

Chapter 5

Differential relations of leader expressiveness and leader preciseness with criteria.

Acknowledgement: Grateful acknowledgement is provided to Lisa van der Heijden for her help in collecting data.

Abstract

We propose a theoretical framework to explain why leader communication styles are related to leader criteria. We argue that leader expressiveness and preciseness may serve to help meet one of two fundamental needs: the need to belong or the need to reduce uncertainty respectively. We furthermore argue that the fulfillment of each of these needs is related to different criteria and that the two different pathways to leader criteria that we distinguished in Chapter 4 may be identified here as well. If this holds true, leader expressiveness has a different relation with leader criteria than leader preciseness. In a scenario study we manipulated leader expressiveness and leader preciseness. We found the expected difference in the direct and indirect relations of leader expressiveness and leader preciseness with leader outcomes.

Why are leader communication styles related to leader criteria? Several studies have revealed strong relations between leader communication styles and leader criteria (e.g., Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Bakker-Pieper & De Vries, in press; Penley & Hawkins, 1985; Sagie, 1996; Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2002). In this chapter, we propose a theoretical framework that may explain why leader communication styles and criteria are related and we report the results of a preliminary exploratory study. In previous studies (chapters 2, 3, and 4), we found evidence that leader expressiveness and leader preciseness are directly and indirectly related to various leader criteria. We will argue that expressiveness and preciseness may each serve to help fulfill a different basic human need. We will furthermore argue that ratings on a leader criterion may be specifically dependent on the level of fulfillment of one of those needs. We will then present the results of a scenario study that we conducted to investigate whether expressiveness and preciseness are indeed differentially related to specific leader outcomes.

A theoretical framework

We propose that two basic human needs underlie the relations between leader communication styles and leader criteria, i.e., the need to belong and the need to feel certain or reduce subjective uncertainty. The need to belong has long been identified as a fundamental human need (Ferguson, 1989). It motivates people to interact and bond (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which presumably provided humans with an evolutionary advantage, as people could depend on each other for survival by jointly fending off enemies and by sharing resources (DeWall & Bushman, 2011). The need "(...) to feel certain about their world and their place within it (...)" (Hogg & Grieve, 1999, p.81) is equally fundamental for people and presumably also provided humans with evolutionary advantages, as "[u]ncertainty reduction is an essential requirement for survival in complex and stochastic environments" (Inglis, 2000, p.1590). It enables people to determine their

own behavior and to predict other people's behavior (Berger, 1986; Hogg & Grieve, 1999; Olivares, 2010).

Although everyone differs in the extent to which they need to belong and to reduce uncertainty, both are basic needs that are to some degree present in all human beings. The satisfaction of these needs is generally assumed to lead not only to individual advantages, but also to social advantages, such as higher productivity and more effective deployment of resources (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Hogg & Grieve, 1999). In interpersonal relations, the behavior of each of the parties involved may contribute to satisfying the need to belong or the need to reduce uncertainty. In the leader-subordinate relationship, leader behavior will be relevant for subordinates in this respect; given the importance of communication for leadership, we suggest that leader communicative behaviors may be particularly relevant.

We furthermore propose that the level of fulfillment of a subordinate's need to belong and that of his/her need to reduce uncertainty are related to different leader criteria. Based on the literature, four broad leader criteria domains may be distinguished (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009; Hiller, DeChurch, Murase, & Doty, 2011): affect- or attitude-related, behavior-related, effectiveness- or performance-related, and cognition-related criteria. The attitude-related criteria pertain to evaluations of a person's psychological state; examples are liking, satisfaction, and commitment. The behavior-related criteria consist of actions of people, e.g., those undertaken by subordinates to the benefit (or detriment) of the organization, such as helping others, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), or leaving the organization. The effectiveness-related criteria include both the tangible, objectively measurable variables - such as sales volume or share price - and the formal or informal performance ratings - such as an annual appraisal or co-worker rating. Cognition-related criteria concern perceptions, such as perceived climate, perceived expertise, or level of confidence (Avolio et al., 2009; Hiller et al., 2011).

The level of fulfillment of subordinates' need to belong may be particularly important for attitude- and behavior-related criteria. For fulfilling the need to belong, the forming of social bonds and regular interacting is essential (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). If leaders demonstrate bonding behavior and easily interact with the people around them, subordinates presumably experience positive emotions, such as being more satisfied and liking their leader more. Studies showed that when people were excluded from social groups, they exhibited less prosocial behavior and more problematic behavior (DeWall & Bushman, 2011). Inclusive behavior by a leader may thus be associated with positive and constructive social behavior by their subordinates, such as sharing knowledge and OCB.

The level of fulfillment of subordinates' need for certainty may be particularly related to effectiveness- and cognition-related criteria. Arguably, leaders are an important source of information for subordinates. If subordinates are unsure about what their leader expects of them and what they can expect from him/her, they may not be convinced that

the leader is clear him/herself on what is required to reach the desired goal or even what the goal exactly is. Such unclarity and uncertainty may lead to less favorable leader related cognitions and presumably also to lower effectiveness ratings.

Differential relations based on the theoretical framework

In line with our theoretical framework, we expect that leader expressiveness and leader preciseness are differentially related to leader criteria. The communication style expressiveness pertains to talkativeness, conversational dominance, use of humor, and informality (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, Konings, & Schouten, in press). By communicating in a highly expressive way a leader may create an environment where subordinates feel included, by promoting interaction and bonding (Ferguson, 2010), which helps to meet the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). On the other hand, the communication style preciseness pertains to a tendency to communicate in a well-structured and thoughtful way, to be substantive and concise (De Vries et al., in press). By communicating in a highly precise way a leader may enhance subordinates' certainty on what to do and what to expect, thus helping to fulfill the need to reduce uncertainty.

In summary: we propose that leader expressiveness particularly helps to fulfil the fundamental human need to belong and that leader preciseness particularly helps to fulfil the fundamental human need to reduce uncertainty. Satisfaction of these needs has been associated with positive individual and social outcomes (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Hogg & Grieve, 1999). We argued that the level of fulfilment of the need to belong is more strongly related to attitude- and behavior-related criteria than to effectiveness- and cognition-related criteria, whereas for the level of fulfilment of the need to reduce uncertainty the opposite holds true. We therefore expect that leader expressiveness will be more strongly predictive of attitude- and behavior-related leader criteria than leader preciseness and that leader preciseness will be more strongly predictive of effectiveness- and cognition-related leader criteria than leader expressiveness.

The present study

We have described a theoretical framework that may explain the relations of leader expressiveness and preciseness with leader criteria. The present study serves to explore the described differences in the relations. All four criteria domains are represented: the effectiveness-related criteria by leader performance, the cognition-related criteria by perceived expertise, the behavior-related criteria by subordinate knowledge sharing and OCB, and last, the attitude-related criteria are represented by satisfaction with the leader, trust in the leader, liking, and affective organizational commitment. Our first expectation is that we will replicate earlier findings on the relationship of leader expressiveness and preciseness with leader outcomes. Our second and third hypotheses are based on our theoretical framework.

Hypothesis 1: Leader expressiveness and leader preciseness are positively related to the leader criteria.

Hypothesis 2: Leader expressiveness has a stronger relation with subordinate knowledge sharing, subordinate OCB, satisfaction with the leader, trust in the leader, liking, and subordinate affective organizational commitment than leader preciseness.

Hypothesis 3: Leader preciseness has a stronger relation with leader performance and perceived expertise than leader expressiveness.

In Chapter 4, we investigated direct and indirect relations of leader expressiveness, preciseness, and verbal aggressiveness with leader criteria through perceived expertise and liking. We furthermore distinguished two pathways to leader criteria; a cognitive and an affective one. We argued that ratings on perceived expertise and leader performance were more likely to be influenced by cognitions, whereas ratings on liking and satisfaction with the leader were more likely to be influenced by affect. This dual process approach may well fit within the theoretical framework that we propose in this paper to explain relations between communication styles and outcomes. In the literature, the findings on the impact of social rejection on emotions are mixed (Gere & MacDonald, 2010). Nevertheless, there is evidence that when belongingness is threatened or the need to belong is not met, cognitive processing is hampered and people are more strongly focused on assessing affect related constructs such as social connections, interpersonal relations, identifying emotions in others, etc. (Gere & MacDonald, 2010). Furthermore, bonding is associated with positive emotions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Affective information processing therefore seems more likely when people's need to belong is not adequately met. Conversely, uncertainty is considered to be a cognitive construct and in order to reduce it, cognitive processing of information is required (Bradac, 2001; Inglis, 2000; Neuliep & Grohskopf, 2000).

In the present study, the communication style verbal aggressiveness is not included, but we will re-investigate the direct and indirect relations of leader expressiveness and preciseness with the criteria. In our earlier study (Chapter 4) we hypothesized and found that perceived expertise was more strongly related to leader performance than to satisfaction with the leader, whereas for liking the opposite was true. In this study, we will re-investigate the relations of perceived expertise and liking with the leader criteria using a different design (i.e., a scenario study instead of a field study) and expect to replicate our earlier results. However, based on our theoretical framework, we expect that different pathways may underlie not only the direct, but also the indirect relations of each of the communication styles with outcomes. In summary, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived expertise is more strongly related to leader performance than to satisfaction with the leader, whereas for liking the opposite is true.

Hypothesis 5: Leader expressiveness is more strongly indirectly related to satisfaction with the leader through liking than through perceived expertise.

Hypothesis 6: Leader preciseness is more strongly indirectly related to leader performance through perceived expertise than through liking.

Method

Manipulation and procedure

We used a 2x2 scenario design in which we manipulated our independent variables: leader expressiveness and preciseness. In our online questionnaire, after a brief introduction and demographic items, a situation was described. Participants were instructed to read it calmly and carefully, as they would need the information to respond to the subsequent questions. After a general introduction of the situation (see Appendix 3), for each condition a different description of an imaginary leader's communication style followed. These descriptions were based on the items of the expressiveness and preciseness scales from the CSI (De Vries et al., in press). In the descriptions, each sub-construct (i.e., talkativeness, conversational dominance, humor, and informality for expressiveness, and structuredness, thoughtfulness, substantiveness, and conciseness for preciseness) was represented. The scenarios are presented in Appendix 3.

Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale how much they agreed or not with several statements, presuming the described leader was their real leader. The questionnaire consisted of 65 items, of which 50 were items from our criterion scales in randomized order, seven items were not used for this study, and eight were manipulation check items. We used an online questionnaire program (eXamine; Roelofsma, Bottema & Smeets, 2005) which offered the possibility to randomly make one of the scenarios available to a participant when he/she used the link to the questionnaire.

Participants

A community sample was obtained by various means (social contacts, e-mails, and subsequent snowballing). In total 138 people completed the questionnaire. For each participant, we visually checked the answer rows. One case was deleted from the file based on long rows (more than 20) of the same answer and one case was deleted as all manipulation check items had the same answer (whereas half of them were reverse coded). Of the 136 remaining respondents 38 (27.9%) were male, the average age was 31.53 years ($SD = 12.89$), with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 75. One hundred and sixteen respondents (85.3%) had finished or were studying a higher professional or university education and the rest a mid-level professional or general secondary education.

There were no significant differences in the gender composition or educational background between the groups.

The random distribution system of the questionnaire program allocated each scenario version the same number of times (i.e., 77 times, thus distributing the questionnaire 308 times). Of the potential participants, 201 people started answering the questionnaire and 138 (69%) fully completed it: 31 in the low/low condition (group 1), 27 in the high/high condition (group 4), 37 in the expressiveness high/preciseness low condition (group 2), and 43 in the expressiveness low/preciseness high condition (group 3). We calculated the chi square for the cell counts, which was not significant ($\chi^2 = 4.26$, $p = .24$), implying that the difference in number of participants for the four conditions was not significant.

Instruments

We used existing scales to measure our dependent variables. The words: "If this were my real supervisor:" preceded the items and the wording of the items were slightly adjusted to accommodate this change in format (see below for examples).

Leader performance: We used Hooijberg's (1996) five item performance scale as a basis for our five item scale. The items relate to leader success, performance targets, peer comparison, role model, and overall effectiveness. An example item is: "If this were my real supervisor, I would expect him to often fail to meet his targets" (reverse coded). The alpha reliability of this scale was .77 in this study.

Perceived expertise: We used all three items of the scale used by Podsakoff, Todor, and Schuler (1983) and added two, "If this were my real supervisor, I would consider him an expert" and "..., because of his expertise, I would consider him to be a source of information for others". The scale's alpha reliability was .92 in this study.

Knowledge sharing: We used the eight items employed by De Vries, Van den Hooff, and De Ridder (2006). In their study, the items loaded on two factors, one representing knowledge donating and the other knowledge collecting. However, we conducted a Principal Component Analysis and found one factor with eigenvalue >1, explaining 53.0% of the variance. The lowest factor loading was .63. As we were interested in all knowledge sharing behaviors of subordinates, the distinction between donating and collecting was deemed to be less relevant. The alpha reliability of the scale consisting of all items was .87. Overall, we felt comfortable in using the eight item scale as a representation of the construct of knowledge sharing. Example items are: "If this were my real supervisor, I would share information I had with him" and "... I would ask him if I needed certain knowledge".

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: We used the Dutch three item scale used by Tanghe, Van Knippenberg, and Van der Flier (2006). An example item is: "If this were my real supervisor, I would be prepared to work overtime in order to get the work done". The alpha reliability was .84 in this study.

Satisfaction with the leader: We used the four item scale of De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, and Oostenveld (2010). An example item is: “If this were my real supervisor, I would feel that there is quite a bit to improve in his leadership” (reverse coded). The alpha reliability of this scale was .84 in this study.

Trust in the leader: For measuring trust we used the 16 item trust scale from Spreitzer and Mishra (1999), which consists of four sub-constructs. In their study, the items of the four underlying dimensions loaded on one factor in a factor analysis. We conducted a Principal Components Analysis and found two factors with eigenvalues > 1 that explained 68.8% of the variance in the items. However, a forced one factor solution explained 58.3% of the variance, with the lowest factor loading being .54. The alpha reliability of the 16-item scale was .95 in this study, thus overall, we felt comfortable in using the trust scale derived from the one-factor solution. An example item is: “If this were my real supervisor, I would trust him to keep the promises that he makes”.

Liking: We used items from liking scales employed by Wayne and Ferris (1990) and Brown and Keeping (2005). Our scale consisted of four items, i.e., “If this were my real supervisor, I would like him”, “... I would get along well with him”, “... I would consider working together with him to be a pleasure”, and “... I would think that he could make a good friend”. The alpha reliability of the scale was .90 in this study.

Affective organizational commitment: We used the five item scale developed by Jak and Evers (2010) specifically for the Dutch language area. It is based on the frequently used scale by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). In this study, the alpha reliability was .84. An example item is: “If this were my real supervisor, I would feel emotionally attached to this organization”.

Manipulation check: We used two scales of four items each as our manipulation checks. The four items represented the four underlying constructs of the expressive and precise communication styles. In each scale, two items were reverse coded. An example manipulation check item for preciseness was: “He needs a lot of words to make his point” (reverse coded), and for expressiveness: “It is easy to have a conversation with him”. The alpha reliabilities were .95 for preciseness and .96 for expressiveness.

Results

First we checked whether our manipulation had been successful. We conducted a Oneway Analysis of Variance and found that there were significant differences between the groups for both manipulation check scales. For preciseness $F_{(3, 132)} = 193.38, p < .01$ and post-hoc Tukey tests revealed that the means in groups 3 ($M = 6.25, SD = 1.01$) and 4 ($M = 5.81, SD = 1.26$) were comparable to each other and significantly higher than those in groups 1 ($M = 1.85, SD = .95$) and 2 ($M = 2.07, SD = 1.02$), which were also comparable to each other. For expressiveness $F_{(3, 132)} = 295.85, p < .01$. The means of groups 2 ($M = 6.25,$

Table 5.1 Means and standard deviations of study criteria, F 's from ANOVA, correlations with predictors, z -values for difference of correlations, and R^2

	Preciseness ↓						Preciseness ↑						Pearson's r		R^2	
	Expr. ↓		Expr. ↑		Expr. ↓		Expr. ↑		Expr. ↓		Expr. ↑		Expr.	Prec.		z
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
perceived expertise	2.33 _a	1	3.17 _b	1.01	4.44 _c	.99	4.97 _c	1.02	44.45**	.13	.66**	-4.87**	.50**			
liking	2.40 _a	.97	4.43 _b	1.14	2.90 _a	1.01	4.69 _b	.92	38.38**	.68**	.03	5.91**	.46**			
leader performance	2.59 _a	.70	3.20 _b	.84	4.20 _c	.96	5.07 _d	1.05	44.01**	.18*	.64**	-4.24**	.50**			
satisfaction with leader	2.14 _a	.66	3.26 _b	.87	3.25 _b	1.08	4.94 _c	1.01	43.42**	.46**	.44**	.18	.49**			
trust in leader	2.75 _a	.91	3.69 _b	.95	4.30 _c	.79	4.85 _c	.94	30.77**	.23**	.55**	-2.83**	.41**			
knowledge sharing	3.30 _a	1.03	4.44 _{bc}	.81	3.91 _b	.93	4.68 _c	.91	13.43**	.43**	.14	2.34*	.23**			
aff. org. commitment	3.00 _a	.81	3.91 _b	.98	2.87 _a	.84	3.82 _b	1.12	11.80**	.46**	-.13	4.73**	.21**			
OCB	3.12 _a	1.05	4.06 _b	1.08	3.64 _{ab}	1.09	4.04 _b	1.12	5.20**	.28**	.07	1.64 [†]	.09**			

Note. For prec. ↓/expr. ↓ $N = 31$, for prec. ↓/expr. ↑ $N = 36$, for prec. ↑/expr. ↓ $N = 43$, for prec. ↑/expr. ↑ $N = 26$, for r , z , and R^2 $N = 136$; for each row: same subscripts = no significant difference between means; expr. = expressiveness, prec. = preciseness, aff. org. commitment = affective organizational commitment, OCB = organizational citizenship behavior; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.

$SD = .87$) and 4 ($M = 6.13, SD = .91$) were comparable to each other and significantly higher than those of groups 1 ($M = 1.83, SD = 1.00$) and 3 ($M = 1.64, SD = .74$), which were also comparable to each other. We concluded that our manipulations had been successful and created two dummy variables, one for preciseness and one for expressiveness, that were scored 0 (low) and 1 (high). We conducted two Univariate ANOVA's and found no interaction effect of expressiveness and preciseness for either manipulation check scale.

We hypothesized that leader expressiveness and leader preciseness are positively related to leader criteria (H1). We further hypothesized that leader expressiveness has a stronger relation with subordinate knowledge sharing, subordinate OCB, satisfaction with the leader, trust in the leader, liking, and subordinate affective organizational commitment than leader preciseness (H2). And last, we hypothesized that leader preciseness has a stronger relation with leader performance and perceived expertise than leader expressiveness (H3). In order to test these hypotheses, we first calculated Pearson's correlations between each of the predictors and each of the criteria (see Table 5.1). Leader expressiveness predicted all criteria with r 's ranging from .18 ($p < .05$) to .68 ($p < .01$), with the exception of perceived expertise ($r = .13, p = n.s.$). Leader preciseness predicted perceived expertise ($r = .66, p < .01$), leader performance ($r = .64, p < .01$), trust in the leader ($r = .55, p < .01$), and satisfaction with the leader ($r = .44, p < .01$). Additionally, Table 5.1 shows that the combined communication styles explain substantial amounts of variance in the criteria; R^2 's ranged from .09 for OCB to .50 for leader performance and perceived expertise (all p 's $< .01$). Both communication styles contributed to the explained variance of all criteria, with the exception of preciseness for affective organizational commitment and OCB. These findings mostly support Hypothesis 1.

We then calculated z -values of the differences in correlations for each criterion (see Table 5.1). The findings provide support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 with two exceptions: preciseness was equally predictive of satisfaction with the leader as expressiveness ($z = .18, p = n.s.$) and preciseness was more predictive of trust than expressiveness ($z = -2.83, p < .01$). For OCB, expressiveness was only marginally more predictive than preciseness.

We furthermore performed a Oneway Analysis of Variance to compare the criteria means of the groups. In Table 5.1, the means and standard deviations are provided, as well as the F -value. On each row, different subscripts indicate that the means are significantly different. The table shows the expected impact of expressiveness and/or preciseness on the various criteria. It furthermore shows that the combination of high expressiveness and high preciseness (group 4) led to the highest mean for each criterion, whereas the combination of low scores for both predictors (group 1) led to the lowest mean for each criterion. Even though we did not expect any interaction effect between expressiveness and preciseness, we performed bootstrap analyses to test for interactions (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Taylor, MacKinnon, & Tein, 2008), but found no significant effects.

The design of this study allowed us to replicate part of a previous study (Chapter 4). In line with the results of that study, we hypothesized that perceived expertise is more strongly related to leader performance than to satisfaction with the leader and that for liking the opposite is true (H4). We compared the correlations of perceived expertise and liking with each of the criteria. The correlation between leader performance and satisfaction with the leader was .76 ($p < .01$). The correlation of perceived expertise with leader performance was .81 and with satisfaction with the leader .66 (both p 's $< .01$). We used Steiger's (1980) test for comparing correlated correlations and found that the difference was significant; $z = 4.07$, $p < .01$. The correlation of liking with leader performance was .34 and with satisfaction with the leader .66 (both p 's $< .01$). Again we found that the difference was significant; $z = -6.45$, $p < .01$. These results provide support for our hypothesis.

We furthermore hypothesized that leader expressiveness is more strongly indirectly related to satisfaction with the leader through liking than through perceived expertise (H5) and that leader preciseness is more strongly indirectly related to leader performance through perceived expertise than through liking (H6). As for Study 3 in Chapter 4, we employed a bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2011) which allowed multiple mediators. To predict each of the leader criteria, we used standardized scores, entered expressiveness and preciseness as predictors, and perceived expertise and liking as mediators. We requested 10,000 bootstrap re-samples and used a 95% confidence interval. In Table 5.2 the results of the analyses are presented. The total relation of expressiveness with satisfaction with the leader was stronger than that with leader performance, liking had a stronger direct relation with satisfaction with the leader than perceived expertise, and the indirect relation of expressiveness with satisfaction with the leader through liking was stronger than that through perceived expertise. Furthermore, the total relation of preciseness with leader performance was stronger than that with satisfaction with the leader, perceived expertise was more strongly related to leader performance than liking, and the indirect relation of preciseness with leader performance through perceived expertise was much stronger than that through liking. These findings provide support for our Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6.

However, even though the total relation of leader preciseness with satisfaction with the leader was weaker than that with leader performance, leader expressiveness was similarly predictive of satisfaction with the leader (not stronger). Notably, in this study perceived expertise was important in the prediction of both criteria when all variables were included in the analysis, whereas liking only had predictive validity for satisfaction with the leader. In Study 3 in Chapter 4, liking was more important and perceived expertise only predicted leader performance.

Table 5.2 Results from the bootstrapping analyses

	leader performance	CI	satisfaction with leader	CI
Total relation				
expressiveness	.29**		.54**	
preciseness	.69**		.53**	
Direct				
expressiveness	.17*		.20 **	
preciseness	.23**		.27**	
perceived expertise	.66**		.29**	
liking	-.05		.40**	
Indirect				
expressiveness through perc. expertise	.16	.07 to .25	.07	.02 to .13
expressiveness through liking	-.04	-.14 to .06	.28	.15 to .43
preciseness through perc. expertise	.46	.32 to .61	.20	.07 to .34
preciseness through liking	-.01	-.04 to .01	.06	.01 to .10
Multiple R	.71**		.70**	
R ²	.50**		.49**	

Note. N = 136; Coefficients are standardized; CI = Confidence Interval 95%; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Discussion

Main findings

With this scenario study, we aimed to explore the difference in the relations of leader expressiveness with various leader criteria and those of leader preciseness with various leader criteria. We proposed a theoretical framework to explain why leader communication styles are related to leader criteria. We suggested that leader expressiveness contributes to satisfying a subordinate's need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which leads to positive feelings and constructive behavior. We furthermore suggested that leader preciseness contributes to reducing a subordinate's uncertainty (Hogg & Grieve, 1999), which in turn leads to positive cognitions and better performance (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Berger, 1986). Consequently, we hypothesized that leader expressiveness was more strongly related to subordinate knowledge sharing, subordinate OCB, satisfaction with the leader, trust in the leader, liking, and affective organizational commitment than leader preciseness and that leader preciseness was more strongly related to leader performance and perceived expertise than leader expressiveness. Last, we expected to replicate part of the results of a previous study (Chapter 4). Hence we

hypothesized that perceived expertise is more strongly related to leader performance than to satisfaction with the leaders, whereas for liking the opposite is true. And based on our theoretical framework, in line with our proposition that two information processes to leader criteria may be distinguished, we hypothesized that leader expressiveness is more strongly related to satisfaction with the leader through liking than through perceived expertise and that leader preciseness is more strongly related to leader performance through perceived expertise than through liking.

We found that leader expressiveness and preciseness predicted all of our study criteria. Notably, the zero order correlations showed that liking was strongly related to expressiveness and not at all to preciseness, whereas perceived expertise was strongly related to preciseness and weakly to expressiveness. In the mediation analyses, indirect relations through perceived expertise were stronger for leader performance than for satisfaction with the leader, whereas for liking the opposite was true. These findings seem to support differential information processing pathways as well as our suggested underlying mechanism; if you like your leader, you will feel a strong positive bond with him/her; (a part of) your need to belong will have been met, thus you are more satisfied. If you perceive your leader to be an expert, you will rely more on him/her to give you useful information; (a part of) your need to reduce uncertainty will have been met and you will consider your leader a strong performer.

Conceivably, subordinates may get to know their leader over time and may be able to derive certainty from less precise leader communication. If that is true, the relation of leader preciseness with leader outcomes reduces over time. However, in previous studies we have consistently found strong relations between leader preciseness and various leader criteria for longer lasting leader-subordinate dyads as well (e.g., Bakker-Pieper & De Vries, in press; De Vries et al., 2010). Possibly this is related to the ease of interpreting precise versus less precise communicative behavior, but, alternatively, it may be a confirmation that uncertainty reduction is an ongoing process (Inglis, 2000) and that a precise interpersonal communication style is an important tool to satisfy that need, especially in a leader-subordinate situation.

Satiation of the need to belong has been related to a reduction in drive and effort to interact and bond, but not in a reduction in drive and effort to perform other activities (DeWall, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2008). In our study, we manipulated the initial interaction between leader and subordinate. Possibly, in longer leader-subordinate relationships bonds are established that do not need to be constantly reaffirmed. More attention and effort may then be 'available' to be used for trying to reach other goals, e.g., organizational results. Thus positive outcomes are obtained, but leader expressiveness may then become less relevant. However, previous cross-sectional field studies with longer established leader-subordinate dyads indicate that leader expressiveness remains strongly associated with leader criteria (e.g., Bakker-Pieper & De Vries, in press). This may be a confirmation of the essential role that communication plays in leader-subordinate

relationships. However, expressiveness may also serve to reduce so-called ‘personal uncertainty’ about the (continued) existence of a good leader-subordinate relationship, which may be an ongoing process (De Cremer & Sedikides, 2009; Stillman & Baumeister, 2009).

We were surprised by the results for trust in the leader and satisfaction with the leader, as they seemed not in line with our proposed theoretical framework. We considered trust to be an attitude-related criterion, as it is the result of an evaluation of someone’s feelings regarding the leader (Hiller et al., 2011). However, trust has been defined in many ways (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) and possibly, depending on the operationalization, it may also be considered a behavior-related criterion (e.g., when the items relate to a subordinate’s action based on his/her trust in the leader) or a cognition-related criterion (e.g., when the items relate to a subordinate’s assessment of the leader’s reliability and abilities). We scrutinized the wording of the items of our trust scale. As they focused on the rater’s perception of his/her leader’s openness, concern, reliability, and competence, the construct we used may well be considered cognition-related, in which case our finding that preciseness was a more important predictor than expressiveness actually aligns with our framework.

Furthermore, a criterion may be operationalized in such a way that it encompasses more than one criterion domain. Satisfaction is an evaluation of feelings and emotions. As such it is an attitude-related variable. However, the items we used for satisfaction with the leader contained elements that may be related to effectiveness as well. For instance, whether or not a subordinate likes to work with a supervisor may be dependent on the success of this particular leader, as presumably this may impact the subordinate’s career. If a scale measures such effectiveness-related content, a strong relation with preciseness is not surprising. Moreover, by communicating very precisely, the subordinates may feel that they know what to do, which may positively influence their performance, thus benefitting their career as well. Leader preciseness may therefore be related to satisfaction with the leader as it may either directly or indirectly impact a subordinate’s future career, a criterion from the effectiveness domain. Hence, our finding that satisfaction is predicted by expressiveness and preciseness to a comparable extent is no disproof of our framework. It does underscore that the selection of measures for study variables may strongly impact results.

We could not fully replicate a previous study (Chapter 4) as we had not included the other communication styles in our study design. Nevertheless, the findings provide further support for our proposition that there are two different pathways to leader criteria; a cognitive pathway and an affective one. The results from our earlier study suggested that affect also played a role in assessing what we assumed to be mostly cognition-based constructs such as leader performance and perceived expertise. Contrarily, the results from the present study seem to suggest that cognitions also played a role in assessing what we assumed to be affect-based constructs such as satisfaction

with the leader and liking. The possibility that affect and cognition influence each other is acknowledged in the literature: cognitions may tell us how to react emotionally to certain events or in certain situations, whereas affect may influence what or how we think about things (Forgas, 2008; Planalp & Fitness, 1999). The difference may be explained by the fact that the earlier study was a field study, in which participants rated their real leader, whereas the present study was a scenario study, in which participants rated an imaginary leader. Conceivably, affect plays a role when people have to rate a real person, who they regularly work and interact with, whereas cognitive aspects play a more important role when people have to rate an imaginary person, who is only described to them on paper.

Limitations

First and foremost, in our study we have not directly tested our proposed theoretical framework. However, the results of the study may suggest that further research on the mechanisms why leader communication styles may be related to criteria along the lines of our framework is warranted.

The main limitation of our study is that the setting was artificial. Measuring the opinion of someone who has read a scenario about an imaginary leader's way of communication is a rather abstract simulation of measuring the full impact of working with a real leader for three months. In reality, the content of leader communication and the actual environment will also play a role in leader outcomes. However, artificiality of delivery treatments may be less problematic than artificiality of content, as the initial reaction is more likely to be comparable to the real life situation (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997). The relations found in this study are based on the first impressions of participants after reading the scenario, not unlike the first impressions people get in real life when they first interact with someone. First impression 'count' and tend to last (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1994; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008; Rule & Ambady, 2011). As such our results provide a meaningful insight in the relation between leader communication styles and leader criteria.

The majority of our participants were female and highly educated. Participant gender or education level did not correlate with any of the criteria. In previous cross-sectional field studies, we have not found consistent differences in the relations between leader communication styles and leader criteria for men versus women or for people with different educational levels (e.g., Bakker-Pieper & De Vries, in press). However, it is conceivable that there are differences in impression formation in the initial stages of leader-subordinate relations, when people need to establish their 'position' vis-à-vis each other. We only used one sample in this study and the leader in our study was male. Obviously our results need to be replicated in further studies in order to confirm the robustness of our findings.

Theoretical and practical implications

We have argued that two fundamental human needs may explain why leader expressiveness and preciseness are related to leader criteria, but we have not tested these mechanisms. However, the results of our exploratory study provide support for our suggested framework and further research seems warranted. This may be done both in field and in experimental studies, by relating subordinates' need to belong or current feeling of belonging in their leader's group and their need to reduce uncertainty or current feeling of (un)certainty to leader communication styles, to leader criteria, and to the relation between communication style and criteria.

In the literature, there is debate about satiation of belonging and about the level of the reduction of uncertainty that is required by people to feel and perform best. Scholars have proposed that people may accept or manage uncertainty in some situations (Brashers, 2001), for instance as a necessary phase in a self-improvement process (De Cremer & Sedikides, 2009), or as a tool to continue to feel good, particularly when more certainty is associated with a stronger possibility of a negative personal outcome (Bradac, 2001). Furthermore, people differ in the strength of these needs. If support for our theoretical framework is found, the influence of individual need differences between subordinates on the relation between the communication styles and leader criteria remains to be investigated (Mathieu, 1990; Routledge, Juhl, & Vess, 2010).

Even though we have found strong similar relations of leader expressiveness and preciseness with criteria in earlier studies for longer lasting dyads, we cannot be sure that there is not a gradual decline of the effect over time. Conceivably, subordinates get used to how their leader communicates and positive or negative effects weaken as their standards may shift (Biernat, 2005). Furthermore, recently scholars have emphasized the reciprocity of leadership; subordinates are influenced by leaders, but leaders also by subordinates (Shamir, 2011). For instance, if a subordinate does not actively share knowledge, perhaps over time his/her leader will communicate less expressively towards this subordinate, whereas that leader may be inclined to communicate more expressively towards a subordinate who actively shares knowledge. An investigation of time effects and of the impact of reciprocity of leader communicative behavior may help us to better understand why and when leaders are successful.

For the leadership assessment and development practice, the results of our study imply that assessing and developing (future) leaders' level of expressiveness and preciseness may help them in becoming more successful leaders. There is ample literature on the trainability of communication related behavior such as certain transformational leadership behaviors (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996), strategizing and coordinating (DeChurch & Marks, 2006), performing a diagnosing interview (Fukui, Ogawa, Ohtsuka, & Fukui, 2008), and reflective listening (Rautalinko & Lisper, 2004). Nevertheless, as communication styles are so closely related to personality traits (De Vries et al., in press), they may be relatively stable. Further research on the limits of trainability may be useful

to determine who can be taught to communicate expressively and precisely, and under which conditions.

Conclusion

In this study we argued that leader expressiveness and leader preciseness possibly serve to help meet two fundamental human needs: the need to belong and the need to reduce uncertainty respectively. Attitude- and behavior-related criteria may be most impacted by the level of fulfillment of the need to belong, whereas effectiveness- and cognition-related criteria may be most impacted by the level of fulfillment of the need to reduce uncertainty. We suggest that this may well be aligned with our earlier proposition that two different pathways to leader criteria may be distinguished, a cognitive and an affective one. Further research is required to test our suggested theoretical framework, to understand the effect of individual differences in subordinates, to investigate the impact of reciprocity and time effects, and to examine trainability of communication styles. However, with this study, the importance of interpersonal communication styles for leadership seems to be confirmed once more.