

**WHAT MAKES LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR APPROPRIATE?  
THE IMPACT OF ELEMENTARY RELATIONSHIPS ON LEADERSHIP  
BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Patience Thandazile Sibongile Mathabela(student number 35701455), declare that

**What makes leadership behaviour appropriate? The impact of elementary relationships on leadership behaviour and social influence** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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Date: 26/01/2020

## SUMMARY

The overall aim of the present research was to explore what makes leadership behaviour to be perceived or judged as appropriate behaviour by followers and thus as influential on followers. Based on the Relational Models Theory, which postulates *four elementary relationships* people engage in and defines what motivates and constitutes *morally guided behaviour* within these relationships, we hypothesised that leadership behaviour is more influential the more its implementation corresponds with the dominant elementary relationship of the leader-follower relationship. More specifically, we hypothesised that leaders are perceived to be more influential when they are in a communal sharing relationship with their followers and demonstrate leadership behaviour based on the moral principle of unity or when they are in an authority ranking relationship with their followers and demonstrate leadership behaviour based on the moral principle of hierarchy. Four experimental studies were conducted to test our hypotheses using a business context (Study 1 and 2) and student context (Study 3 and 4) and presenting these contexts either as a scenario to be imagined (Study 1 and 2) or as a bogus post on Facebook (Study 3 and 4). Although our findings did not support our overall hypothesis, they imply that leaders who are in a communal sharing relationship with their followers or demonstrate leadership behaviour based on unity are relatively more influential.

Keywords: Relational Models Theory, elementary relationships, appropriate behaviour, social influence, social identity

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
DECLARATION	2
SUMMARY	3
LIST OF TABLES	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
ABSTRACT	9
INTRODUCTION	10
Leadership Approaches	10
Leadership Behaviour	18
Relational Models Theory	20
RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	26
Leader-follower interactions in communal sharing and authority ranking relationships	28
Research Hypothesis and Research Context	30
STUDY 1	32
Participants	32
Procedure	33
Measurements	35
Dependent variables	35
Manipulation check measures	37
Results	38
Preliminary results	38
Hypothesis testing	42
Discussion	44

STUDY 2	47
Participants	47
Procedure	48
Measurements	50
Dependent variables	50
Manipulation check measures	51
Results	51
Preliminary results	51
Hypothesis testing	53
Discussion	55
STUDY 3	57
Participants	57
Procedure	58
Measurements	61
Dependent variables	61
Manipulation check measures	62
Results	62
Preliminary results	62
Hypothesis testing	64
Discussion	66

STUDY 4	66
Participants	67
Procedure	67
Measurements	69
Dependent variables	70
Manipulation check measures	70
Results and Discussion	70
Preliminary results	70
Hypothesis testing	71
GENERAL DISCUSSION	73
REFERENCES	80

## LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the manipulation check statements depending on the experimental conditions, Study 1
- Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of principal variables, Study1
- Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of principal variables, Study2
- Table 4. Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of principal variables, Study3
- Table 5. Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of principal variables, Study4

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## ABSTRACT

Research focusing on leadership behaviour argues that if leadership behaviour is implemented *appropriately*, it increases the leader's influence on followers. The present research, which is based on Relational Models Theory, tested the assumption that leadership behaviour guided by moral principles of behaviour of the dominant elementary relationship in which the leader-follower relationship is embedded should be judged and perceived as *appropriate* (and should therefore be relatively more influential); whereas leadership behaviour that violates moral principles of the dominant elementary relationship of the leader-follower relationship should be judged as *inappropriate* (and should therefore be relatively less influential). Four experimental studies were conducted to test the proposed hypotheses for the elementary relationship of communal sharing and authority ranking. The results showed that leaders are perceived to be more influential when they are either in a communal sharing relationship with their followers (all studies) or when their leadership behaviour was based on unity (Study 1). Although we could not confirm our overall hypothesis, the results of the present research have important implications.

## INTRODUCTION

Social psychological and organisational research on leadership has shown that leadership behaviour is important for leaders to be influential on followers (Bass, 2008, Yulk, 2012, Steffens et al., 2014a). However, leadership behaviour is often conceptualised as independent of social context (Yulk, 2012; Arvonen & Pettersson, 2002; see also Wellman, 2017). The present study argues that leadership behaviour does not happen in a social vacuum (Tajfel, 1974). To understand its impact, it is necessary to understand the social context in which it occurs and how the behaviour is executed within the respective social context (Yulk, 2012). Social context can be conceptualised from at least two theoretical perspectives: the situational and the relational perspective. While the situational perspective focuses on the particulars of the *leader-follower contexts* (Gliebs & Haslam, 2016), the relational perspective focuses on the *leader-follower relationship* (e.g., Gerstner & Day, 1997; Fiske, 1991). The overall aim of this research project is to extend our understanding of the role of the *leader-follower relationship* for leadership behaviour as social influence.

### Leadership Approaches

The question of what makes leaders influential has been of interest for a long time (Shelley et al., 2014) and resulted in different leadership approaches ranging from the Hereditary Genius approach to the more recent social identity approach to leadership (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). The Hereditary Genius perspective is one of the earliest leadership approaches, which informed popular ideas about leadership influence during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Galton & Eysenck, 1869 as cited by Haslam et al., 2011; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). It assumes leadership to be the result of inherited characteristics and extraordinary abilities of distinct individuals. According to this approach,

leaders are born with internal characteristics such as high confidence, intelligence, and social skills (Galton & Eysenck, 1869 as cited by Haslam et al., 2011; Derue et al., 2011). This approach dominated early leadership research and subsequent studies established that individual characteristics such as skills and abilities are related with leadership influence (see Haslam et al., 2011; Derue et al., 2011). This tradition of reasoning about leadership evolved to the Great Man approach (Galton & Eysenck, 1869 as cited by Haslam et al., 2011). According to the Great Man approach, leadership is a combination of hereditary characteristics and charisma, which is referred to as a certain quality of an individual's personality that sets apart ordinary from extraordinary people (Derue et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2011). The Great Man perspective views leaders as individuals who are superior over others by virtue of possessing intellectual and social characteristics and charisma, which is what makes them influential on followers (Derue et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2011).

Leadership research evolved to the study of personality traits and attributes that differentiate leaders from “non-leaders” (Derue et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2011). For instance, personality traits such as distinct extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness versus reduced neuroticism, and agreeableness were identified and found to be strong predictors of leadership (Derue et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2011).

These early approaches influenced subsequent leadership approaches that focused not only on “what a leader should be like” such as the inspirational (charismatic) leadership approach (Conger, 1989) but also on “what a leader should do” such as the transactional leadership approach (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1995), the transformational leadership approach (Bass, 1990; Bass, 1997; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1997; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003), the leader-member exchange theory (Avolio et al., 1997; Derue et al., 2011), and the social identity approach to leadership (Haslam et al., 2011).

The inspirational (charismatic) leadership approach, which was still in the tradition of the Great Man approach to leadership, describes influential leaders as those who arouse enthusiasm, faith, loyalty, and pride and trust in followers (Conger, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). Followers want to identify with inspirational (charismatic) leaders and imitate them; they develop intense feelings about them, and above all, they trust and have confidence in them (Conger & Kanungo, 1987).

The transactional leadership approach considers besides personality traits (i.e., distinct extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness versus reduced neuroticism, and agreeableness) also leadership behaviour for leaders to be influential (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990). Three leadership behaviours are proposed; namely contingent rewards, and active and passive management by exception (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1995). Contingent reward as leadership behaviour refers to leaders clarifying the work that must be achieved by using rewards in exchange for good performance. Passive management by exception refers to leaders intervening only when problems arise; whereas active management by exception refers to leaders actively monitoring the work of followers and making sure that standards are met (see also Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasurbramaniam, 2003). This approach does not yet recognise the relationship that exists between leader and followers; except that all their interactions are based on exchange for specific tasks and that leaders use rewards and punishments to motivate followers.

The transformational leadership approach, on the other hand, considers personality traits of a leader, leadership behaviours as well as the relationship between the leader and followers as important for leaders' influence (Bass, 1990; Bass, 1997; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Avolio et al., 1997). Avolio et al. (1997) proposed four leadership behaviours: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Idealised influence concerns the formulation and articulation of a vision and challenging

goals and it serves to motivate followers to work beyond their self-interest to achieve common goals (Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). Research showed that leaders who apply idealised influence are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary in demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Inspirational motivation refers to the way leaders motivate and inspire their followers to commit to the vision of the organisation. Leaders applying inspirational motivation foster a strong team spirit as a means for leading team members towards achieving desired goals (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Intellectual stimulation, on the other hand, is concerned with the role of leaders in stimulating innovation and creativity in their followers by questioning assumptions and approaching old situations in new ways (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through this leadership behaviour, followers are encouraged to try new approaches or methods to solve “old” problems. Lastly, individualized consideration as leadership behaviour refers to leaders paying special attention to each follower’s need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Followers are helped to reach higher levels of achievement through individualized learning opportunities that are created in a supportive environment. It is through individualized consideration (relationships) that extend beyond the scope of work where transformational leaders identify individual’s needs and desires. Moreover, individualized consideration and idealised influence leadership behaviours seem to correspond with the basic assumptions of other subsets of approaches to leadership. For example, individualized consideration as leadership behaviour corresponds with the basic assumptions of the leader-member exchange theory (LMX).

The leader-member exchange theory is a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the two-way (dyadic) relationship between leaders and followers (Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982, see also Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien

1995; Gerstner & Day, 1997). It assumes that leaders develop an exchange relationship with each of their followers and that the quality of these leader-member exchange relationships influences followers' responsibilities, decisions, and their access to resources and performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These relationships are based on trust and respect and are often emotional relationships that extend beyond the scope of employment. Leader-member exchange relationship may promote positive employment experiences and increases organisational performance and effectiveness (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995). Although leader-member exchange theory conceptualises leadership from a relational perspective (e.g., Gerstner & Day, 1997), its focus is on what leaders and followers exchange rather than on what leaders and followers have in common.

What leaders and followers have in common was brought into focus by social psychologists who argue that leadership processes are embedded in a context of shared group membership (Haslam et al., 2011; Platow, Haslam, Reicher, & Steffens, 2015, see also van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Hogg, 2001). The processes, of how psychological group memberships are formed, are outlined in self-categorisation theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) which builds on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The self-categorization theory proposes that people categorise themselves and others into social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). It defines self-categorization as the process that is characterised by how people think of themselves and how they compare themselves to others during social interaction. It further explains the psychological processes involved on how people evaluate and categorise themselves into “me” (i.e., unique or personal self), “us” (i.e., group the self as identical or similar to others), and “them” (i.e., differentiate the self in contrast to others; see also Turner & Oakes, 1986).

Self-categorization exists at different levels of abstraction based on the principle of class inclusion (see also Turner & Oakes, 1986, p. 241). The latter means that categories

differ in their level of abstraction. For instance, dogs and cats are members of the category of animals; whereas animals and plants are members of the category of life. Consequently, the theory distinguishes three levels of abstraction (see also Turner & Oakes, 1986). The first level is self-categorization as a human being, which is based on the differentiation between humans and animals. The second level is self-categorization as a member of social categories, which is based on the differentiation between groups of people with regards to defined characteristics (e.g., class, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, etc.). The third level is self-categorization as a unique human being, which is based on the differentiation between oneself as a unique individual with unique attributes and other individuals.

Self-categorization, therefore, creates social identity for individuals, which they internalize as an important aspect of their self and which allows them to understand their social environment (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). It is through the psychological process of *depersonalisation*, whereby people perceive themselves as group members and not as unique individuals, that group processes such as group cooperation, social influence and leadership are only possible (Turner et al., 1987). Depersonalisation precedes the psychological process of social identity. Social identity is when people behave according to what they think is valued by the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; see also Terry, Hogg, & White, 2000). Turner, Reynolds and Subasic (2008) argued that the development of social identity is what makes people (group members) prone to social influence because group members share the same values and norms, which enable them to influence each other as they conform to group norms and behave the way others (members of the in-group or out-group) expect them to behave (see also Terry et al., 2000). Social identity enables group members not only to think as a unit but also to act as a unit or as a collective (Turner et al., 2008). Consequently, leadership is exercised through ingroup-based influences which informs the simple observation that there cannot be a leader without followers (Platow

et al., 2015, p. 20). Accordingly, the concept of leadership as social influence needs to consider social identity processes of leaders and followers (Haslam et al., 2011, see also van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Hogg, 2001).

Thus, from the social identity theory and the self-categorisation theory perspective, leadership is not a product of personality traits or attributes but group processes (Turner et al., 2008). Personal factors of leaders matter insofar as they are seen “at any time, by any given group, as representing [a group’s] identity better than others do” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 65). Leadership from this theoretical perspective is as much about being able to reflect and embody the group’s identity, as being able to create and shape the group’s identity (Turner et al., 2008, p. 65). Therefore, leadership is *conferred* rather than *imposed*; it is through defining “who we are” that leaders influence followers in “what they do”.

The social identity approach to leadership proposes that leaders exercise influence on followers through four psychological dimensions that influence their social identity processes (Haslam et al., 2011; see also Steffens et al., 2014a). The first psychological dimension refers to *what a leader should be*; namely, prototypical (*identity prototypicality*) of the ingroup (Haslam et al., 2011). The other three dimensions refer to *what a leader should do*; namely, to advance ingroup needs (*identity advancement*), to create ingroup identity (*identity entrepreneurship*) and to build lived structures that are not only visible to ingroup but also outgroup members (*identity impresarioship*; see Haslam et al., 2011; Steffens et al., 2014a).

Research on *identity prototypicality* validated, for instance, the three-way interactions between prototypicality of the leader, followers’ identification with the group and the behaviour of the leader in predicting effective leadership (van Dick & Kerschreiter, 2016). The study by Ullrich, Christ, and van Dick (2009) showed that prototypicality was most important for followers who strongly identified with the group, whereas less identified followers were more concerned about their leader acting fairly (see also van Dick &

Kerschreiter, 2015). Identity advancement, identity entrepreneurship and identity impresarioship outline the leaders' behaviour that is necessary for the leader to be influential on followers (Steffens et al., 2014a). According to the social identity approach to leadership, leader behaviour is about creating, shaping and increasing group identity through which leaders exercise influence (Haslam et al., 2011). For instance, research showed that creating strong group identity increases group members' performance (Fransen, Haslam, Steffens, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, & Boen, 2015; Schuh, Egold, & van Dick, 2012), increases compliance with instructions and trust (Greenaway, Wright, Willingham, Reynolds, & Haslam, 2015), results in strong work commitment, work engagement and reduces burnout (Steffens, Haslam, Kerschreiter, Schuh & van Dick, 2014b), and increase followers' self-esteem (De Cremer, van Knippenberg, van Dijke, & Bos, 2006).

In sum, the transactional and transformational leadership approaches, the leader-member exchange theory, as well as the social identity approach to leadership, do not only consider what a leader *should be* but also what a leader *should do* to be effective and thus influential. The question, what a leader should do has also been addressed by research focussing on leadership behaviour resulting in different taxonomies, which according to Yukl, Gordon and Taber (2002, p. 15) led to a "major problem" because "there is a lack of agreement about which behavioural categories are relevant and meaningful". Based on the various leadership behaviours proposed in the various leadership approaches, Yukl et al. (2002) suggested to distinguish between three meta-categories: task-, relations-, and change-oriented leadership behaviour (see also Derue et al., 2011).

## **Leadership Behaviour**

Task-orientated leadership behaviour includes planning short-term activities, clarifying task objectives, role expectations, and monitoring operations and performance (Yukl et al., 2002; see also Derue et al., 2011). Moreover, task-orientated leadership behaviour supports the process of achieving group goals by enhancing understanding of not only what is supposed to be done but also how it is supposed to be done (Yukl et al., 2002; see also Derue et al., 2011; Yukl, 2012).

Relations-oriented leadership behaviour involves demonstrating respect and consideration for the needs of other group members, doing things to make it pleasant to be part of the group, and resolving intra-group conflicts (Yukl, 2006). Relational-oriented leadership behaviour aims at fostering strong relationships within the group (Yukl et al., 2002; see also Derue et al., 2011; Yukl, 2012; Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978) and at influencing followers in that they dedicate their efforts in accomplishing group goals (Behrendt, Matz, & Goritz, 2017). However, leadership behaviour is not only about maintaining the existing social reality but also about changing existing social reality (Haslam et al., 2011).

Change-oriented leadership behaviour refers to the here-and-now, it focuses on the specific change at hand and how the leader handles it from a strategic point of view (House & Aditya, 1997). It entails developing and communicating a compelling vision of the future and encouraging innovative thinking. Or to put it differently, change-oriented leadership behaviour refers to “verbal communication of an image of the future, with the intention to persuade others to contribute to the realization of that future” (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013, p. 46). In addition to the three meta-categories, Yukl (2012) and Behrendt et al. (2017) proposed external behaviour as a fourth meta-category to be included in the taxonomy of leadership behaviour. External behaviour refers to facilitating performance that provides relevant information about outside events, getting necessary resources and assistance, and

promoting the reputation and interests of the organisation. It includes networking, external monitoring, and representing the organisation in the broader context (Yukl, 2012).

Research focusing on leadership argues that if leadership behaviour is implemented *appropriately* it improves group performance by influencing the processes that govern performance (Fransen et al., 2015; Schuh, Egold, & van Dick, 2012; see also Yukl et al., 2002; Derue et al., 2011), it increases follower's compliance with instructions and trust in the leader (Greenaway et al., 2015), and it results in strong work engagement (Steffens, et al., 2014a). Moreover, it increases followers' job satisfaction (Walumba & Hartnell, 2011; Fransen et al., 2015), decreases turn-over intentions of followers (Hughes, Avey, & Nixon, 2010), increases leaders' perceived fairness (Bacha & Walker, 2013), increases citizenship behaviours through followers' trust in the leader (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), increases perceived charisma (Atwater, Camobreco, Dionne, Aviolio, & Lau, 1997), increases perceived identification with the leader (Kark & Shamir, 2002), increases followers' trust with their co-workers (Lau & Liden, 2008), increases followers' commitment to change (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008), increases follower self-esteem (Yukl et al., 2002; see also Derue et al., 2011), and increases followers' intentions to support group goals (van Vugt & De Cremer, 2002).

The question, however, arises, what constitutes whether leadership behaviour is "implemented appropriately"? The dominant leadership approaches would describe the *appropriate implementation* of leadership behaviours through the outcomes such as job performance, followers' job satisfaction (Yukl et al., 2002; see also Derue et al., 2011) and/or as serving to change, shape, and increase the identification with the ingroup or team (Haslam et al., 2011). However, less is known about the psychological processes involved that make leadership behaviour to be perceived or judged as *appropriate* behaviour. To understand what makes leadership behaviour to be perceived and judged as appropriate

behaviour and thus as effective leadership behaviour, a theoretical approach is required that considers both the relational and behaviour aspect of the leader-follower relationship. The present research proposes that the Relational Models Theory (Fiske, 1991; 1992) offers such a theoretical approach.

### **Relational Models Theory**

According to Fiske (1992, p. 689), Relational Models Theory explains social life “as a process of seeking, making, sustaining, repairing, adjusting, judging, construing, and sanctioning relationships”. The basic assumption of Relational Models Theory is that individuals’ behaviour assumes social meaning only in the context of relations (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2004; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). According to Fiske (1991; 1992), the most basic characteristic of human beings is *sociality*, which implies that humans generally cognize and organise their social life in terms of their relations with other people. The theory proposes that people are oriented to relationships as such, that people generally want to relate to each other, feel committed to the basic types of relationships, regard themselves as obligated to abide by them, and impose them onto other people (including third parties; Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2004; Fiske & Haslam, 2005).

Relational Models Theory distinguishes four elementary relationships: *Communal Sharing*, *Authority Ranking*, *Equality Matching*, and *Market Pricing*. *Communal Sharing* refers to a relationship in which members treat each other as equivalent, one unit, and undifferentiated with respect to the social domain in question. In an *Authority Ranking* relationship, members occupy different hierarchical status (some are in a relatively higher or lower position). In an *Equality Matching* relationship, members act to maintain a balance of activities and actions to and from one member to the other, and *Market Pricing* refers to a

relationship where members make ratios meaningful so that it is possible to make decisions that combine quantities and values of diverse entities to ensure that there is proportionality (Fiske, 1991).

Furthermore, the Relational Models Theory stipulates that these elementary relationships on their own are abstract and that their use to act or interpret others' action requires socially shared implementation rules, so-called "preos" (Fiske & Haslam, 2005). These implementation rules are culture-specific, and they stipulate parameters, precepts, prescriptions, propositions, and proscriptions as to when, where, how, and who is eligible to relate with whom; as well as in which way, in which domain, and under what circumstances, which of the four relationships is implemented (Fiske, 1991, p. 142-143). For instance, an organisation might adopt an authority ranking relationship in the domain of work allocation but applies a market pricing relationship in the domain of bonus incentives. Or, a leader, who has both formal and informal authority over his or her subordinates (authority ranking as the predominant model defining the relationship), allocates tasks to staff stressing collective responsibility (based on communal sharing), decides on an organisational issue using a voting system (based on equality matching), and determines bonus payments based on performance (based on market pricing).

Accordingly, the Relational Models Theory distinguishes five implementation rules: (1) the domain to which each elementary relationship applies; (2) the persons who are eligible to relate in each way, (3) an implicit (or explicit) consensus about the taxonomy of relevant actions and things, (4) the code that people use to mark the existence and quality of any type of social relationship, and (5) the ideological concepts defining what is real, what is good, and what is possible (Fiske, 1991, p. 142).

The first implementation rule is that each culture specifies the domains to which each relationship applies (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For example, within

the domain of decision making some cultures may adopt a communal sharing relationship by making decisions by consensus, whereas other cultures may adopt an authority ranking relationship where only the superior (e.g., leader or chain of command) makes decisions and others go along. Other cultures may adopt an equality matching relationship by deciding through votes (e.g., one-person-one-vote ballot) and some other cultures may adopt a market pricing relationship by calculating costs and benefits when deciding on an issue (Fiske, 2000). In other words, cultural differences determine to what, when, and where people should use relationships for what domain (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005).

The second implementation rule is that each culture specifies the persons that are eligible to relate through particular elementary relationships (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For instance, in the domain of decision-making, cultures may differ on who is eligible to participate. In some cultures, only the first-born male participates in decision making. Another example is, that in some cultures one cannot vote on an issue if the person is regarded as a minor (less than the age of eighteen years). If the person is mentally handicapped, she or he cannot make a legally binding contract and so forth. Defining who enters in what social relationship in relation to what domain is a major determinant of the shape and substance of society, and the quality of human social existence (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005).

The third implementation rule is that in each culture people must have an implicit (or explicit) consensus about the taxonomy of relevant actions and things (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Communal sharing relationships, for instance, require a shared understanding of what aspects of people's identities are merged and how they operationalize the principle of equivalence with diverse others; whereas authority ranking relationships require a shared understanding of how to rank people (e.g., age, gender, caste, seniority, promotion system, achievement on the task or test, contest or combat). On the other hand,

equality matching relationships require a shared understanding of what counts as “the same” (Fiske, 1991, p. 147); while market-pricing relationships require a shared understanding of exchange ratios, quantities, and differences between qualities (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005).

The fourth implementation rule refers to culturally determined codes that people use to mark the existence and quality of any type of social relationship (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Communal sharing relationships are marked by an equivalence relation that aims at reinforcing the relationship through activities to celebrate the past, the present and the future of the group and it is through these activities that unity, sharing, and making certain sacrifices to advance the needs of the group become evident (Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For example, in some cultures, people sacrifice animals to feed the ancestors and then they share the food (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). The act of drinking and eating together reinforces a sense of oneness in the relationship. Authority ranking relationships, on the other hand, are marked by linear ordering, in that for instance leaders take positions in front of followers at major ceremonies (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). In this relationship, people must have a shared understanding of what constitutes superiority and what kind of magnitude (i.e., scale, measurement) will be used to determine superiority (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For instance, to be appointed in a senior position in the government sector might require that one has ten years of experience in a relevant field; while to be appointed in a senior position in the private sector might require that one has already a position in the company.

Equality matching relationships are marked by reciprocity, which aims to ensure that there is a tangible balance of actions and/or activities such as turn-taking, rotating and an eye for an eye principle (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). People in this relationship convey and create equality by concrete actions of comparing, aligning, balancing, and

matching symbolic records of their social relations (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Finally, market pricing relationships are marked by proportionality. People in this relationship use proportional language to inform each other about prices and to negotiate a deal (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For example, a leader who has four years of experience in a job receives as a salary of R20 000 per month, while a leader who has 10 years of experience in a job receives a salary of R70 000 per month. A leader who has 5 or 6 years of experience in a job may negotiate for a monthly salary between R35000 and R40 000.

Lastly, each culture shares ideological concepts defining what is real, what is good, and what is possible (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2000; Fiske & Haslam, 2005; Rai & Fiske, 2011). For instance, in the communal sharing relationship, the guiding ideals are that people should be a caring, compassionate, altruistic, sharing generously with others and that people should place the needs of the group ahead of their own needs. These guiding ideals are regulated through the *moral principle of unity* (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011). The guiding ideals in authority ranking relationships refer to respect, admiration, loyalty, and “obedience by subordinates, complemented by the pastoral responsibility of the authority to exercise his or her strength to provide security and protection of subordinates and to give wise directive guidance” (Fiske, 1991, p. 117; see also Rai & Fiske, 2011) and are regulated through the *moral principle of hierarchy*. The guiding ideals in equality matching relationships are based on the *moral principle of equality* which guarantees, for instance, that turn-taking rotations are kept entirely independent of any interference (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011). Finally, the *moral principle of proportionality* regulates market pricing relationships, in that people who enter this relationship are trusted, and entitled to calculate and maximise their utilities, costs and benefits (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011).

In sum, Relational Models Theory assumes that these four elementary relationships manifest themselves in a variety of behaviours and situations and that these behaviours and situations are guided, judged and interpreted through the moral principle of the respective relationship (Fiske, 1991; 1992). For example, behaviours and situations in communal sharing relationships are guided, judged and interpreted through the moral principle of unity; whereas behaviours and situations in authority ranking relationships are guided, judged and interpreted through the moral principle of hierarchy. Behaviours and situations in equality matching relationships are guided, judged and interpreted through the moral principle of equality, and in market pricing relationships through the moral principle of proportionality.

Apart from stipulating what constitutes a morally guided behaviour, the theory further assumes that people observe their own behaviours and behaviours of others during the process of social interaction from which they draw inferences about the kind of social relations they are operating from (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). These inferences may range from judging the behaviour as normatively appropriate if it corresponds with norms and values of the dominant elementary relationship or as normatively inappropriate if it does not correspond with norms and values of the elementary relationship (see also Giessner & van Quaquebeke, 2010).

According to Relational Models Theory, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and/or situations are defined as behaviour/situations that are either in line with morally guiding principles in the particular relationship or they violate these morally guiding principles. For instance, a director of a company, who greets his or her personal assistant by asking how she or he is doing, is most likely to be perceived or judged as behaving appropriately. However, a director of a company, who requests a kiss from his or her personal assistant when entering his or her office, is most likely to be perceived or judged as behaving inappropriately. The latter behaviour, however, might be considered as appropriate in a

different relationship; for instance, if the director of the company and the personal assistant are a couple (i.e., communal sharing relationship).

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The present study argues that the Relational Models Theory provides a theoretical framework which allows us to theoretically conceptualise (in)appropriateness of leadership behaviour. If we apply the perspective of the Relational Models Theory to leadership one could argue that the leader-follower relationships should be understood with regard to the dominant elementary relationship they are operating from (i.e., communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, and market pricing). For example, most organisations are hierarchically structured, which corresponds with the authority ranking relationship. However, that does not mean that all leader-follower relationships in every structured organisation are dominated by authority ranking (Hogg, 2001; Haslam et al., 2011; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Within the organisation, there can be many kinds of leader-follower relations that do not only differ in the degree to which they rely on the hierarchical structure but also in the culturally valid implementations of the relational models. For instance, there are different subunits in an organisation or different teams, and they engage in different domains. That is exactly the reason why it is important to study how such relational contexts affect the influence of leaders.

Social influence and the degree to which it is successful in producing the desired outcome depends on the social context (Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002). Consequently, if the context changes, leadership behaviour needs to change that it is considered to be influential within this specific context (Osborn et al., 2002). Thus, it can be assumed that to be influential, leaders need to implement their behaviour in accordance with the dominant

elementary relationship of the leader-follower relationship. More precisely, we propose that leadership behaviour that is guided by moral principles of behaviour of the dominant elementary relationship should be judged and perceived as *appropriate* (and should therefore be relatively more influential); whereas leadership behaviour that violates moral principles of the dominant elementary relationship should be judged as *inappropriate* (and should therefore be relatively less influential). For instance, within a communal sharing relationship between leader and followers, leadership behaviour stressing unity should be judged and perceived as appropriate; whereas leadership behaviour stressing hierarchy should be judged and perceived as inappropriate.

It is important to note that previous studies established that people hardly use only one relationship exclusively (Giessner & Quaquebeke, 2010). Naturally, people use a combination of the four relationships to coordinate their interactions (Fiske & Haslam, 1999; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For example, “colleagues may share a printer freely with each other (Communal Sharing), work on a project in which one of them is the expert who takes the lead (Authority Ranking), divide the office space equally (Equality Matching), and sell each other working hours for an agreed amount of money (Market Pricing)” (Giessner & Quaquebeke, 2010, p. 47). Nevertheless, while the relationships can be combined in different ways, there is often a dominant elementary relationship that significantly defines a given relationship (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005; see also Giessner & Quaquebeke, 2010; Wellman, 2017). The present study focuses on groups or organisations that adopt a communal sharing or authority ranking as a dominant elementary relationship to govern leader-follower interactions.

## **Leader-follower interactions in communal sharing and authority ranking relationships**

Communal sharing relationship is defined as a sense of oneness and unity, social identity and collectivism, and solidarity (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). When communal sharing is regarded as a dominant elementary relationship, group members “treat each other as all the same, focusing on commonalities and disregarding distinct individual identities” (Fiske, 1992, p. 690). Members in this relationship typically feel that they share something in common such as blood, deep attraction, national identity, a history of suffering, or the joy of food (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Examples include nationalism, racism, and intense romantic love (see also Bolender, 2010). In this relationship, group membership and group attributes rather than individual attributes become the primary criterion governing participation such that all members are expected to help the group complete the activity, without keeping track of inputs or predetermining specific responsibilities (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). For example, members within this relationship would only focus on the fact that everyone does the same work and produces the same things (Fiske, 1991; 1992) rather than focusing on who works more or less relative to the others. In a communal sharing relationship, caring for others is a core obligation while individualism is its core taboo (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Therefore, leader-follower interactions based on communal sharing relationship refer to a system of widespread involvement, whereby most or all group members frequently engage in leadership behaviour and leadership is viewed as a shared group responsibility (Wellman, 2017). Leadership behaviour in this relationship would likely focus on helping the group explore alternatives (e.g., decisions) that are acceptable to all group members rather than advancing members’ individual views and interests (Wellman, 2017). More specifically, the guiding principle of leadership behaviour within communal sharing is *unity* in achieving the common goal. For example, one group member can come up with an idea of painting a church, another group

member can volunteer to collect donations for buying paint, and another member might volunteer to manage catering for all members during the painting period.

Authority ranking relationship, on the other hand, is defined as a hierarchical or linear ordering of individuals or groups, where some individuals within a group are placed in relative higher or lower positions (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). It is a relationship of inequality (Fiske, 1991, p. 14). Individuals or groups in this relationship perceive each other as differing in social importance or status. This ordering then determines members' roles in the group with respect to group activities (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). This relationship is characterised by mutual acceptance of power differences, which implies that the power to make decisions lies with those of high status and that those of low status should be submissive (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Yet, the higher-ranked also have duties of protecting those below them. In this relationship, mutual respect is a core obligation and disrespect of the hierarchy is a taboo (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). Important is also to note, that physical abuse, use of force and manipulation is not considered to be authority ranking but as toxic relationship (Baumeister & Bushman, 2010). The latter is more properly referred to as a null relation in which people treat each other in non-social ways (Fiske, 1991; 1992; Fiske & Haslam, 2005 see also Baumeister & Bushman, 2010). Therefore, leader-follower interactions within authority ranking relationships would involve implicit or explicit linear ordering of group members. For example, the leader would fulfil the vast majority of the group's leadership responsibilities, while followers would expect and respect orders, suggestions and directives (see also Wellman, 2017). The guiding principle of leadership behaviour within authority ranking is providing guidance and respecting *hierarchy* in achieving the common goal.

## Research Hypotheses and Research Context

The present research argues that leadership behaviour is influential, the more it corresponds with the implementation of the dominant elementary relationship in a leader-follower relationship. More specifically, we hypothesised that leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs as compared to hierarchy, equality or proportionality will be more influential in the communal sharing context than in the authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy as compared to unity and followers' needs, equality or proportionality will be more influential in the authority ranking context than in the communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2).

These hypotheses were tested in four experimental studies for change-oriented leadership behaviour (Study 1) and task-oriented leadership behaviour (Study 2, Study 3 and Study 4), in a business (Study 1 and 2) and student context (Study 3 and 4) using either a scenario "to be imagined" approach (Study 1 and 2) or "a bogus post on Facebook" approach (Study 3 and 4). The decision to test the hypotheses experimentally for different leadership behaviours, in different social contexts and using different experimental approaches (i.e., imagination versus deception) was informed by the overall aim to achieve *internal validity*.

All four experimental studies were conducted with students who were recruited from the University of South Africa (Unisa). The University of South Africa is a distance university with the majority of students studying part-time. The four experiments were conducted using the internet platform *Qualtrics*. Prospective participants in all four studies were invited through email to participate in the study. The information about the research stated that the studies aim at extending our understanding of individuals supporting new strategies proposed by their leaders. All participants were further informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any given moment without any

consequences before they provided or did not provide *consent* to participate. After completing all measures (or after withdrawal from the study), participants were thanked for taking the time and effort to participate in the study. More importantly, they were debriefed about the real purpose of the study, while anonymity and confidentiality were again assured. Lastly, they were informed that the results would only be analysed at the group level (i.e., gender) for scientific purposes.

Permissions to conduct these four experimental studies were granted by the Department of Psychology (ref. no: PERC\_17044) and the Ethics Research Committee at the College of Human Sciences (ref. no: 2018-CHS-0212) of Unisa. The approval to use Unisa students for research purposes was received from the Senate Research, Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee of Unisa (ref. no: 2018\_RPSC\_072).

## STUDY 1

Study 1 was based on a 2 (elementary relationship: authority ranking *versus* communal sharing) x 4 (behavioural leadership: hierarchy *versus* unity *versus* equality *versus* proportionality) between-subject factorial design. More specifically, Study 1 tested the hypotheses that leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2). In Study 1, we focused on change-oriented leadership behaviour and leader's influence on followers was assessed as a commitment to change, perception of ethical leadership and identity-related influence (i.e., identification with the ingroup and identification with the leader).

### Participants

In total, 516 participants completed all principal variables (i.e., dependent variables and manipulation checks). None of the 516 participants identified the true aim of the study according to the suspicion check. Of the 516 participants, 252 indicated to be female, 222 indicated to be male, one participant used the option "other"; while 41 participants did not answer the question. They were on average 34.3 years old ranging from 18 to 70 years. The majority of our participants reported to belong to the group of black South Africans (n = 363), 63 reported belonging to the group of white South Africans, followed by 33 participants classifying themselves as coloured South Africans and 11 as Indian South Africans. Thirty-eight participants did not answer the question and eight used the option "other". We asked our participants whether they are formally employed. In total, 296 participants reported being

formally employed, 183 participants indicated not being formally employed, and the remaining participants did not answer this question (n = 37).

## **Procedure**

After providing consent to participate in the study, participants were randomly allocated to one of the eight experimental conditions: (1) communal sharing relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 67), (2) communal sharing relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 69), (3) communal sharing relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses equality (n = 57), (4) communal sharing relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses proportionality (n = 54), (5) authority ranking relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 75), (6) authority ranking relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 69), (7) authority ranking relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses equality (n = 60), and (8) authority ranking relationship and change leadership behaviour that stresses proportionality (n = 65).

The two independent variables were manipulated through vignettes that participants were requested to read. As the first independent variable, we manipulated the elementary relationship between a manager and staff as either communal sharing or authority ranking relationships. Communal Sharing was manipulated by the following information, which we adopted from Haslam and Fiske (1992, p. 468-469):

*Imagine you are working for a software company that sells telecommunication products and services. The company culture can be described as highly professional. The manager and staff members decide on the day-to-day work responsibilities and implement the decisions they have made. The manager and staff members highly regard and respect each*

*other. Your relationship with this manager, who is your manager, and your colleagues is based on a “one for all and all for one” approach, in that, what happens to the other person is nearly as important as what happens to you. If you, your manager and your colleagues needed help, then anyone of you would cancel their plans to help each other out. Your manager and your colleagues would go to any lengths to assist you should there be in need and you would do the same for them. It is normal that you, your manager and your colleagues eat together and share food with each other.*

Authority Ranking was manipulated by the following information, which again was adopted from Haslam and Fiske (1992, p. 468-469):

*Imagine you are working for a software company that sells telecommunication products and services. The company culture can be described as highly professional. Only the manager allocates work to staff members, the manager is highly regarded and respected by all. The staff members follow all decisions made by the manager. In other words, the manager always “calls the shots” and takes the lead in all day-to-day activities. This manager, who is your manager, is totally in charge and usually gets what s/he wants. Your manager takes sole responsibility for things. You and your colleagues follow along in this relationship and always back the manager’s decision because you know that you can depend on your manager’s lead and that you will be protected by your manager when needed.*

The change-oriented leadership behaviour that stresses unity, hierarchy, equality, or proportionality was manipulated through the following information, respectively:

*Now imagine that the company’s sales have dropped in the past two years. This then requires a new recruitment strategy to gain new customers. [unity: Your manager comes to you and your colleagues and informs you that a new recruitment strategy is required to gain new customers. You, your manager and your colleagues collectively develop and implement*

*the new strategy*]; [hierarchy: *Your manager comes to you and your colleagues “like somebody in charge” and informs you that s/he alone will develop the new strategy. You and your colleagues are instructed to follow her/his decision and implement the new strategy*]; [equality: *Your manager comes to you and your colleagues and informs you that the new strategy will be developed and implemented by dividing the necessary work evenly amongst all members in the company*]; or [proportionality: *Your manager comes to you and your colleagues and informs you that you need to apply a cost and benefit ratio when developing the new company strategy. You, your manager and your colleagues will calculate cost and benefit ratio before deciding on the implementation of this new strategy*].

Participants were asked to take a minute to read the information provided. The experimental manipulation was followed by the measurements of the dependent variables (i.e., commitment to change, ethical leadership, relational identification and ingroup identification), the manipulation check measures (i.e., manipulation check of elementary relationship and manipulation check of change leadership behaviour), suspicion check and demographic information (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status).

## **Measurements**

### **Dependent Variables**

*Commitment to change* was assessed through *affective* commitment to change scale developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) using the following items: “I believe in the value of new strategy”; “The new strategy will be good for the company”; “I think that the manager is making a mistake by introducing the new strategy” (reversed); and “This new strategy is not necessary” (reversed). The scale achieved internal consistency lower than  $\alpha < .70$ . The corrected item-total correlation analysis revealed that the two reversed items showed

corrected item-total correlations lower than .3. We, therefore, omitted the reversed items from the scale. The correlation between the two remaining items was strong,  $r = .61, p < .001$ .

*Ethical leadership* was assessed through the following four items proposed by Yulk, Mahsud, Hassan, and Prussia (2013): “The manager shows a strong concern for the company values”; “The manager sets an example of professional behaviour in his/her decisions and actions”; “The manager can be trusted in what s/he is doing”; and “The manager can be trusted to carry out promises and commitments” ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

*Relational identification* was measured using four items proposed by Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011, see also Shamir, Zakay, Breinin & Popper, 1998; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003): “When someone criticises this manager, it would feel like an insult to me”; “When I would talk about this manager, I would say *we* rather than *him or her*”; “I would be proud to tell others that I work with this manager”; and “The values of this manager are consistent to my own” ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

*Ingroup identification* was measured using eight items selected from the ingroup identification scale developed by Leach et al. (2008): “I feel a bond with the company”; “I feel committed to the company”; “I think that the company has a lot to be proud of”; “I have a lot in common with the average member of the company”; “I am similar to the average person in the company”; “Members of the company have a lot in common with each other”; “Members of the company are very similar to each other”; and “Members of the company are very similar to each other” ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

The items within each dependent variable were randomly presented to participants but the order of the dependent variables corresponds with the order of the above-outlined measures and was the same in all eight experimental conditions. All dependent variable measures were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to

5 (*strongly agree*). Thereafter, participants were presented with the manipulation check measures for the independent variable *elementary relationship*, and the manipulation check measures for the independent variable *leadership behaviour*.

### **Manipulation check measures**

The manipulation check measure for the independent variable *elementary relationship* was developed by applying the descriptions of the relationships for authority ranking and communal sharing as proposed by Fiske (1991, p. 83-89). Participants were asked to think about the information they received about the relationship between the manager and staff. They were provided with eight terms that described either the communal sharing relationship (i.e., united, sharing, similar, consensual) or the authority ranking relationship (i.e., hierarchical, guiding, unequal, dominance). Participants were asked to indicate whether the term presented (1) *does not describe the relationship at all*; (2) *slightly describes the relationship*, (3) *somewhat describes the relationship*, (4) *moderately describes the relationship*, or (5) *describes the relationship very well*. Two variables were computed, namely the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .65$  if the term “guiding” was excluded) and the communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

The manipulation check measure for change-oriented leadership behaviour consisted of four items that were selected from the relationship scale proposed by Haslam and Fiske (1999; see also Vodosek, 2009). Each item assessed one of the four moral principles in implementing change-oriented leadership behaviour: “The manager encourages unity and sharing amongst members of the company as well as considers the needs of all” (unity); “The manager uses his authority to instruct staff members of the company on what is expected of them” (hierarchy); “The manager encourages even distribution and equality amongst members of the company” (equality); and “The managers encourages business-like ways of

doing things” (proportionality). Participants responded to these items on a five-point answer format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Afterwards, participants were asked to briefly write down the aim of the study (i.e., suspicion check). Lastly, the participants were asked to complete demographical questions related to gender, ethnicity, age, and status of employment.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analysis**

In a first step, we tested whether the manipulations of the independent variables (i.e., elementary relationship between manager and staff and change leadership behaviour) were successful. As assumed participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored significantly higher on the communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ,  $n = 269$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ,  $n = 247$ ),  $F(1,514) = 105.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .169$ . Likewise, participants in the authority ranking relationship condition scored significantly higher on the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ,  $n = 269$ ) than participants in the communal sharing relationship condition ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ,  $n = 247$ ),  $F(1,514) = 32.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .059$ . These results imply that the manipulations of authority ranking and communal sharing as dominant relationships between manager and staff were successful.

To check the manipulation of change-oriented leadership behaviour guided by the principle of unity, we would have assumed that participants in the unity condition score higher on the unity manipulation check statement (“The manager encourages unity and sharing amongst members of the company as well as considers the needs of all”) than participants in the other three conditions (i.e., hierarchy, equality and proportionality). The

means of the manipulation check measure as depicted in Table 1 suggest that participants in the unity condition scored similarly on the unity manipulation check measure as participants in the equality and proportionality conditions. Our observation was supported by the results of group comparisons,  $F(3,482.790) = 9.83, p < .001, \eta^2 = .056$ , and the post-hoc statistics using Games-Howell, which revealed that participants in the hierarchy condition differed significantly from the other three conditions ( $p_s < .001$ ) but participants in the unity, equality and proportionality conditions did not differ significantly from each other ( $p_s > .995$ ). More specifically, participants in the hierarchy condition scored significantly lower on the unity manipulation check statement when compared to participants in the unity, equality and proportionality conditions.

**Table 1.**

**Means and standard deviations for the manipulation check statements depending on the experimental conditions, Study 1 (n = 294)**

	Manipulation checks							
	Unity		Hierarchy		Equality		Proportionality	
Experimental Conditions	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Unity	3.79	1.36	3.86	1.33	3.65	1.38	3.99	1.20
Hierarchy	2.99	1.60	4.19	1.23	2.97	1.53	3.40	1.39
Equality	3.78	1.38	4.08	1.21	4.04	1.13	3.96	1.11
Proportionality	3.75	1.36	3.92	1.24	3.69	1.39	3.83	1.19

Furthermore, we would have assumed for a successful manipulation of change-oriented leadership behaviour based on hierarchy, that participants in the hierarchy condition would have scored higher on the hierarchy manipulation check statement (“The manager uses his authority to instruct staff members of the company on what is expected of them”) than participants in the other three conditions. However, group comparisons revealed no significant differences between the four conditions,  $F(3,489) = 1.92, p > .05, \eta^2 = .012$ .

The manipulation check analysis for change-oriented leadership behaviour based on equality revealed that there were indeed significant group differences in responding to the manipulation check statement (“The manager encourages even distribution and equality amongst members of the company”),  $F(3,478.313) = 13.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .065$ . According to the Games-Howell post-hoc analysis, participants in the equality condition did not differ in their scores from participants in the unity and proportionality conditions ( $p_s > .08$ ). However, participants in the hierarchy condition scored significantly lower on the equality manipulation check statement when compared to the other three conditions ( $p_s < .01$ ).

Finally, we checked whether participants in the change-oriented leadership behaviour condition based on proportionality scored significantly higher on the manipulation check statement for proportionality (“The manager encourages business-like ways of doing things”),  $F(3, 269.482) = 5.713, p < .01, \eta^2 = .039$ . Again, the results revealed that participants in the proportionality condition did not differ from participants in the unity and equality conditions ( $p_s > .71$ ) but participants in the hierarchy condition scored significantly lower than participants in the other three conditions ( $p_s < .044$ ).

These results imply that our manipulation of change-oriented leadership behaviour discriminated only between change-oriented leadership behaviour based on hierarchy and the other three change-oriented leadership behaviours (i.e., unity, equality and proportionality).

Given that, our hypotheses were focusing on the matching between elementary relationship (i.e., communal sharing and authority ranking) and change leadership behaviour (i.e., unity and hierarchy), we decided to omit the equality and proportionality conditions from further analyses. We tested the manipulation checks for leadership behaviour based on unity and hierarchy again. The analyses revealed that participants in the unity condition scored significantly higher on the unity manipulation check measure than participants in the hierarchy condition,  $F(1,261.792) = 19.355, p < .001$ , and that participants in the hierarchy condition scored significantly higher on the hierarchy manipulation check measure than participants in the unity condition,  $F(1,267) = 4.581, p < .05$  (see Table 1).

In conclusion, the manipulation of the underlying relationship as either communal sharing or authority ranking was successful. On the other hand, the manipulation of change-oriented leadership behaviour as either based on unity, hierarchy, equality or proportionality was rather ambiguous according to the used manipulation check measures. However, our results suggest that participants discriminated change-oriented leadership behaviour based on hierarchy from the other three leadership behaviours. Consequently, the following analyses related to the hypotheses testing included only participants allocated to the change-oriented leadership behaviour conditions based on unity and hierarchy (total sample of 294). The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the principal variables are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

**Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of principal variables, Study 1 (n = 294)**

	1	2	3	4
M	4.00	3.74	3.33	3.71
SD	1.14	1.14	1.23	0.89
1. Affective commitment to change	-			
2. Ethical leadership	.61***	-		
3. Relational Identity	.49***	.69***	-	
4. Ingroup Identification	.41***	.56***	.59***	-

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### **Hypotheses Testing**

We argued that leadership behaviour is more influential the more it corresponds with the implementation of the dominant elementary relationship in a leader-follower relationship. More specifically, we hypothesised that leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2). We analysed our data using factorial multivariate analysis of variance (GLM multivariate). Commitment to change, ethical leadership, relational identification, and ingroup

identification were entered as dependent variables; while elementary relationship (i.e., communal sharing and authority ranking) and change-oriented leadership behaviour (i.e., unity and hierarchy) were entered as independent variables.

The Box's test revealed that the differences amongst the variance-covariance matrices were statistically significant, Box'  $M = 76.714$ ,  $F(30, 228313.95) = 2.49$ ,  $p < .001$ , implying that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance was violated. Thus, we opted to use *Pillai's Trace* as test statistic because the sample size was fairly similar in all four experimental conditions (Field, 2013). According to the *Pillai's Trace* statistic, there was a significant main effect of elementary relationship,  $F(4, 287) = 8.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .109$ , and a significant main effect of change-oriented leadership behaviour on the four dependent variables,  $F(4, 287) = 8.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .111$ . However, the interaction between elementary relationship and change-oriented leadership behaviour was not statistically significant,  $F(4, 287) = 0.52$ ,  $p = .724$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .006$ .

The test of between-subject effects showed that the independent variable elementary relationship had a significant main effect on all four dependent variables. More precisely, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition showed significantly more affective commitment to change ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1,290) = 5.13$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .017$ . A similar pattern was observed for ethical leadership in that participants attributed more ethical leadership to the manager in the communal sharing relationship condition ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1,290) = 9.268$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .031$ . Likewise, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition showed significantly more relational identification with the manager ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and ingroup identification ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ),  $F(1,290) = 30.623$ ,  $p <$

.001,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .096$ , and ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ),  $F(1,290) = 19.980$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .064$ , respectively.

Furthermore, participants in the unity condition showed significantly more commitment to change ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1,290) = 26.743$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .084$ . Similarly, participants in the unity condition attributed more ethical leadership to the manager ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = .93$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1,290) = 28.330$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .089$ . Also, participants in the unity condition showed significantly more relational identification with the manager ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and ingroup identification ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ),  $F(1,290) = 12.784$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .042$  and ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ )  $F(1,290) = 13.935$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_{ps}^2 = .046$ , respectively.

In sum, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition and participants in the change-oriented leadership behaviour condition based on unity scored significantly higher on the commitment to change, ethical leadership, relational identity and ingroup identification when compared with participants in the authority ranking relationship condition and change-oriented leadership behaviour condition based on hierarchy. Yet, the assumed interaction was not statistically significant.

## **Discussion**

The aim of Study 1 was to test whether change-oriented leadership behaviour is more influential the more its implementation corresponds with the dominant elementary relationship in a leader-follower relationship. The results suggest that leaders are considered as more influential when they are either portrayed to be in a communal sharing relationship

with their followers or when they demonstrate change-oriented leadership behaviour based on unity relative to leaders portrayed to be in an authority ranking relationship with their followers or as demonstrating change-oriented leadership behaviour based on hierarchy. Although we could not support our hypotheses in Experiment 1, the present results are somehow in line with Relational Models Theory in that identity-based indicators (i.e., relational identification and ingroup identification) differentiate communal sharing relationships between leader and followers from authority ranking relationships between leader and followers (Fiske, 1991; 1992).

The reason that we could not find empirical evidence for our hypotheses might be due to methodological limitations related to both the manipulation of leadership behaviour and the use of change-oriented leadership behaviour. For instance, our results implied that participants could not differentiate between the moral principles of unity, equality and proportionality in implementing change-oriented leadership. However, they could differentiate between hierarchy and the other three moral principles in implementing change-oriented leadership. We, therefore, decided to omit the equality and proportionality conditions from further analyses.

Furthermore, it is possible that the change-oriented leadership manipulations, used in Study 1, were rather ambiguous for our participants as the manipulation check results implied. The information in the scenarios that aimed at change-oriented leadership behaviour based either on unity or hierarchy might have not been clear enough and/or relevant enough for our participants. Moreover, people's attitudes toward change consist not only of effective but also of cognitive and behavioural intent components (Piderit, 2000), which are important indicators of support for change. However, Study 1 only examined the affective component through the underlying psychological dimension of commitment to change (e.g., affective commitment to change, Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

We also assume that using change-oriented leadership behaviour might be a limitation in its own because research on organisational change suggests that bottom-up communication and collective participation play a central role in influencing followers' attitudes towards change initiatives (Herold et al., 2008; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Parish, Cadwallader, & Busch, 2008). Moreover, change-oriented leadership behaviour is rather distinct from the other meta-categories of leadership behaviour as it usually refers to long-term activities and it is somehow limited to change situations (Herold et al., 2008; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

To overcome these limitations, we decided to use in our second study a 2 (elementary relationship: authority ranking *versus* communal sharing) x 2 (behavioural leadership: hierarchy *versus* unity) between-subject factorial design; and to focus on task-oriented leadership behaviour as this behaviour is more common and seemingly more relevant in most leader-follower interactions within stable organisations. Task-orientated leadership behaviour includes activities such as planning, clarifying, monitoring and problem-solving. Our manipulation in Study 2 focused on the two former activities. More specifically, *planning* is about scheduling activities and assigning tasks in a way that will accomplish task objectives and avoid delays, duplication of effort, and wasted resources (Yulk, 2012). *Clarifying* is about setting clear, specific, and challenging but realistic goals usually improving performance by a group (Locke & Latham, 1990) and ensuring that followers understand what to do, how to do it, and what are the expected results (see also Yukl et al., 2002; Derue et al., 2011; Yulk, 2012).

Thus, the aim of Study 2 was to test the hypotheses that task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2).

## STUDY 2

Study 2 was based on a 2 (elementary relationship: authority ranking *versus* communal sharing) x 2 (behavioural leadership: hierarchy *versus* unity) between-subject factorial design. Study 2 differs from Study 1 not only with regard to using a different leadership behaviour orientation (i.e., task-oriented leadership behaviour instead of change-oriented leadership behaviour) but also with regard to the assessment of the leader's influence. Study 2 assessed leadership influence as work engagement (different to Study 1, which assessed it as the commitment to change). Similar to Study 1, Study 2 assessed ethical leadership and identity-related influence (i.e., identification with the ingroup and identification with the leader) as indicators for the leader's influence.

### Participants

In Study 2, a total of 399 Unisa students completed all principal variables (i.e., dependent variables and the manipulation checks). None of them identified the true aim of the study according to the suspicion check. Of the 399 participants, 215 indicated to be female, 169 indicated to be male, two participants selected the option "other", and 13 participants did not indicate their gender. They were on average 34.3 years old ranging from 18 to 70 years. The majority of our participants reported belonging to the group of black South Africans (n = 227), followed by 89 white South Africans, 27 coloured South Africans, 34 Indian South Africans, eight participants used the option "others" and 14 did not indicate their ethnicity. In total, 277 participants reported being formally employed; 109 participants indicated not being formally employed, and the remaining 13 participants did not answer the question.

## Procedure

Participants were randomly allocated to one of the following the four experimental conditions: (1) communal sharing relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 107), (2) communal sharing relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 99), (3) authority ranking relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 88), and (4) authority ranking relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 105).

The two independent variables were again manipulated through vignettes, participants were requested to read. As the first independent variable, we manipulated the relationship between a manager and staff as either communal sharing or authority ranking relationship. Communal sharing was manipulated by the following information:

*Imagine you are working as a consultant for a software company that produces communication software for the private sector. The company's culture is highly professional. The manager and consultants share the responsibilities, they decide together and implement the decisions they reached together. Manager and consultants highly regard and respect each other. Your relationship with the manager and the other consultants is based on a "one for all and all for one" approach; in that, what happens to the other person is nearly as important to you as what happens to you. Your manager and your colleagues would go to any lengths to assist you should you be in need and you would do the same for them. It is normal that you, your manager and your colleagues eat together and share food with each other.*

Authority Ranking was manipulated by the following information:

*Imagine you are working as a consultant for a software company that produces communication software for the private sector. The company's culture is highly professional. Only the manager allocates work to staff. The manager is highly regarded and respected by*

*all. The staff follows all decisions made by the manager. In other words, the manager always “calls the shots” and takes the lead in all day-to-day activities. This manager, who is your manager, is totally in charge and usually gets what s/he wants. Your manager takes sole responsibility for things. You and your colleagues follow along in this relationship and always back the manager’s decision because you know that you can depend on your manager’s lead and that you will be protected by your manager when needed.*

The task-oriented leadership behaviour that stresses either unity or hierarchy was manipulated through the following information, respectively:

*[unity: Now imagine that the manager and consultants hold morning meetings every Monday to plan daily activities for the upcoming week. Your manager opens the meeting by saying “colleagues, we have a target to achieve by the end of this month and as we start this week, we are all expected to recruit new customers and to ensure that we keep our old customers satisfied. Colleagues, let each one of us work as much and as hard as we can to reach the target”]; [hierarchy: Now imagine that the manager and consultants hold morning meetings every Monday to plan daily activities for the upcoming week. Your manager opens the meeting by saying “colleagues, we have a target to achieve by the end of this month and as we start this week senior consultants are expected to recruit new customers and junior consultants are expected to keep our old customers satisfied. Colleagues, let each one of you work according to his or her assigned duties to reach the target”].*

Participants were asked to take a minute and to read the information provided. The experimental manipulation was followed by the measurements of the dependent variables (i.e., work engagement, ethical leadership, relational identification and ingroup identification), the manipulation check measures (i.e., manipulation check of relationship and

manipulation check of task leadership behaviour), suspicion check and demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status).

## Measurements

### Dependent Variables

*Work engagement* was assessed through the work engagement scale developed by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004; see also Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) as answer format. This scale measures physical, emotional, and cognitive work engagement. We used the following items: “I would devote a lot of energy to reach the week's target as consultant”; “I would try my best to perform well in reaching the week's target as consultant”; “I would be enthusiastic in reaching the week's target as consultant”; “I would be proud to reach the week's target as consultant”; “My mind would be focused on reaching the week's target as consultant”; and “I would pay a lot of attention on reaching the week's target as consultant” ( $\alpha = .92$ ). We decided to omit three items we originally selected from the work engagement scale because they showed low corrected item-total correlations ( $< .26$ ): “I would concentrate on reaching the week's target as consultant”; “I would feel positive about reaching the week's target as consultant”; and “I would work as hard I can and strive to complete my job and reach the week's target as consultant”. We assume that the low corrected item-total correlations were caused by the fact that the answer format of these three items was reversed when presenting the question – which was due to an oversight when we set up the questionnaire in *Qualtrics*.

*Ethical leadership* ( $\alpha = .91$ ), *relational identification* ( $\alpha = .82$ ), and *ingroup identification* ( $\alpha = .86$ ) were assessed using the same measures and answer format as in Study

1. Likewise, the items within each measurement were randomly presented to participants, and the order of the measures was the same as in Study 1. Thereafter, participants were presented with the manipulation check measures for the independent variable *elementary relationship*, and manipulation check measures for the independent variable *leadership behaviour*, and demographic questions.

### **Manipulation check measures**

The manipulation check measures for communal sharing ( $\alpha = .87$ ) and authority ranking ( $\alpha = .79$ ) were the same as in Study 1, except that in the authority ranking manipulation check measure the term “guiding” was replaced with the term “instructing”. The manipulation check measure for task-oriented leadership behaviour stressing unity was assessed by the following two items: “The manager encourages unity and sharing”; and “The manager considers the needs of all” ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ); while the manipulation check measure for task-oriented leadership behaviour stressing *hierarchy* was assessed by the following two items: “The manager instructs all on what is expected of them”; and “The manager gives clear instructions to all” ( $r = .75, p < .001$ ). The items were randomly presented to participants and they were asked to rate them on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

## Results

### Preliminary Analysis

First, we tested whether the manipulations of the independent variables (i.e., relationship between manager and consultants /staff and task-orientated leadership behaviours) were successful. As in Study 1, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored significantly higher on the communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ,  $n = 206$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ,  $n = 193$ ),  $F(1,373.53) = 62.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .136$ . Likewise, participants in the authority ranking relationship condition scored again significantly higher on the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ,  $n = 193$ ) than participants in the communal sharing relationship condition ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ,  $n = 206$ ),  $F(1,397) = 64.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 4.576$ . These results imply that the manipulations of communal sharing and authority ranking as dominant relationships between manager and consultants/staff were also successful in Study 2.

The manipulation check of task-oriented leadership behaviour guided by the principle of unity or hierarchy revealed that although participants in the unity condition scored higher on the unity manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ,  $n = 195$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ,  $n = 204$ ),  $F(1, 397) = 4.73$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $\eta^2 = .004$ , the difference was only marginally statistically significant. On the other hand, participants in the unity condition scored unexpectedly higher on the hierarchy manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ,  $n = 195$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ,  $n = 204$ ),  $F(1, 395.12) = 1.06$ ,  $p = .31$ ,  $\eta^2 = .001$ , yet the difference was not statistically significant either. Our results suggest that the manipulation of task-orientated leadership behaviour based on unity or hierarchy between manager and consultants/staff could not be

confirmed by the manipulation checks used. The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the principal variables are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

**Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of principal variables, Study 2 (n = 399)**

	1	2	3	4
M	4.26	3.96	3.56	3.77
SD	1.00	1.03	1.01	0.88
1. Work Engagement	-			
2. Ethical leadership	.40***	-		
3. Relational Identity	.23***	.65***	-	
4. Ingroup Identification	.28***	.53***	.65***	-

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### Hypotheses Testing

We tested our hypotheses that task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2) using factorial multivariate analysis of variance (GLM multivariate). Work engagement, ethical leadership, relational identification, and ingroup identification were

entered as dependent variables, and elementary relationship (i.e., communal sharing and authority ranking) and task-oriented leadership behaviour (i.e., unity and hierarchy) were entered as independent variables.

Because the Box's test revealed to be statistically not significant, Box'  $M = 41.86$ ,  $F(30, 410759.92) = 1.37$ ,  $p > .05$ , we decided to use *Wilks' Lambda*s multivariate teststatistic. According to the *Wilks' Lambda* statistic, there was only one significant main effect, namely for elementary relationship,  $F(4, 392) = 10.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .094$ . Neither the main effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour,  $F(4, 392) = 0.88$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .009$ ; nor the interaction between elementary relationship and task-oriented leadership behaviour reached statistical significance,  $F(4, 392) = 1.29$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .013$ .

The test of between-subject effects showed that the independent variable elementary relationship had a significant main effect on three of the four indicators of social influence. Similar to Study 1, participants in the communal sharing relationship attributed significantly more ethical leadership to the manager ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $F(1,395) = 6.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .015$ ; and they scored significantly higher on relational identification ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ) and on ingroup identification ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 1.07$  and  $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ , respectively),  $F(1, 395) = 27.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .064$ , and  $F(1, 395) = 28.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .068$ , respectively. However, elementary relationship between leader and followers did not influence followers' work engagement because the scores of participants in the communal sharing condition ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) did not differ statistically from the scores of participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ),  $F(1,395) = 1.29$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .013$ .

## Discussion

The aim of Study 2 was to test whether task-orientated leadership behaviour is more influential the more it corresponds with the implementation of the dominant elementary relationship in a leader-follower relationship. More precisely, we assumed that leaders are more influential when they implement task-oriented leadership behaviour stressing unity in a communal sharing context than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), and when they implement that task-oriented leadership behaviour stressing hierarchy in an authority ranking context than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2).

The results of Study 2 replicated to a certain degree our results of Study 1, in that leaders are more influential when they are portrayed to be in a communal sharing relationship than in an authority ranking relationship with their followers. However, the relationship between the leader and followers did not influence followers' work engagement. Different from Study 1, leadership behaviour did not influence any indicators of social influence.

Similar to Study 1, the manipulation of leadership behaviour was ambiguous according to our manipulation check measures. We argued in Study 1, that change-oriented leadership behaviour might be less relevant to our study context than task-oriented leadership behaviour. Given that we replicated in Study 2 the findings of Study 1, our argument seems less valid. One could, however, argue that it is not only the leadership behaviour but the behaviour of a particular leader that is important because according to Fiske (1991), implementation rules depends on the persons involved in the relationship. For instance, the use of "employees" or "consultants" in our scenario could have triggered different elementary relationships (i.e., market pricing) as we know that generally, people associate being a consultant/employee with profit-making and ratios (paid based on the work done). This is deeply embedded in peoples' minds (Fiske, Haslam, & Fiske, 1991) and in some instances,

people do not need to pronounce that being a consultant/employee is morally motivated by market pricing. One could, however, also argue that the context of a *software company that sells telecommunication products and services* (Study 1) or a *software company that produces communication software for the private sector* (Study 2) might not be relevant to our participants since they are university students registered in different disciplines and fields. One could further argue that using vignettes without contextualising them might also reduce the importance of the information, which in turn might have influenced our results.

To address these limitations, we conducted a third experiment using the context of internship, which appeared to be more relevant for our participants (i.e., university students) and providing a relevant context in which the information about the internship is not only presented (i.e., using Facebook) but also endorsed (i.e., Facebook site of the university). As in Study 2, the aim of Study 3 was to test whether task-orientated leadership behaviour is more influential the more it corresponds with the implementation of the dominant elementary relationship in a leader-follower relationship.

### STUDY 3

Study 3 was again based on a 2 (elementary relationship: authority ranking *versus* communal sharing) x 2 (behavioural leadership: hierarchy *versus* unity) between-subject factorial design. Leader's influence was assessed as the intention to apply for an internship (different to Study 1, which assessed leadership influence as the commitment to change and Study 2, which assessed it as work engagement), as perceiving the leader as ethical, and as identity-related influence (i.e., identification with the ingroup and relational identification).

#### Participants

In Study 3, a total of 553 Unisa students completed all principal variables (i.e., dependent variables and manipulation checks). None of them identified the true aim of the study according to the suspicion check. Of the 553 participants, 253 indicated to be female, 287 indicated to be male, and 13 participants did not indicate their gender. They were on average 32.8 years old ranging from 18 to 58 years. The majority of our participants reported belonging to the group of black South Africans (n = 368), 119 reported belonging to the group of white South Africans, followed by 34 participants classifying themselves as coloured South Africans, nine as Indian South Africans, eight used the option "other" and 15 did not indicate their ethnicity. In total, 385 participants reported being formally employed, 158 participants indicated not being formally employed, and the remaining 10 participants did not answer the question.

## **Procedure**

After providing consent to participate in the study, participants were randomly allocated to one of the four experimental conditions: (1) communal sharing relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 146), (2) communal sharing relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 135), (3) authority ranking relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses unity (n = 138), (4) authority ranking relationship and task leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy (n = 134).

Different from Study 1 and 2, the independent variables were manipulated as Facebook posts because students use Facebook frequently for communication and social interaction (Zhao, Sherri, & Jason, 2008). Participants were made to believe that the internship advert (relationship manipulation) was real and that the university endorsed the advert because it was posted on the Facebook site of the University. Participants were requested to read the Facebook entry. As the first independent variable, we manipulated the relationship between the leader and team members either as communal sharing or as authority ranking relationship followed by the manipulation of task-oriented leadership behaviour. Both independent variables were manipulated for each experimental condition by the information as outlined below.

***Communal sharing X Task-oriented leadership behaviour unity***



***Communal sharing X Task-oriented leadership behaviour hierarchy***



***Authority ranking X Task-oriented leadership behaviour unity***

...

We are looking for interns to join our team!

Our working team's culture is highly professional. Only the person in charge takes responsibilities. The person in charge makes the decides and all others implement them. We highly regard and respect each other. Our relationships are based on "the person in charge always calls the shots" principle; in that, the person in charge takes sole responsibility for things. Everybody always backs the person in charge because we know that we can depend on the person in change as s/he protects us when needed.

Our team leader, who is the person in charge, is keeping us together, is caring and compassionate, is fair in allocating work and is someone who places the team needs ahead of personal needs.

---

 Like  Comment

---

 Write a comment...    

***Authority ranking X Task-oriented leadership behaviour hierarchy***

...

We are looking for interns to join our team!

Our working team's culture is highly professional. Only the person in charge takes responsibilities. The person in charge makes the decides and all others implement them. We highly regard and respect each other. Our relationships are based on "the person in charge always calls the shots" principle; in that, the person in charge takes sole responsibility for things. Everybody always backs the person in charge because we know that we can depend on the person in change as s/he protects us when needed.

Our team leader, who is the person in charge, is respected, is loyal, is using the authority and power to allocate work and to give each team member instructions and directives.

---

 Like  Comment

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 Write a comment...    

Participants were asked to take a minute to read the Facebook advert. The experimental manipulation was followed by the measurements of the dependent variables (i.e., intention to apply, ethical leadership, relational identification and ingroup identification), the manipulation check measures (i.e., manipulation check of relationship and manipulation check of task leadership behaviour), suspicion check, and demographic information (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status).

## Measurements

### Dependent Variables

*Intention to apply* was measured through selected items from a scale by Aiman-Smith, Bauer, and Cable (2001; see also Turban & Keon, 1993, Collins, 2007) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) as answer format: “I would immediately apply for an internship in the team”; “I would immediately apply for an internship under the team leader”; “Working as an intern in the team will prepare me for my professional future”; “Working as an intern under the team leader will prepare me for my professional future”; “I would enjoy to work as an intern in the team”; “I would enjoy to work as an intern in under the team leader”; “If the team visited campus I would want to speak with a representative”; “If the team was at a job fair I would seek out their booth”; “I would attempt to gain an interview with the team”; and “I would actively pursue obtaining a position with the team” ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

*Ethical leadership* ( $\alpha = .95$ ), *relational identification* ( $\alpha = .87$ ), and *ingroup identification* ( $\alpha = .93$ ) were assessed using the same measures and answer format as in Study 1 and Study 2. Likewise, the items within each dependent variable were randomly presented

to participants, and the order of the dependent variables was the same in all four experimental conditions.

### **Manipulation check measures**

The communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .76$ ) were the same as in the previous studies. The manipulation check measure for task-oriented leadership behaviour consisted of selected items from Haslam and Fiske (1999). The items were randomly presented to participants and they were asked to respond to them on a five-point answer format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Similar to Study 1 but different from Study 2, Study 3 used one item respectively to assess task-orientated leadership behaviours: “The manager encourages unity and sharing amongst members of the company as well as considers the needs of all” (unity), and “The manager uses his authority to instruct staff members of the company on what is expected of them” (hierarchy).

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analysis**

We first tested whether the manipulations of the independent variables (i.e., relationship between the leader and team members and task-orientated leadership behaviours) were successful. As in our previous studies, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored significantly higher on the communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.97, SD = 0.81, n = 281$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 2.90, SD = 1.05, n = 272$ ),  $F(1,551) = 145.266, p < .001, \eta^2 = .210$ . Likewise, participants in the authority ranking relationship condition scored significantly higher on the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.81, SD = 1.04, n = 272$ ) than

participants in the communal sharing relationship condition ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ,  $n = 281$ ),  $F(1,550.766) = 114.409$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .172$ . These results again imply that the manipulations of communal sharing and authority ranking as dominant relationships between the leader and team members were successful.

Secondly, we checked the manipulation of task-oriented leadership behaviour guided either by the principles of unity or hierarchy to be successful. Different to our expectations, participants in the unity condition scored lower on the unity manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ,  $n = 284$ ) than participants in the hierarchy condition ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ,  $n = 269$ ),  $F(1,551) = 0.886$ ,  $p = .35$ ,  $\eta^2 = .006$ , although the difference was not statistically significant. As expected, participants in the hierarchy condition scored higher on the hierarchy manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ,  $n = 269$ ) when compared to participants in the unity condition ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ,  $n = 284$ )  $F(1, 551) = 0.225$ ,  $p = .64$ ,  $\eta^2 = .036$ ; yet the difference was not statistically significant. Our results imply again that the manipulation of task-orientated behaviour based on unity and hierarchy between the leader and team members could not be confirmed by the manipulation check measures used.

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the principal variables are reported in Table 4. Different from the previous two studies, the intercorrelations between the dependent variables were rather strong.

**Table 4.**

**Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of principal variables, Study 3 (n = 553)**

	1	2	3	4
M	3.59	3.66	3.29	3.38
SD	1.28	1.31	1.23	1.09
1. Intention to Apply	-			
2. Ethical leadership	.81***	-		
3. Relational Identity	.81***	.81***	-	
4. Ingroup Identification	.79***	.77***	.82***	-

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### **Hypotheses Testing**

We tested our hypotheses that task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis 1), whereas task-orientated leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2) using again factorial multivariate analysis of variance (GLM multivariate). Intention to apply, ethical leadership, relational identification, and ingroup identification were entered as dependent variables, and elementary relationship (i.e., communal sharing and authority ranking) and task-oriented leadership behaviour (i.e., unity and hierarchy) were entered as independent variables.

Because the Box's test was statistically significant, Box'  $M = 154.53$ ,  $F(30, 822134.81) = 5.08$ ,  $p < .001$ , we opted to use the *Pillai's Trace* as multivariate test statistic which revealed only one significant main effect on the dependent variables, namely of elementary relationship,  $F(4,546) = 36.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .21$ . Neither the main effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour,  $F(4,546) = 0.44$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .003$ , nor the interaction between elementary relationship and task-oriented leadership behaviour reached statistical significance,  $F(4,546) = 0.13$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .001$ .

The test of between-subject effects showed that the independent variable elementary relationship had a significant main effect on all four indicators of social influence. More precisely, participants in the communal sharing relationship showed significantly stronger intentions to apply ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ),  $F(1,549) = 137.156$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .200$ , they attributed more ethical leadership to the team leader ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ),  $F(1,549) = 108.659$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .165$ ; and they scored significantly higher on relational identification with the team leader ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) and ingroup identification ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 1.34$  and  $M = 2.99$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ , respectively),  $F(1,549) = 113.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .172$ , and  $F(1,549) = 85.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .135$ , respectively.

## Discussion

The results of Study 3 are consistent with the results of Study 2 in that only elementary relationship influenced the social influence indicators. Neither leadership behaviour nor the interaction between elementary relationship and leadership behaviour had an effect on the social influence indicators. To exclude the possibility that our findings result from the limitation of the manipulation of leadership behaviour (which according to our manipulation check was again rather ambiguous), we conducted a fourth experimental study in which we aimed to overcome this possible limitation.

More specifically, we decided to change our manipulation strategy for task-oriented leadership behaviour by replacing the manipulation describing the leader with a manipulation by which participants were requested to select adjectives that best describe the leader's behaviour whereby they were forced to either describe the leader's behaviour as unity-oriented or as hierarchy-oriented.

## STUDY 4

Study 4 was also based on a 2 (elementary relationship: authority ranking *versus* communal sharing) x 2 (behavioural leadership: hierarchy *versus* unity) between-subject factorial design. Leader's influence was assessed as the intention to apply for the internship, as motivation to work and as leader support (different to Study 1, 2, and 3 which assessed ethical leadership). Moreover, we excluded the measures of identification with the ingroup and identification with the leader.

## **Participants**

In Study 4, a total of 340 Unisa students completed the principal variables (i.e., dependent variables and manipulation checks). None of our participants identified the true aim of the study according to the suspicion check. Of the 340 participants, 245 indicated to be female, 77 indicated to be male, two indicated other and 16 participants did not indicate their gender. They were on average 33 years old ranging from 19 to 58 years. The majority of our participants reported belonging to the group of black South Africans ( $n = 315$ ), two reported belonging to the group of white South Africans, followed by one participant classifying self as Indian South Africans, six used the option “other”, and 16 did not indicate their ethnicity. In total, 143 participants reported being formally employed, 180 participants indicated not being formally employed, and the remaining 17 participants did not answer the question.

## **Procedure**

After providing consent to participate in the study, participants were randomly allocated to one of the four experimental conditions: (1) communal sharing relationship and unity-oriented ( $n = 79$ ), (2) communal sharing relationship and hierarchy-oriented ( $n = 90$ ), (3) authority ranking relationship and unity-oriented ( $n = 82$ ), (4) authority ranking relationship and hierarchy-oriented ( $n = 89$ ).

The independent variable elementary relationship was manipulated using the same instruction, context and communication form as in Study 3. Participants were requested to read the Facebook post carefully. Communal Sharing was manipulated by the following information:



Authority Ranking was manipulated by the following information:



The elementary relationship manipulation was followed by the manipulation of leadership behaviour, which differed from the previous studies. Instead of providing participants with a description of a leader's behaviour, we provided participants with a list of ten adjectives that describe the leader's behaviour and they were requested to select five

adjectives which best describe the leader's behaviour. Participants in the unity condition received the following ten adjectives: caring, compassionate, altruistic, unifying, sharing, empathic, kind, concerned, earnest and selfless; whereas participants in the hierarchy condition received the following adjectives: respected, admired, resolute, purposeful, thoroughgoing, decisive, firm, determined, strong and powerful.

Followed by the measurements of the dependent variables (i.e., intention to apply, leader support and motivation to work as indicators of social influence), the manipulation check measures (i.e., manipulation check of relationship), suspicion check and demographic information (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status) were assessed.

## **Measurements**

### **Dependent Variables**

*Intention to apply* was measured as in Study 3 ( $\alpha = .95$ ). *Leader Support* was measured by four-items from the scale of Za'rraga and Bonache (2003; see also Wickramasinghe & Widyaratne, 2012). "I would support this team leader"; "I would like to work for this team leader"; "This team leader is a good leader"; and "The values of this leader are consistent to my own" ( $\alpha = .91$ ). *Motivation to Work* was assessed using the work engagement scale developed by May et al. (2004; see also Rich et al., 2010) using similar items as in Study 2: "I would devote a lot of energy to learn as much as I can as an intern"; "I would try my best to perform my duties well"; "I would be enthusiastic to do my duties"; "I would be proud when doing my duties"; "My mind would be focused on duties at hand"; "I would pay a lot of attention on my duties"; "I would concentrate when doing my duties"; "I would feel positive doing what is expected of me"; and "I would work as hard I can and strive to complete my duties" ( $\alpha = .94$ ).

All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) as answer format. As in the previous studies, the items within each dependent variable were randomly presented to participants, and the order of the dependent variables was the same in all four experimental conditions. Thereafter, participants were presented with the manipulation check measures for relationship.

### **Manipulation check measures**

The communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $\alpha = .73$ ) were the same as in the previous studies. We did not include a manipulation check measure for task-oriented behaviour because of the changed manipulation strategy.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Preliminary Analysis**

As in the previous experiments, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored significantly higher on the communal sharing manipulation check measure ( $M = 4.13, SD = 0.75, n = 169$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.43, SD = 1.26, n = 171$ ),  $F(1,338) = 39.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .104$ . Likewise, participants in the authority ranking relationship condition scored significantly higher on the authority ranking manipulation check measure ( $M = 3.75, SD = 1.06, n = 171$ ) than participants in the communal sharing relationship condition ( $M = 3.13, SD = 1.06, n = 169$ ),  $F(1,338) = 29.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .079$ . These results imply that the manipulations of communal sharing and authority ranking as dominant relationships between the leader and team members were again successful.

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the principal variables are reported in Table 5. Similar to Study 3, the inter-correlations between the dependent variables were rather strong.

**Table 5.**

**Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of principal variables, Study 4 (n = 340)**

	1	2	3
M	4.14	4.02	4.61
SD	0.99	1.13	0.76
1. Intention to Apply	-		
2. Leader Support	.84***	-	
3. Motivation to Work	.77***	.70***	-

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### Hypotheses Testing

We tested our hypotheses that leadership behaviour that stresses unity will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking context (Hypothesis1), whereas leadership behaviour that stresses hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in the communal sharing context (Hypothesis 2) using again factorial multivariate analysis of variance (GLM multivariate). Intention to apply, leader support, and motivation to work were entered as dependent variables, and elementary relationship (i.e., communal sharing and authority ranking) and task-oriented leadership behaviour (i.e., unity and hierarchy) were entered as independent variables.

Because the Box's test was statistically significant, Box'  $M = 113.978$ ,  $F(18, 389507.077) = 6.23$ ,  $p < .001$ , we opted to use the *Pillai's Trace* as multivariate test statistic, which revealed only one significant main effect, namely of elementary relationship,  $F(3,334) = 11.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ . Neither the main effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour,  $F(3,334) = 0.12$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .001$ , nor the interaction between elementary relationship and task-oriented leadership reached statistical significance,  $F(3,334) = 0.86$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .008$ .

Participants in the communal sharing relationship condition showed significantly more intention to apply ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ),  $F(1,336) = 17.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .051$ , and participants in the communal sharing relationship condition supported the leader more ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) than participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ),  $F(1,336) = 23.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .065$ . Participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored similarly on motivation to work ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) as participants in the authority ranking relationship condition ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ),  $F(1,336) = 2.44$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .007$ .

In sum, participants in the communal sharing relationship condition scored significantly higher on the social influence indicators of intention to apply and leader support when compared with participants in the authority ranking relationship condition. These results replicate the findings of Study 2 and Study 3 that only the elementary relationship determines leadership influence on followers.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The overall aim of this study was to test whether leadership behaviour is more influential the more its implementation corresponds with the dominant elementary relationship of the leader-follower relationship. Our hypotheses were informed by the Relational Models Theory, which stipulates that people observe behaviours of themselves and others during the process of social interaction from which they draw inferences about the kind of social relations they are operating from (Fiske, 1991; 1992; 2004; Fiske & Haslam, 2005). These inferences may range from judging the behaviour as normatively appropriate if it corresponds with norms and values of the existing relationship (e.g., between a leader and followers) or as normatively inappropriate if does not corresponds with norms and values of the existing relationship (Fiske, 1992; Fiske & Tetlock, 1997).

More specifically, our research tested the assumption that when a leader-follower relationship is governed by norms and values of a particular elementary relationship (e.g., communal sharing, authority ranking), that this particular relationship guides not only their behaviour but also their interpretation and responses to others' behaviour. More specifically, we assumed that if a leadership behaviour is implemented in a manner that does not correspond with the dominant elementary relationship between leader and followers, the leadership behaviour will be viewed as a transgression and judged as normatively inappropriate which will decrease the leader's influence.

In four experimental studies, we tested our hypotheses that leadership behaviour stressing unity and followers' needs will be more influential in a communal sharing than in an authority ranking relationship (Hypothesis 1), whereas leadership behaviour stressing hierarchy will be more influential in an authority ranking than in a communal sharing relationship between leader and followers (Hypothesis 2). The results of all four experimental

studies did not support these two hypotheses because no interaction effect between the elementary relationship that is dominant (i.e., communal sharing relationship or authority ranking relationship) and the implementation of the leadership behaviour (i.e. stressing unity or hierarchy or equality or proportionality) on the social influence indicators was found.

However, our results suggest that leaders are considered as more influential when they are portrayed to be in a communal sharing relationship relative to leaders portrayed to be in an authority ranking relationship with their followers (Study 1 to 4) or when they demonstrate leadership behaviour based on unity relative to leadership behaviour based on hierarchy (Study 1). These results suggest that leaders are influential on followers when they share the same social identity with their followers (communal sharing) or when their behaviour is social identity related (unity).

Our results are somehow in line with the findings of Keck, Giessner, Van Quaquebeke and Kruijff (2018), who showed the importance of the communal sharing relationship for leader-follower relationships by asking participants to indicate which of the four elementary relationships corresponded to their actual and ideal relationships with their leader. The majority of participants (44%) identified authority ranking as the dominant actual elementary relationship, followed by market pricing (21%), equality matching (20%) and communal sharing relationships (15%). However, their *ideal* relationship was communal sharing (30%) followed by authority ranking (25%), equality matching (20%), and market pricing relationships (20%). Both the results by Keck et al. (2018) and our results show that communal sharing as the leader-follower relationship is not only favoured but also most influential.

Moreover, our findings suggest one consistent methodological limitation of our studies, in that the manipulations of leadership behaviour (e.g., change-oriented, task-oriented leadership behaviour or just leadership behaviour) were rather ambiguous. One of the reasons

might be that the transgressions used in the manipulation of leadership behaviour were not relevant or strong enough for our participants. One could explain these findings from the perspective of the Relational Models Theory, which assumes that the ordering of the relationships has implications on perceptions of moral transgressions. More specifically, Fiske and Tetlock (1997) argue that distress and outrage about explicit transgressions of relationships (e.g., the mismatch between elementary relationship and behaviour) depend on the direction and distance of the ordering of the relationships (see also McGraw & Tetlock, 2005; Fiske & Rai, 2011). For instance, Fiske and Tetlock (1997) propose that people rank elementary relationships from communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching to market pricing (communal sharing > authority ranking > equality matching > market pricing; as cited by Fiske, 1991; see also Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; McGraw & Tetlock, 2005) and that this ranking corresponds with the relational complexity of the elementary relationships and the ontogenetic emergence of the elementary relationship in a person's life (Fiske, 1991, see also Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; McGraw & Tetlock, 2005). Moreover, Fiske and Tetlock (1997) argue that people tend to perceive transgressions in the direction *from* communal sharing *to* authority ranking *to* equality matching *to* market pricing as more stressful and unjustifiable when compared to transgressions in the opposite direction *from* market pricing *to* equality matching *to* authority ranking *to* communal sharing. Important for our research is, however, the fact that not only the direction matters but also the distance (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). According to Relational Models Theory, a violation from communal sharing to market pricing is typically perceived as more stressful than a violation from communal sharing to authority ranking or from communal sharing to equality matching. For an example, a leader who is in a communal sharing relationship with his or her followers and his or her leadership behaviour is guided by hierarchy may be less perceived as committing an unjustifiable transgressing than a leader who is in a communal sharing relationship with his or her

followers and his or her leadership behaviour is guided by proportionality. Or to put it differently, the leader is more likely “get away” with the violation within a communal sharing relationship if the distance of the moral asymmetry is rather small (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997, see also McGraw & Tetlock, 2005). This limitation should be addressed in future research by which both direction and distance of transgression should be considered.

Although the outlined limitation is core, it is not the only limitation of the present research. Another limitation is that we did not pre-test the information we used for the experimental manipulations. It is possible that some of the information was not only irrelevant for our participants (as we assumed) but misunderstood by them. Another limitation is of course that we cannot be certain that the manipulation of the leadership behaviour might not have changed our participants’ perception about the dominant elementary relationship. Again, future research should consider this possibility. The fact that we did not include a leadership behaviour manipulation check in Study 4, limits also our methodological certainty.

Besides these limitations, our findings have various implications for research on leadership. First, previous research showing that the communal sharing relationship is more favoured (Keck et al., 2018) and our research implying that the communal sharing relationship is most important to influence followers underlines the role of social identity processes in leadership. According to Fiske (1991; 1992), the *social self* differs in communal sharing and authority ranking relationships to the extent to which communalities and similarities (i.e., identification with the ingroup) or differences and hierarchies are important and salient (Fiske, 1991; 1992). Members in communal sharing relationship endeavour to identify with the ingroup, in order to ensure that group members are similar, equivalent and undifferentiated, whereas members in authority ranking relationship endeavour to identify with their respective status in the hierarchy, in order to ensure that group members are

different (Wellman, 2017; see also Fiske, 1991; 1992). However, research has shown that shared social identity (i.e., ingroup identification and or relational identification) plays a significant role in social influence processes (Abrams et al., 1990; Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, Turner et al., 1987; see also Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

Thus, our results support the notion of the importance of the leader-follower relationship which points to the social identity approach to leadership. This approach argues that leadership processes are embedded in a context of shared group membership (Haslam et al., 2011). More specifically, for members in communal sharing relationships, social influence occurs within the ingroup, which corresponds with the assumption that the more similar people are, the stronger is their influence (Fiske, 1991, p. 76). People tend to group the self as identical or like others or differentiate the self in contrast to others (see also Turner & Oakes, 1986). People within communal sharing relationships may go along with others as they fear to appear as disrespectful or as they feel embarrassed to stand out as disparate or opposed to the group (Fiske, 1991, p. 76). This may be because of social identification and the desire to belong (Fiske, 1991; see also Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identification is about people feeling that they have something in common with others that make them essentially the same (Fiske, 1991; 1999). This shared social identity makes people willingly conform to groups norms and being motivated to imitate actions of others especially those whom they perceive as “in-group prototypes”(Fiske, 1991). Thus, the question that future research needs to address is whether appropriate leadership behaviour depends also on shared ingroup norms which might differ from general moral principles because they depend on the intergroup context.

Secondly (and in line with the previous contribution), our results support the findings of previous research which shows that violations/transgressions by the leader do not have necessarily a negative impact on leadership influence on followers (e.g., Platow, Hoar, Reid,

Harley & Morrison, 1997; Jetten, Duck, Terry, & O'Brien, 2002). For instance, Platow et al. (1997) showed that in interpersonal situations fair leaders are endorsed over unfair leaders, whereas in intergroup situations, leaders who favour the in-group (rather than the out-group) are more likely to be endorsed, regardless of whether the leader is perceived as fair or not. Similarly, leaders who favour the out-group are more likely to be negatively evaluated by followers because they violated the basic expectation that an in-group leader should advance the in-group (Jetten et al., 2002). Likewise, a leader gained more support from followers under the condition that she or he favours the in-group more than the out-group, as opposed to conditions, where she or he treats both groups fairly or where she or he favours the out-group more than the in-group (Haslam & Platow, 2001). Moreover, the very same study found that perceptions of fairness did not determine followers' support. Support for a leader's decision was strongest when the decision favoured in-group as opposed to out-group interests. Thus, support for a leader's decision as sensible and fair does not necessarily mean that followers will be willing to act out the leader's intentions. Based on these findings, one could argue that transgressions might only be perceived as such if they disadvantage the ingroup. Future research should follow up on this conclusion.

Lastly, our consistent results that leaders in communal sharing relationships with their followers are relatively more influential might result from the changed public discourses about organisations that stress agility rather than hierarchy. Agile organisations define their structure as networks, and their people as a cohesive community that shares leadership and embraces role mobility (Aghina et al., 2018). Again, future research is necessary to test this explanation.

In conclusion, although the present research could not demonstrate empirically all assumed psychological processes involved that make leadership behaviour to be perceived or judged as (in)appropriate behaviour, we still adhere that our research question "what makes

leadership behaviour (in)appropriate” is of utmost importance. We would even argue that in times where political leaders can loot whole countries (e.g., South Africa; Sudan, Angola), or leaders of companies can jeopardize the reputation of a brand because of greed (e.g., VW), or destroy an already weak economy of a country because of ignorance and incompetence (Eskom in South Africa), the question should not only focus on “what makes leadership behaviour inappropriate” but also on when and under what conditions will inappropriate leadership behaviour be challenged by followers and lead to social protest.

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