern researchers have challenged the notion that masculinity and femininity are opposing ends of a gendered spectrum (e.g., Fagenson, 1990; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), but the scales developed to test this conceptualization of gendered traits, such as the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) do not lend themselves to the present study. The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence et al., 1973), for instance, requires respondents to rate themselves with respect to 24 statements, many of which are not applicable to the meeting described in this study (e.g., "Not able to devote self completely to others," "Never cries," and "Very home oriented"). To reduce measurement error due to guessing, as the vignettes

contain no relevant information to many items on the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, participants used two, 20-point sliding scales to indicate the extent to which they believed the meeting leader was masculine or feminine. Each scale contained 20 points because research indicates that people make finer distinctions on some gendered and stereotypic traits (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014).

Results

Manipulation Checks

An independent samples *t* test was performed to assess the efficacy of the leader style manipulation. Participants in the directive condition ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.09$) rated the fictional meeting leader as significantly less participative, and therefore more directive, than participants in the participative condition ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.65$), $t(300) = -22.78$, $p < .001$, $d = -2.63$.

Similarly, a 3 (experimental condition) x 4 (manipulation check item) chi-square test indicated that the meeting type experimental condition was significantly related to participants' perceptions of the meeting type, $\chi^2(6, N = 308) = 355.74$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis Testing

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and estimates of internal consistency for focal study variables are presented in Table 3. Because individuals may differentially prefer leader styles according to meeting type, we manipulated meeting type to serve as an independent variable. However, meeting type was not related to any outcome variable, exerted no main effects, and did not interact with participant gender, leader style, or both on any dependent variable. Given that meeting type did not affect the conclusions of the analyses, we excluded it from the hypothesis testing that follows.

We tested hypotheses using a multivariate analysis of variance, and an overview of these analyses is reported in Table 4. Hypotheses 3a through 3c stated that leader style would relate to participants' ratings of the leader, such that participative leaders would be rated more highly on all outcome variables aside from masculinity. Indeed, the multivariate main effect of leader style, Pillai's trace = .59, $F(4, 269) = 95.65, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .59$, was accompanied by significant univariate main effects on warmth, $F(1, 272) = 374.08, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .58$, competence, $F(1, 272) = 70.39, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$, perceptions of leader masculinity, $F(1, 272) = 46.08, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$, and perceptions of leader femininity, $F(1, 272) = 43.71, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$. Consistent with Hypotheses 3a through 3c, participative leaders were rated more highly than directive leaders on all measures aside from masculinity, on which directive leaders were more highly rated.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 proposed that leader style and participant gender would interact on ratings of leader warmth. The multivariate test of the interaction was significant, Pillai's trace = .07, $F(4, 269) = 5.04, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Testing of the univariate interaction indicated that leader style interacted with participant gender on ratings of leader warmth, $F(1, 272) = 8.60, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .03$ as hypothesized. Simple effects tests showed that men ($M = 2.50$), compared to women ($M = 2.09$), rated directive leaders higher in warmth, $F(1, 284) = 10.46, p = .001$, although men and women rated participative leaders similarly. The interaction is depicted in Figure 1.

Study 2 Summary

Building from the findings in Study 1, the results of this experiment indicated that respondents perceived participative meeting leaders to be more warm, competent, and satisfying than directive leaders. Additionally, as predicted by Role Congruity Theory, meeting leaders were rated as more masculine than feminine, which is consistent with the proposition that leadership in general is a male-typed role. However, participants believed the directive meeting leader was more masculine and less feminine than the participative meeting leader. To account for the gender differences discovered in Study 1, we used participant gender as a fixed factor in our analysis and found that gender interacted with meeting leader style on ratings of warmth, masculinity, and femininity. Specifically, we found that women rated only *directive* leaders significantly lower on warmth than did men, men viewed participative leaders as more masculine than did women, and women, compared to men, rated participative leaders as more feminine.

General Discussion

Across two studies, we demonstrated that leadership style in meetings significantly affected how meeting attendees viewed their leader, which may influence perceived leader effectiveness and employee motivation. For this reason, it is important that leaders put effort into understanding what approach to leadership they can use to produce the highest quality perceptions of meeting quality, adjusting as needed (Yukl, 1989). Not only did the results of the second study support the first study's findings, they also suggested that leaders in general are perceived as more masculine than feminine. At the same time, directive leaders tended to be perceived as more masculine than participative leaders. One key takeaway from these results is that meeting attendees make judgments of their meeting leaders based on the style that these leaders utilize, as well as their own gender, thereby bringing context and individual differences together to construct the reality of their work environment. Furthermore, such beliefs likely

influence these individuals' subsequent effort, engagement, and performance. These results also illustrate that there may be unforeseen effects of using a leadership style, and efforts may need to be taken to increase awareness of the impact of leadership styles, as well as to mitigate any negative outcomes that result. It is our hope that future research may attempt to connect these findings with other organization outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

One unique contribution of this study to the literature is its focus on meeting leadership style and how meeting attendees perceive different leadership styles, which is a topic that has been surprisingly understudied, despite the widespread prevalence of meetings (Luong & Rogelberg, 2005). Specifically, we sought to examine some of the perceptions that can result from either directive or participative styles of leadership in a meeting context, in terms of the perceptions of the meeting leader. The results of this study help build the foundation for future research that can more comprehensively investigate the impact of meeting leadership styles and other, more objective outcomes, such as employee performance.

Regarding meetings research, the specific results of this study may be considered along with other research suggesting the relationship between perceived leader warmth and enhanced motivation (Tjosvold, 1984). Together, this information suggests that the act of engaging in participative leadership in the meeting context may be a component of a social exchange relationship and norms of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In other words, perhaps a participative leadership style in meetings may be necessary for allowing the workplace to be perceived as an environment in which employees may feel free to voice their thoughts, ideas, and opinions.

Pertaining to leadership research, this study may shed some light on the findings of studies that have looked more closely at leadership approaches other than the participative and directive styles. Our findings in Study 2 demonstrate that a meeting leader's approach to leadership in meetings can influence how meeting attendees perceive the meeting leader, which can influence future interactions between attendees and meeting leaders. Our findings may also facilitate a greater understanding of how meeting leader perceptions are developed, based on individual characteristics, and this knowledge may be beneficial in efforts to more effectively manage attendee impressions. For example, the relation between high-quality leader-member exchange relationships and satisfaction has been investigated in previous studies (Vecchio & Gobdel, 1984). This study illustrates that gender perceptions may play a significant role in the formation of attributes of leaders and may impact a variety of subsequent outcomes.

One additional implication for meetings research may be that our findings seem to be generalizable across different meeting types. That is, no significant difference based on meeting type was found in either study. We had initially considered the idea that meeting leadership style would be less important in informational meetings than in decision-making meetings. This belief developed because of research by Leach and colleagues (2009), indicating different classifications of meetings. However, results did not provide any support that meeting attendees' perceptions of meeting leaders vary across meeting types.

Practical Implications

From a practitioner standpoint, the results of this study indicate that training meeting leaders to engage in participatory meeting leadership behaviors may yield more positive perceptions of the leader's warmth and competency. Additionally, utilizing participative meeting leadership has also been found to be related to other positive outcomes, such as employee

engagement (Yoerger et al., 2015). However, the first rule in this effort is to remember that efforts to elicit contributions from followers must be genuine (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). Thus, it is important that employees perceive the overall work environment as psychologically safe and secure in order for them to provide honest, constructive feedback. If such efforts are instead made with no intention to consider follower contributions, then detrimental consequences may follow (Stohl & Cheney, 2001).

These results also suggest that people hold implicit notions about the fundamental role of a meeting leader in most meeting contexts, which is to facilitate the collection and integration of information and decision-relevant thoughts from all meeting attendees. We manipulated leader style and meeting type, and, across decision-making, problem solving, or information sharing meetings, participants rated participative leaders as more warm and competent than directive leaders. Even when participants reported on their own meetings in Study 1, we found the same results. From a practitioner perspective, managers should try to hold meetings when attendees will be encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions on a given topic. There are numerous strategies that meeting leaders can employ to stimulate employee participation in even the most top-down meetings. Our findings indicate that leaders who fail to adapt their leadership style to the meeting context versus other work contexts can produce negative perceptions among meeting attendees. We propose that these negative perceptions arise, at least partially, because directive leadership is inherently incongruous with employees' conceptualization of how the typical work meeting should be conducted.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although we examined leadership style in meetings using two complementary methods, several limitations must be considered when interpreting these findings. First, Study 1 utilized a

cross-sectional design that generally precludes the formation of causal conclusions. Furthermore, the results of Study 1 should be interpreted with common method bias in mind. However, we attempted to mitigate the effect of common method bias by following recommendations by Conway and Lance (2010) and Podsakoff and colleagues (2003). When paired with the experimental manipulations in Study 2, the value of Study 1 is that we demonstrated that the association between leadership style and subordinate ratings of a meeting leader exists in work settings.

Future research into the role of leadership in workplace meetings should also consider the geographical and cultural context of the sample. The current samples are from the United States, and leadership principles do not apply equally across cultures (Bass, 1990). Furthermore, the degree to which participative leadership is preferred varies depending on cultural characteristics, with many Western European clusters showing a stronger preference for participative leadership than many Asian, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European cultures (Dickson et al., 2003). This cultural difference may be due to varying degrees of power distance between leaders and subordinates. Therefore, future research should examine the degree to which the associations between leadership styles in meetings and perceptions are stable across different cultures with varying levels of power distance.

Furthermore, despite the pairing of Study 1 and Study 2, each relied on participant self-report measures, which can be difficult to connect with meaningful outcomes in the workplace. Self-report techniques are appropriate in the two studies reported in this paper because interest centered on follower perceptions—in terms of warmth, competence, and gendered traits—with respect to the leader of a meeting. Now that this paper has explored some underlying psychological mechanisms of leadership in workplace meetings, future research could focus on

behavioral outcomes associated with leader style, such as the nature of follower-initiated behaviors in the presence of the meeting leader. For example, researchers could use a video coding program along with a behavioral coding scheme to code statements indicative of leader warmth and competence, as well as many other characteristics, and code subsequent interactions of meeting attendees. Such an approach would do much to allow causal inferences to be more readily made.

One limitation of the present series of studies is that, because interest centered on the interaction between leader style and follower gender, we deliberately did not ask for or manipulate meeting leader gender in either study. In Study 1, wherein participants reported on their own meeting leader's behavior, we did not ask participants to report their meeting leader's gender so as to limit the salience of that factor on participants' frames of reference used while responding. In Study 2, we focused on how leaders of different genders interpret the behavior of directive of participative leaders. Again, we did not wish for *leader* gender to contaminate our findings. Future research should seek ways to incorporate leader gender into similar studies to produce a more nuanced and rich understanding of the phenomena of interest.

Lastly, future research should endeavor to probe the gender effects we found in more depth and determine what implications these have, if any, on workplaces that have meetings. In Study 1, we found that women tended to rate their meeting leaders lower on warmth, competence, and participative behaviors than did men. Then, in Study 2, we found that these effects were more nuanced in that women rated only *directive* leaders significantly lower on warmth than did men. Finally, as we conceptualized masculinity and femininity as two distinct constructs, rather than opposing poles of a single spectrum, we found that men viewed participative leaders as more masculine than did women, whereas women rated participative

leaders as more feminine than did men. To extend these findings, additional research could examine if men and women have different outcomes of meetings based on the meeting leader's style. For example, are attendees more committed to action following the meeting if the leader's style aligns with the individual's gender-based preferred style?

Conclusion

This is the first paper, to our knowledge, that has explored the intersection of leadership style and workplace meetings. We found that, in an applied and a controlled experimental setting, subordinates believe participative meeting leaders are warmer and competent than directive meeting leaders. These preliminary findings persisted across organizational and meeting types, which indicates, at least retrospectively, that meeting attendees prefer participative leadership. Although this paper represents only an initial set of findings concerning leadership style and workplace meetings, this area is ripe for additional study given the increasing prevalence of meetings as a tool for collaboration in organizations.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study 1 Focal Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Age	38.72	13.03	-									
2. Gender	-	-	-.23*	-								
3. Education level	-	-	.14	-.04	-							
4. Hours worked	41.76	10.39	.19*	-.12	.20*	-						
5. Org. tenure	8.55	9.64	.65*	-.17	.11	.11	-					
6. Job level	-	-	.23*	-.27*	.15	.29*	.31*	-				
7. Meeting type	-	-	.17	-.04	.15	.21*	.18*	.29*	-			
8. Leader style	3.65	0.57	.03	-.19*	.16	.15	<.01	.06	.15	(.70)		
9. Warmth	3.57	0.67	-.03	-.18*	.17	.02	.01	.06	.11	.54*	(.89)	
10. Competence	4.09	0.76	.23*	-.22*	.10	.10	.18*	.25*	.10	.31*	.56*	(.92)

Note. $N = 120$. Diagonal values represent internal consistency estimates. For gender, 1 = male, 2 = female. For education level, 1 = some high school, 2 = graduated high school, 3 = some college but no degree, 4 = graduated college; 5 = some graduate work, 6 = graduate degree. For job level, 1 = employee associated level, 2 = supervisor level, 3 = manager level, 4 = director level, 5 = senior/top management level. Org tenure = organizational tenure. For leader style, higher scores indicate a more participative style. * $p < .05$.

Table 2

Regression Analyses Predicting Leader Warmth and Competence in Study 1

Variable	Warmth		Competence	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Controls</i>				
Gender	-.18*	-.08	-.22*	-.17
<i>Focal variable</i>				
Leader style		.52**		.27*
<i>F</i>	4.07*	24.99**	6.18*	8.11*
Adjusted R^2	.03	.30	.04	.11
ΔR^2		.27		.07

Note. Standardized regression coefficients are displayed. $N = 118$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study 2 Focal Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Age	37.01	12.17	-								
2. Gender			.08	-							
3. Education level			-.01	-.11	-						
4. Warmth	3.09	1.05	-.12*	-.11*	.04	(.96)					
5. Competence	3.71	.75	-.02	.03	.01	.59*	(.91)				
6. Leader femininity	6.71	5.00	-.05	.12*	.11*	.40*	.24*	-			
7. Leader masculinity	12.67	4.81	.09	-.05	.00	-.38*	-.08	-.43*	-		
8. Meeting type			.02	-.06	.07	-.03	.01	-.04	.05	-	
19. Leader style			-.02	-.04	.10	.73*	.43*	.35*	-.36*	-.01	-

Notes. $N = 326$. Diagonal values represent internal consistency estimates. For gender, 1 = male, 2 = female. For education level, 1 = some high school, 2 = graduated high school, 3 = some college but no degree, 4 = graduated college; 5 = some graduate work, 6 = graduate degree.. For meeting type, 1 = informational, 2 = training, 3 = recognition, 4 = routine issues, 5 = decision making, 6 = problem solving. For leader style, 1 = directive, 2 = participative. * $p < .05$.

Table 4

Overview of Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Leader Warmth, Leader Competence, Leader Masculinity, and Leader Femininity in Study 2

Source	Pillai's Trace	Multivariate <i>F</i>	η_p^2
Leader style	.59	95.65*	.59
Participant gender	.07	73.83*	.07
Leader style x participant gender	.07	5.04*	.07

Note. $N = 274$. For all tests, hypothesis degrees of freedom = 4 and error degrees of freedom = 269. * $p < .05$.

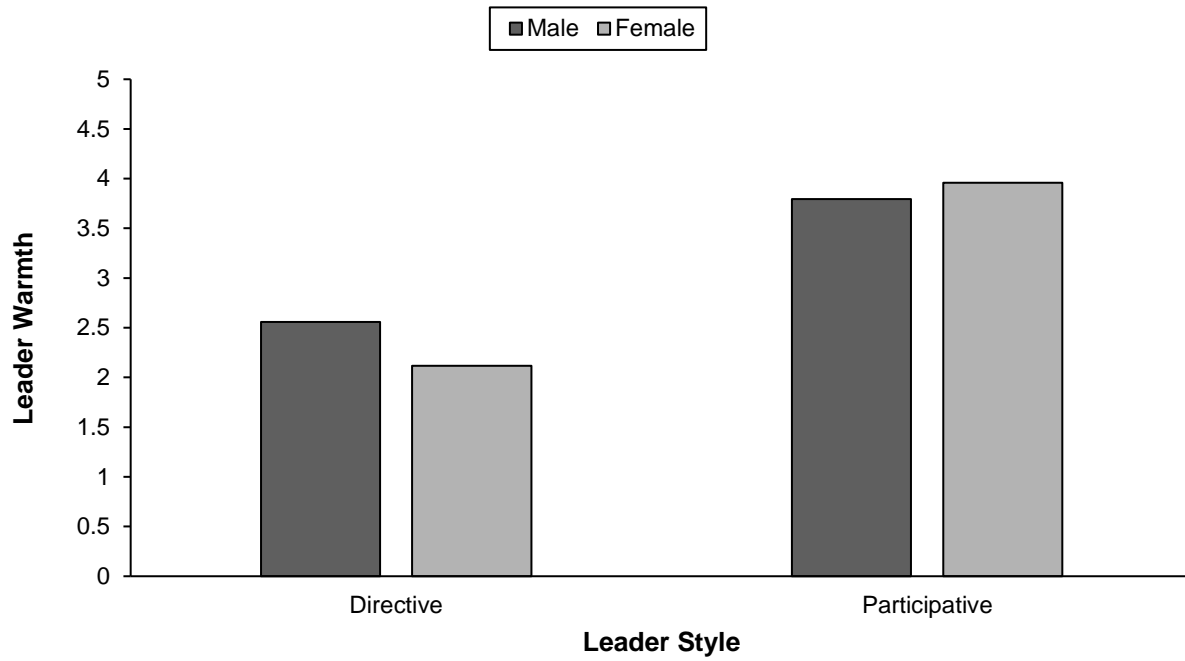


Figure 1. The interaction between leader style and participant gender on ratings of meeting leader warmth.

Appendix

Directive Leader

Imagine that it is 11 a.m., and you just left a meeting with your new boss and three other people. Your new boss, who was also the meeting leader, called the meeting for information-sharing purposes—everyone in the room gave an update about projects they're working on, but you did not meet in order to make a specific decision or to solve a particular problem. Your new boss has a directive approach to leadership and demonstrates this by imposing a structure on work tasks, telling everyone what and how to do specific tasks, and making decisions based on their own ideas without encouraging feedback. In the meeting, the boss selected who would speak and for how long and told each person exactly what to do next and when without seeking ideas from everyone in the meeting.

Participative Leader

Imagine that it is 11 a.m., and you just left a meeting with your new boss and three other people. Your new boss, who was also the meeting leader, called the meeting for information-sharing purposes—everyone in the room gave an update about projects they're working on, but you did not meet in order to make a specific decision or to solve a particular problem. Your new boss has a participative approach to leadership and demonstrates this by actively seeking suggestions and input from subordinates, truly listening to those suggestions, and incorporating everyone's feedback into final decisions. In the meeting, the boss encouraged everyone to share ideas and suggestions, listened to those suggestions, and used those suggestions and ideas in making decisions that affected you.

Note: We also manipulated meeting type—information sharing, problem solving, or decision-making—which resulted in six vignettes. Meeting type did not influence the results and was not related to any of the outcome variables of interest so those vignettes are omitted here.