

**Comparing identity-, task-, and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours  
regarding the effects on different work-related outcomes**

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### **Abstract**

In an everchanging world, companies have to adapt their way of working to remain successful. With that, new demands on leaders emerge. Literature suggests that to be successful, leaders should implement identity leadership behaviours. In this study, the effects of relationship-oriented, task-oriented, and identity leadership behaviours are evaluated in the context of a German company. Relationship-oriented leadership behaviour is proposed to predict identification with the team, trust towards the leader, and job satisfaction. Further, task-oriented leadership behaviour is proposed to predict innovative work behaviours and organizational citizenship, while identity leadership behaviour is proposed to predict all dependent variables mentioned, mediated by the identification with the team. The study consists of two parts. Firstly, an online questionnaire with a sample of 309 employees investigates the relation between leadership behaviours and the employees' identification with the team, trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviour, and organizational citizenship. Secondly, the findings are validated and enhanced by the leaders' perspective in interviews with four leaders in the company. Conducting linear regression analyses, results suggest that relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviours are better predictors for identification with the team, trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship compared to identity leadership behaviour. Overall, relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviours sufficiently cover the positive effects identity leadership behaviour was found to have in other studies. Thus, leaders can be successful even without identity leadership behaviours.

*Keywords:* identity leadership, relationship-oriented leadership, task-oriented leadership, distributed leadership, new work

## **Comparing identity-, task-, and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours regarding the effects on different work-related outcomes**

As Götz Werner, the head of a large German company (dm-Drogerie Markt), states, he wants his employees to execute tasks because they perceive them to be reasonable, not because they have been told to execute them (Karrierefürer, n.d.).

On a similar note, more and more companies are moving away from hierarchical structures, granting their employees more autonomy, freedom, and participation in the working environment (Matusiewicz, 2019). This movement is referred to as “new work”. Various large companies such as Adidas or Microsoft have already implemented aspects of it into their daily business (Matusiewicz, 2019). However, without the right leaders, new work and subsequent changes will not be successful (Helmold, 2020). Leadership in the context of new work grants freedom and enables self-responsibility while ensuring employees contribute to the company’s tasks (Müller-Friemuth & Kühn, 2019). Consequently, new leadership styles need to be discussed. Current literature suggests successful leaders should focus on identity leadership, targeting the group identity in addition to task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours (van Dick & Kerschreiter, 2016). Identity leadership was found to predict job satisfaction, identification with the team, trust towards the leader, organizational citizenship, and innovative work behaviour (Van Dick et al., 2018). To test whether identity leadership has an advantage over relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviours, this study investigates to what extent identity leadership behaviour influences the given work-related outcomes compared to task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours. Therefore, the extent to which identity leadership behaviour has positive effects for the organization and whether these effects are already accomplished by the existing task- and relationship-oriented leaders will be explored.

The research question this paper aims to answer is *To what extent do identity leadership, task-oriented leadership, and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours influence job satisfaction, identification with the team, trust towards the leader, organizational citizenship and innovative work behaviour?*.

### **Theoretical background and current state of research**

#### **Leadership**

Leadership is defined as the process of influencing followers to work towards common group goals (Helmold & Samara, 2019; Platow et al., 2017). Leadership theories assume a cooperative relationship between leader and followers, sharing agency (Reicher et al., 2005).

Consequently, leadership is defined as a group process (Platow et al., 2015; Reicher et al., 2005). Hence, leadership is not solely dependent on the leader's personality. It rather depends on the interplay of leader, circumstances, and followers (Padilla et al., 2007). This means that the followers are equally important in making leadership effective.

When defining leadership, the different types of behaviour (relationship-oriented, task-oriented, and identity leadership behaviour) should not be neglected. A leader must perform various tasks, with different impacts and of different importance. The three types of leadership that are of interest for this study will be discussed in the following.

### ***Task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour***

Task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and their effect on group and organizational processes have been studied in various papers (Behrendt et al., 2017; Montano et al., 2017; Tabernerero et al., 2009; Yukl et al., 2002). Both types of leadership behaviours have been found to affect variables that can be seen as indicators of effective leadership (Judge et al., 2004).

Leadership behaviour focusing on structuring, evaluation, and analysis of information while guiding solving and decision-making processes is usually classified as task-oriented behaviour (Yukl, 2012a). By doing so, the groups efficacy and job performance are enhanced, and processes are improved (Judge et al., 2004; Tabernerero et al., 2009; Yukl, 2012b). Task-oriented behaviour concentrates on the accomplishment of shared objectives, which is facilitated by relationship-oriented behaviour improving the interactions of group members (Behrendt et al., 2017).

In the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviours relationship-oriented behaviour is divided into supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering (Yukl, 2012a). Further, it includes asking for ideas, agreeing, being friendly, providing positive feedback, encouraging, and showing personal interest (Hoogetboom & Wilderom, 2015; Yukl et al., 2002). This type of leadership behaviour typically strengthens the interpersonal relations within a group, solving conflicts and interpersonal problems (Yukl, 2012b). All in all, relationship-oriented behaviour is targeted at improving the interaction between group members (Behrendt et al., 2017). Thus, the employee's engagement, identification, and commitment, as well as the group's cohesion, job and leader satisfaction, and motivation are enhanced, supporting the completion of the group's goals (Behrendt et al., 2017; Judge et al., 2004; Lok & Crawford, 1999; Tabernerero et al., 2009).

Both task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours can have an impact on the team and its performance. To sum up, the difference between task- and relationship-oriented

leadership behaviour lays mainly in the focus of the behaviour. Task-oriented leadership behaviour is directed towards enabling the team to fulfil the task, while relationship-oriented leadership behaviour is centred around the individual. Hence, both types of leadership behaviour are important, especially to ensure productivity in corporate contexts. However, as mentioned above, leadership also depends on the followers, making a third type of leadership essential.

### ***Identity leadership behaviour***

Further theories of leadership stress that effective leadership depends upon a leader and the followers having some sense of a shared identity (Reicher et al., 2005). This assumption is built upon social identity as defined by Tajfel (1974). The social identity of an individual is (partly) derived from group membership and is influenced by its emotional significance (Tajfel, 1974). Hence, through identification with a group, the successes or failures of the group are projected onto the self. Based on this, it has been found that leaders can be especially successful if they stress the shared identity of leader and followers (Steffens et al., 2014). The leader defines a group and its goals and, subsequently, the followers evaluate and interpret the definition given, integrating the group into their sense of self (Reicher et al., 2005). This means that leaders can gain influence by making the followers feel to be part of the group and by making the group matter to the followers. These feelings can be accomplished by a leader's identity leadership behaviours. These behaviours are grouped into four dimensions (Steffens et al., 2014), which go beyond relationship-oriented leadership behaviours in focussing on building cohesion and identity within the team.

Comparing identity leadership behaviour to relationship-oriented leadership behaviour there are some similarities in the type of behaviour and its effects for the organization. For example, promoting the interests of the team could be classified as either relationship-oriented or identity leadership behaviour (Steffens et al., 2014; Yukl, 2012a). Further, both types of behaviour enhance the employees' job satisfaction and trust towards the leader (Bobbio et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2004; Lok & Crawford, 1999). However, relationship-oriented behaviour targets the interaction between individuals and aims to minimize conflicts. In contrast, identity leadership behaviour targets the relationship between an individual and the group by enhancing the identification with the team and stressing the groups values. The four dimensions of identity leadership will be clarified in the following.

***Identity prototypicality.*** Steffens et al. (2014) define identity prototypicality as a leader's representativeness of the group and its members. Identity prototypicality is about personifying a group's unique qualities and what it means to be a group member. By

representing the core values of the group, the leader draws a clear distinction between their own and other groups. Essentially, identity prototypicality is about the leader being ‘one of us’, a prototypical group member (Steffens et al., 2014).

***Identity advancement.*** Moreover, identity advancement refers to a leader ‘doing it for us’, embodying the groups interests and working towards the group’s goals. The leader is not focussed on their own goals, but rather the main interests of the group. Further, the leader helps tackling problems and overcoming challenges while preventing the group from failing (Steffens et al., 2014).

***Identity entrepreneurship.*** By ‘crafting a sense of us’ in terms of identity entrepreneurship, a leader actively creates the feeling of a shared identity. This can be done by the leader’s choice of words, e.g., referring to the group as ‘us’ and ‘we’, but also by clearly defining what the group stands for, stressing its aims and values (Steffens & Haslam, 2013; Steffens et al., 2014).

***Identity impresarioship.*** To really put meaning into the group membership, a leader should set up structures and display the group’s existence to individuals inside or outside the group. This can be done by setting up events, activities, or facilitating certain structures (Steffens et al., 2014).

Taking these dimensions together and behaving accordingly, the leader can create a shared social identity within the group (Steffens et al., 2014). All four dimensions work to create a ‘sense of we and us’ in the followers, which is needed for the leader to be of influence. With respect to that, leaders and followers will behave differently depending on whether they perceive themselves to share a group identity. If they do not feel as if they share a common identity, leaders and followers are likely to act solely as individuals or as members of another group (Platow et al., 2015). This could significantly impact a group’s performance and can be applied to various contexts (Fransen et al., 2020; Haslam, 2014; Slater & Barker, 2019). In corporate contexts, a lack of identification with the team could limit productivity significantly (Platow et al., 2015). Identification causes employees to work for the group’s interests, enhancing the employees’ performance and increasing organizational citizenship behaviour (Van Knippenberg, 2000; Worchel et al., 1998).

Organizational citizenship behaviour is defined as behaviour that an employee performs to support the company (e.g., complying to the rules, helping other employees) which is seen separately from, and as an addition to, the tasks the employee was hired to perform (Van Knippenberg, 2000). If an individual identifies with a group, they are more likely to act supportive towards the group. If not, it is easy to omit supportive behaviours such as

organizational citizenship behaviour, because it benefits the group instead of the self only (Van Knippenberg, 2000).

Moreover, innovative work behaviour is defined as “intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization” (Janssen, 2000, p. 288). To exhibit this kind of behaviour, the employee needs to be motivated, e.g., through identification with the group. Both organizational citizenship and innovative work behaviour can be enhanced by identification with the group (Riketta, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2018).

Identity leadership was found to enhance the team members’ (employees’) identification with the team, trust in their leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship (Krug, Haslam, et al., 2021; Riketta, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2018). This means that identity leadership impacts the individuals’ wellbeing, feelings towards group and leader (job satisfaction, trust towards the leader) as well as the employees’ performance (organizational citizenship behaviour, innovative work behaviour). Additionally, it has a positive effect on team members’ mental health and is negatively associated with measures of burnout (Fransen et al., 2020; Van Dick et al., 2018). Lastly, identity leadership enhances a follower’s identification with the group, which in turn predicts outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviour, innovative work behaviour, trust towards the leader, and job satisfaction (Cicero et al., 2007; Krug, Geibel, et al., 2021; Platow et al., 1990; Riketta, 2005). Therefore, it is proposed that identification with the team mediates the effect identity leadership behaviour has on the given variables. All in all, research shows that effective leadership is centred around group identity development (Haslam et al., 2017). Further, it is stressed that next to task- and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, leaders should also focus on group-oriented leadership, creating a shared social identity (van Dick & Kerschreiter, 2016). This means that leaders should pay attention to identity management in addition to the usual tasks of a leader in organizational contexts.

### **The present study**

While identity leadership behaviour predicted identification with the team, trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship in previous studies (Stevens et al., 2018; Van Dick et al., 2018), relationship-oriented leadership behaviours were found to enhance (inter-)personal outcomes such as group cohesion, follower satisfaction, job and leader satisfaction, and motivation (Judge et al., 2004; Tabernero et al., 2009; Yukl, 2012b). In contrast, task-oriented leadership behaviours increase the groups efficacy and improve processes (Tabernero et al., 2009; Yukl, 2012b). Additionally, task-

oriented leadership behaviour is related to job performance and group-organization performance (Judge et al., 2004). Moreover, organizational identification predicts work-related variables such as job satisfaction, in-role and extra-role performance (Riketta, 2005).

In this study, the employees' identification with the team, trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship behaviour will be measured as indicators of effective leadership.

It is proposed that task-oriented behaviour will predict outcomes related to productivity and effectiveness such as innovative work behaviours and organizational citizenship. Moreover, since relationship-oriented behaviour targets the individual and the individual's interaction with the group, it is proposed that relationship-oriented behaviour will predict personal outcomes, such as job satisfaction, identification with the team, and trust towards the leader in this sample. Furthermore, the perceived group identity of an employee is an important predictor of the employee's behaviour and identity leadership behaviour was found to enhance identification with the team, trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship (Steffens & Haslam, 2013; Stevens et al., 2018; Van Dick et al., 2018). Hence, it is proposed that identity leadership behaviour will predict trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship behaviour mediated by the identification with the team.

**H1:** Relationship-oriented leadership behaviour will be positively associated with trust towards the leader, identification with the team, and job satisfaction of the employees.

**H2:** Task-oriented leadership behaviour will be positively associated with innovative work behaviours and organizational citizenship of the employees.

**H3:** Identity leadership behaviour will be positively associated with the employees' trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship, mediated by the identification with the team.

As mentioned above, effective leadership is the result of the interplay of leader, context, and followers (Padilla et al., 2007). Hence, special characteristics of the sample and the context should be considered. In most companies, there is one leader per team, who needs to combine task- and relationship-oriented behaviour. In the company that is subject to analysis, this is not the case. Instead, there are two leaders per team. Relationship-oriented and task-oriented behaviours are assigned to different persons, allowing both kinds of behaviour to be present at the same time. In literature, the term "distributed leadership" has been used to describe the



distribution of leadership responsibilities between multiple leaders (Gronn, 2002). Based on the job descriptions of the company, the tasks of these leaders can be classified into task-oriented behaviour for one and relationship-oriented behaviour for the other leader. Corresponding to the Spotify model of organizations, the first leader will be referred to as “tribe lead”, while the second type of leader will be referred to as “people lead” (Kniberg & Ivarsson, 2012).

The people lead’s tasks focus on mentoring, giving feedback, team building, motivating, and coaching employees, which is very similar to relationship-oriented behaviour as defined in literature (Yukl, 2012b). The tribe lead’s tasks correspond with the description of task-oriented behaviour in literature, which is described as structuring, evaluating, analysing and guiding problem solving (Yukl, 2012b). In contrast to the people lead, the tribe lead is supposed to guide decision processes, have technical and professional expertise and customer focus. Consequently, according to the company’s job descriptions, it is expected that the people leads will have higher scores on the scale measuring relationship-oriented behaviours than the tribe leads. Respectively, it is proposed that tribe leads will have higher scores on the scale measuring task-oriented behaviour than the people leads.

**H4:** The people leads will be rated higher on the relationship-oriented leadership scale than the tribe leads.

**H5:** The tribe leads will be rated higher on the task-oriented leadership scale than the people leads.

## **Method**

The research is split up into two subsequent parts, following an explanatory sequential design (Creswell et al., 2003). Firstly, a questionnaire measures the employee’s perception of their leaders’ behaviours and the impact the leaders have on various work-related outcomes. Thus, it can be analysed to what extent the dimensions of the identity leadership behaviour are already present in the company and how different leadership behaviours affect job satisfaction, trust towards the leader, identification with the team, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship. Based on the results of the questionnaire, interviews are conducted with leaders from within the company. The interview questions are designed to enhance and validate the findings of the questionnaire. This way, the relation between leaders and followers is assessed from both viewpoints. Leaders were asked to what extent they use the behaviours to obtain their perspective and confirm the impressions of the employees. This enhances the perception of behaviour that the employees have by the actual (perception of) the leaders’

behaviours. To answer the research question, the primary focus of the study is the quantitative part and its results. The qualitative analysis is an addition to facilitate interpretation and clarification of the results from the quantitative part.

The study has been reviewed and accepted by the ethics board of the University of Twente and was preregistered in the Open Science Framework. In the following, the sample, procedure, and design for each the questionnaire and the interviews are noted.

### **Context of analysis**

The company that is subject of analysis in this paper has recently undergone great structural changes. The corporate structure changed, flattening hierarchies, and enabling new perspectives for the employees. Especially interesting for this analysis are the newly created leadership positions. The structure changed from having one leader for every team to having two leaders per team, who's tasks can be generally described as relationship-oriented behaviour and task-oriented behaviour, respectively. The allocation to a leadership position was based on self-selection, where leaders could apply for either one of these positions.

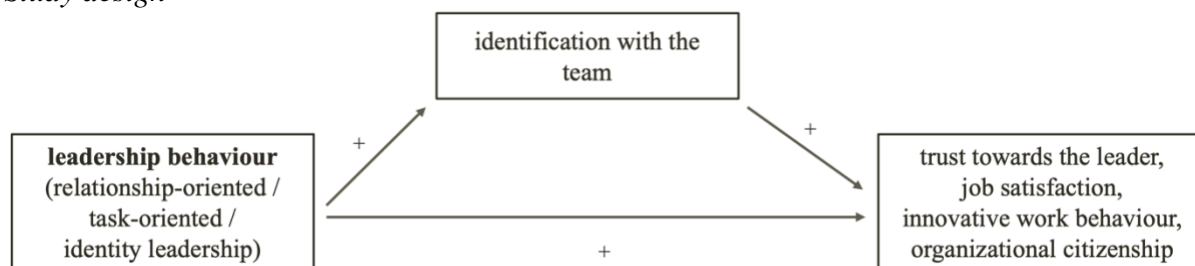
### **Questionnaire**

#### ***Participants & Design***

Using non-probability convenience sampling, data was collected in a large German company. Via email, the online questionnaire was directly forwarded to employees across the company to ensure participation of employees from different corporate divisions and with different leaders. Participation was voluntary. Hence, a self-selection of the participants into participating or not took place.

Data was collected with a Qualtrics questionnaire between March 28th and April 28th, 2022. Incomplete data was interpreted as the participant withdrawing participation and hence not included in the analysis. A sample of 309 employees with a mean age of 43.3 ( $SD = 12.3$ ) completed the questionnaire. 64.4% ( $N = 199$ ) of participants were male and 35.0% ( $N = 108$ ) were female, while 0.7% ( $N = 2$ ) of participants declared their gender as „other“.

The independent variable investigated was the leadership behaviour (relationship-oriented, task-oriented, or identity) of people leads and tribe leads. As dependent variables, job satisfaction, trust towards the leader, identification with the team, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship were measured. It was proposed that the effect of the leadership behaviours on the dependent variables is mediated by the employees' identification with the team. Data was collected in a within-subjects design. See figure 1 for an overview of the study design. In addition, the participants were asked to state their age and gender as control variables.

**Figure 1***Study design***Measures**

**Leadership behaviour.** Each of the three leadership styles observed was measured with four items. Each participant rated both their tribe lead and their people lead on these scales. Items based on the behavioural descriptions in Yukl's hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviour (2012a) measured task-oriented (e.g., "My people lead [tribe lead] checks on the progress and quality of the work.") and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour (e.g., "My people lead [tribe lead] shows concern for the needs and feelings of individual members."). The scale for relationship-oriented leadership behaviour shows excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .90$ ), while the reliability of the scale measuring task-oriented leadership behaviour is good ( $\alpha = .88$ ). To measure identity leadership behaviour, four items of the Identity Leadership Inventory (Steffens et al., 2014) were used (e.g., "My people lead [tribe lead] embodies what the team stands for."). As mentioned above, some leadership behaviours can be classified as either relationship-oriented or identity leadership behaviours. To account for this overlap, items of the Identity Leadership Inventory that measure identity leadership behaviours with the least similarities to relationship-oriented leadership are used in this study instead of the short form of the Identity Leadership Inventory. Translations of the items given by the authors of the Identity Leadership Inventory were used (Van Dick et al., 2018). The identity leadership behaviour scale shows excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Responses to all leadership items were given on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). This means that the higher the score, the more the leader shows the leadership behaviour.

**Identification with the team.** Identification with the team was assessed with four items (e.g., "I identify with the members of my team.") adapted from Doosje et al. (1995). Employees gave their responses on a 7-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Reliability of the scale is good ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

**Trust towards the leader.** Trust towards the leader was measured with three items adapted from Schoorman et al. (2016) for the employee's tribe lead and people lead each.

Responses to the items (e.g., “I really wish I had a good way to keep an eye on my people lead [tribe lead].”) were given on a 7-point Likert scale (“*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*”). Reliability of this scale is  $\alpha = .68$ , which is questionable.

**Job satisfaction.** Three items extracted from the Job Diagnostic Survey Job satisfaction (Van Dick et al., 2001) were used to measure job satisfaction. Answers were given on a 7-point Likert scale with the scale anchors “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*” (e.g., “Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.”). Reliability of the scale is good ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

**Innovative work behaviour.** To measure innovative work behaviours, participants were asked to rate how often they perform eight different behaviours (e.g., “Creating new ideas for difficult issues.”) on a 6-point Likert scale from “*never*” (1) to “*always*” (6) based on Janssen (2000). This scale’s reliability is excellent ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Organizational citizenship.** Organizational citizenship was measured with five items (e.g., “I am always punctual.”) on a 7-point Likert scale with scale anchors “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*” (Van Dick et al., 2006). The scale has poor reliability ( $\alpha = .52$ ), deviating from the reliability of  $\alpha = .79$  stated by the authors (Van Dick et al., 2006). However, the scale will be used and the variable will be included in the analysis. When interpreting the effects, the poor reliability of the scale should be considered.

**Control variables.** Additionally, participants were asked to state their age and gender as control variables. For an overview of all items used, see appendix A. Items without a translation available were translated from English to German by the researcher. Because this questionnaire was conducted in an applied setting and shared within a company, the researcher opted for short scales. This was decided to ensure participation of a sufficient number of participants by decreasing the response burden (Alcaraz et al., 2013).

### **Procedure**

The first stage of research in this study was quantitative. The employees of the company were asked to participate in an online questionnaire, which consisted of 39 questions and took 10 minutes to complete.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of the data, and the researcher’s contact information was given. Further, participants were informed about their right to withdraw from participation at any point without giving a reason. Afterwards, participants were asked to confirm that they read the information by checking a box. Moreover, participants were asked to give their active consent. The study ended at this question for participants that did not consent. Participants that gave their consent were presented with the items mentioned above. To avoid bias, the scales were

presented to the participants in randomized order. Additionally, the order of choices was randomly flipped. After completing the last question, participants were debriefed and thanked for the participation.

### ***Statistical analysis***

The statistical analysis was done in R. Using the *robustlmm* and *robustbase* package, linear (multilevel) models were analysed to test the preregistered hypotheses (Koller, 2016; Maechler et al., 2022). The assumptions for linear modelling were not met, hence robust analyses were used to account for heteroscedasticity and lack of linearity (Hox et al., 2018; Koller, 2016).

### **Interviews**

#### ***Participants & Design***

Via Microsoft Teams, the interviews were conducted in the same German company as the questionnaire. Participants for the interviews were selected with a purposeful sampling strategy based on gender, team, and management experience to allow for maximum variation in perspectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). Two people leads and two tribe leads (one female, one male each) were contacted and asked whether they would like to participate. All leaders contacted agreed to participate. There was no relationship between the participants and the researcher prior to the interviews.

The leaders that took part in the interviews have been a leader ranging from 7 to 36 years ( $M = 21.5$ ;  $SD = 12.4$ ) and are responsible for a mean of 21.5 ( $SD = 10.4$ ) employees.

#### ***Procedure***

Prior to the interviews, the researcher obtained written consent and orally re-established active consent when doing the interviews. The interviews lasted 20-30 minutes each and began by the researcher reading out the same introductory statement to all participants which contained the objectives of the interviews, explained the participants rights, and ensured anonymity in the data analysis and use. Following, participants were asked for their consent to participate and for the interviews to be recorded. All participants consented and were interviewed by the researcher in the next step.

Topics in the interviews were the individual's leadership style and behaviour, the individual's perception of leadership in the company, the individual's notion of a perfect leader and what would be needed to enable everyone to be this perfect leader. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for follow-up questions by the researcher in case a relevant topic arises that was not priorly identified. The researcher asked standardized open-ended questions (e.g., "What behaviour do you show as a leader?"). See appendix B for the questions prepared prior

to the interviews. In the end, the researcher thanked the participants for their participation and once again ensured anonymity.

### ***Analysis***

The transcripts of the interviews were screened for behaviours and the perceived consequences of the behaviours mentioned. Further, information about leadership in the company was extracted and matched to the survey results.

In the first stage of analysis, each transcript was analysed sentence by sentence. The content of each sentence was assessed and grouped thematically for each transcript. Mind maps were used to thematically organize the content and to visually combine them into relevant categories. Following, the categories were combined across participants. They were organized into central categories and the responses of the participants were compared.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive statistics and correlations**

Descriptive statistics and the correlations in the data are depicted below (see table 1). The scales used to measure relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and task-oriented leadership behaviour are moderately correlated, while there is a strong correlation between the scale measuring relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and the scale measuring identity leadership behaviour. This means that relationship-oriented and identity leadership behaviours are strongly related.

### **Leadership behaviour of people leads and tribe leads**

A linear regression model with the leadership behaviour as dependent variable and the leader as independent variable was fitted. Comparing the leadership behaviours of people leads and tribe leads in this sample, it is apparent that the mean score of relationship-oriented behaviour is not significantly different between the tribe leads and the people leads ( $B = -0.04$ ;  $p = .446$ ). Tribe leads have a mean score of 5.3 ( $SD = 1.3$ ) on the relationship-oriented leadership behaviour scale, while people leads have a mean of 5.4 ( $SD = 1.3$ ). However, people leads and tribe leads significantly differ in the extent to which they display task-oriented leadership behaviour ( $B = 1.05$ ;  $p < .001$ ). In the given sample the tribe leads have a mean of 5.1 ( $SD = 1.3$ ), while people leads have a mean of 4.0 ( $SD = 1.6$ ) on the task-oriented leadership behaviour scale. This means that the employees perceive their tribe lead to show significantly more task-oriented leadership behaviour than their people lead in this sample.

**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Trust towards the leader	4.5	1.5	—								
2. Identification with the team	5.9	0.9	.15**	—							
3. Job satisfaction	5.7	1.0	.16**	.45**	—						
4. Innovative work behaviour <sup>a</sup>	3.8	0.9	.04	.23**	.14**	—					
5. Organizational citizenship	5.8	0.7	.01	.25**	.16**	.19**	—				
6. Relationship-oriented leadership behaviour	5.4	1.3	.49**	.26**	.26**	.08**	.10	—			
7. Task-oriented leadership behaviour	4.5	1.5	.40**	.20**	.22**	.03	.12	.57**	—		
8. Identity leadership behaviour	5.1	1.4	.45**	.23**	.23**	.06**	.10	.83**	.55**	—	
9. Age <sup>b</sup>	43.3	12.3	-.17**	-.13**	.10**	-.04	-.12**	-.01	-.01	.02	—
10. Gender <sup>c</sup>	1.7	0.5	-.04	-.01	-.03	.06*	-.23**	.14**	.07**	.15**	.11**

*Note.* Scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale unless indicated otherwise.

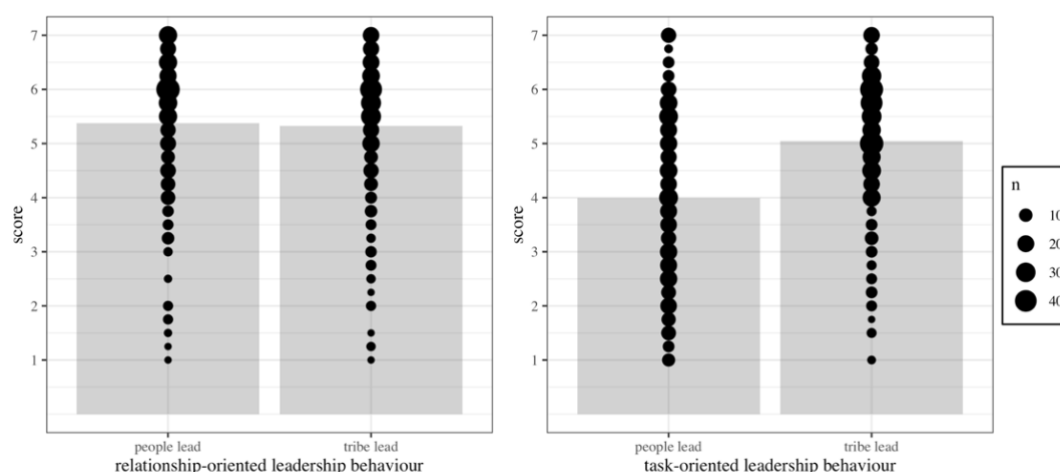
<sup>a</sup> Measured on a 6-point Likert scale.

<sup>b</sup> Continuous variable.

<sup>c</sup> 1 = female and 2 = male.

\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*  $p < .001$ .

For a visual overview of the mean relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviour per leader see figure 2. Moreover, results suggest that the people leads show significantly more identity leadership behaviour than the tribe leads. People leads have a mean of 5.1 ( $SD = 1.5$ ) while tribe leads have a mean of 4.9 ( $SD = 1.4$ ) on the identity leadership behaviour scale. The difference is significant ( $B = -0.15$ ;  $p = .03$ ).

**Figure 2***Relationship-oriented and task-oriented behaviour per leader*

## **Effect of leadership behaviour on dependent variables**

### ***Identification with the team***

To test whether the identification with the team is predicted by the different leadership behaviours, a robust linear regression model was fitted. The leadership behaviours were included as the independent variables, identification with the team was the dependent variable in the model. Results show that the extent to which a leader shows relationship-oriented behaviour has a significant effect on the employees' identification with the team ( $B = 0.15$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This means that if the relationship-oriented behaviour increases by 1, identification with the team increases by 0.15. Additionally, identification with the team is significantly predicted by the extent to which a leader shows task-oriented behaviour ( $B = 0.04$ ;  $p = .02$ ). This means that if the task-oriented behaviour increases by 1, the employees' identification with the team increases by 0.04. However, identification with the team is not significantly predicted by the extent to which a leader shows identity leadership behaviour ( $B < 0.01$ ;  $p = .98$ ). This means that the extent to which a leader shows identity leadership behaviour does not have a significant influence on the employees' identification with the team in this sample.

### ***Trust towards the leader***

As for trust towards the leader, a robust multilevel model with the leadership behaviour and the leader as independent variables and trust towards the leader as dependent variable was fitted. As the data is nested within the participants, the multilevel model was conducted with random intercepts. Level 1 variables were centred within the clusters (here: participants) to be able to interpret the individual score regarding its relative position within the cluster (Finch et al., 2019). Further, level 2 variables were grand-mean centred to enable a comparison of scores across all individuals (Finch et al., 2019).

Relationship-oriented, task-oriented, and identity leadership behaviour are significant predictors for trust towards the leader. A leader's relationship-oriented leadership behaviour has a significant effect on the employee's trust towards the leader ( $B = 0.30$ ;  $p < .001$ ) as a leader's task-oriented leadership behaviour ( $B = 0.15$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and identity leadership behaviour ( $B = 0.16$ ;  $p < .001$ ) have. This means that if the relationship-oriented behaviour increases by 1, trust towards the leader increases by 0.30. Further, if the task-oriented leadership behaviour increases by 1, trust towards the leader increases by 0.15 and if the identity leadership behaviour increases by 1, trust towards the leader increases by 0.16.

Moreover, the leader does not have a significant effect on trust ( $B = -0.02$ ;  $p = .55$ ). This means that in this sample the trust towards the tribe leads is not significantly higher ( $M = 4.5$ ;  $SD = 1.2$ ) compared to the mean trust towards the people leads ( $M = 4.4$ ;  $SD = 1.2$ ).



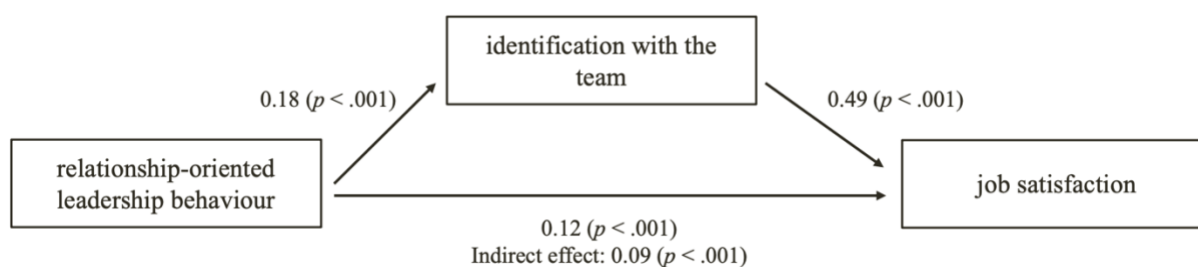
### ***Job satisfaction***

To determine the effect the leadership behaviours have on the employees' job satisfaction, a robust linear regression model with job satisfaction as dependent variable and task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and identity leadership behaviour as independent variables was fitted. Further, the mediation effect of identification with the team was tested with a Sobel test. Results suggest that the employees' job satisfaction is predicted by the leaders' relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and task-oriented leadership behaviour. The extent to which a leader shows relationship-oriented leadership behaviour has a significant direct effect on job satisfaction ( $B = 0.12$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This means that the employees' job satisfaction increases by 0.12, when the extent to which the leaders show relationship-oriented leadership behaviour increases by 1. Additionally, relationship-oriented leadership behaviour has a significant indirect effect on job satisfaction, partly mediated by the employees' identification with the team ( $B = 0.09$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This means that when a leader shows more relationship-oriented leadership behaviours, the employees' identification with the team increases, which then predicts an increase in job satisfaction. The mediation effect is visualized in figure 3.

Further, a leader's task-oriented leadership behaviour has a significant direct effect on the employees' job satisfaction ( $B = 0.09$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Hence, when the extent to which a leader shows task-oriented leadership behaviour increases by 1, the employees' job satisfaction increases by 0.09. Additionally, there is a significant indirect effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour on job satisfaction ( $B = 0.06$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Hence, the effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour on job satisfaction is partly mediated by the identification with the team. This means that an increase in task-oriented leadership behaviour causes an increase in identification with the team which, in turn, increases the employees' job satisfaction (see figure 4).

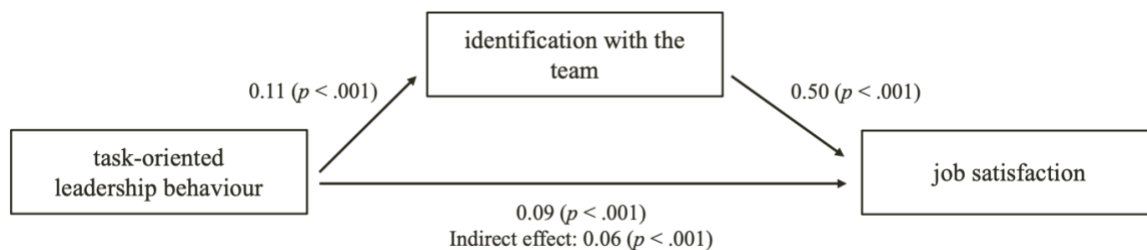
**Figure 3**

*Mediation model for job satisfaction predicted by relationship-oriented leadership behaviour*



**Figure 4**

*Mediation model for job satisfaction predicted by task-oriented leadership behaviour*



However, the effect of identity leadership behaviour on the employees' job satisfaction is not significant ( $B = -0.03$ ;  $p = .37$ ). This means that, when controlling for relationship-oriented leadership behaviour and task-oriented leadership behaviour, identity leadership behaviour does not predict job satisfaction in this sample.

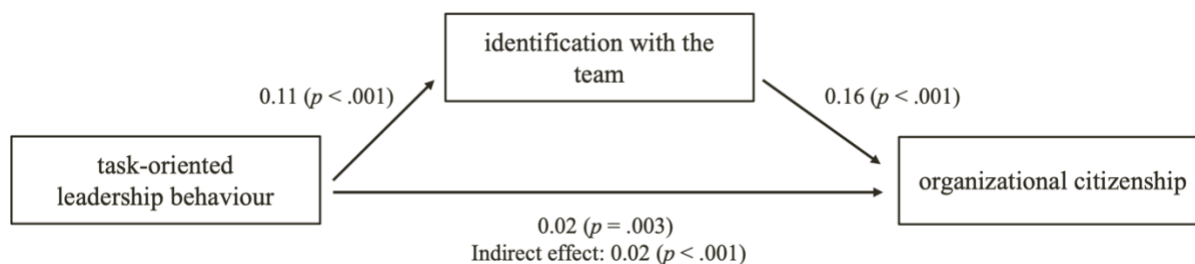
### ***Organizational citizenship***

Further, a linear regression model was fitted to test the effect the leadership behaviours have on organizational citizenship. The leadership behaviours were included in the model as independent variables, while organizational citizenship was the dependent variable. Additionally, a Sobel test was performed with task-oriented leadership behaviour as the independent, organizational citizenship as the dependent, and identification with the team as the mediating variable.

It was found that identity leadership behaviour does not predict the employees' organizational citizenship ( $B = 0.01$ ;  $p = .60$ ). Similarly, relationship-oriented leadership behaviour does not have a significant effect on organizational citizenship ( $B = 0.03$ ;  $p = .44$ ). However, results suggest a significant indirect effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour on organizational citizenship ( $B = 0.02$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This effect is partly mediated by the identification with the team. This means that an increase in task-oriented leadership behaviour predicts an increase in identification with the team, which then leads to an increase in organizational citizenship in the employees. Next to the mediation, there is a significant direct effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour on organizational citizenship ( $B = 0.02$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This means that, even when controlling for the mediation, an increase in task-oriented leadership behaviour by 1 predicts an increase in organizational citizenship by 0.02. The mediation is illustrated in figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Mediation model for organizational citizenship*



### ***Innovative work behaviour***

Lastly, a linear regression model with innovative work behaviour as dependent variable and the leadership behaviours as independent variables was fitted to determine the effect the leadership behaviours have on the innovative work behaviour. Additionally, a Sobel test was conducted with relationship-oriented leadership behaviour as independent variable, innovative work behaviour as dependent variable and identification with the team as mediator.

Innovative work behaviour is not significantly predicted by the leaders' task-oriented leadership behaviour ( $B = -0.01$ ;  $p = .53$ ). Additionally, identity leadership behaviour does not have a significant direct effect on the employees' innovative work behaviour ( $B = -0.01$ ;  $p = .71$ ). This means that the extent to which a leader shows identity leadership behaviour or task-oriented leadership behaviour does not have an impact on the innovative work behaviour of the employees in this sample.

However, there is a significant indirect effect of relationship-oriented leadership behaviour on innovative work behaviour ( $B = 0.04$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This effect is fully mediated by identification with the team. This means that if the leader shows more relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, identification with the team increases and predicts an increase in innovative work behaviour. The relationship is illustrated in figure 6.

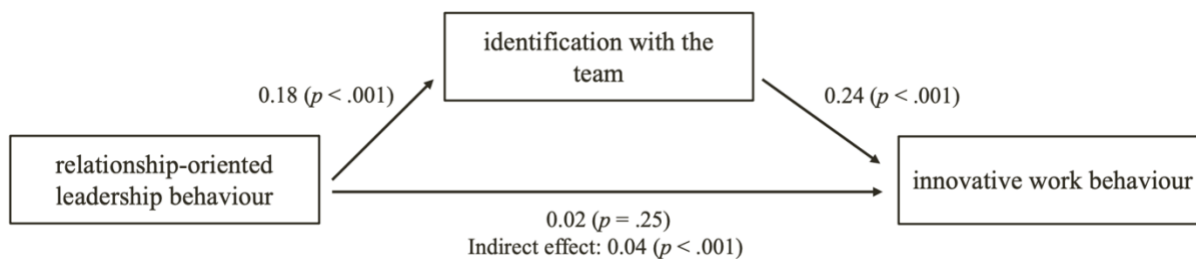
### **Control variables**

To make sure the effects found are caused by the variables measured and not by other influences such as gender and age, additional analyses were conducted. To account for possible influences, the measured control variables age and gender were included in the models.

Results show that including the control variables in the models does not change the significance of the findings presented above.

**Figure 6**

*Mediation model for innovative work behaviour*



## Interviews

The interviews were transcribed and screened for behaviours mentioned. Behaviours, the perceived consequences of the behaviours mentioned, and information about leadership in the company were extracted. The central categories derived from the analysis are leadership behaviour of the people leads in the company, leadership behaviour of the tribe leads in the company, the overall understanding of leadership, and how leadership in the company is generally perceived. These categories will be discussed and illustrated with quotations from the participants below.

People leads described their leadership style as cooperative. A people lead's main task, according to the participants, is taking care of personnel and development matters and ensuring that each employee has the right skills and competences to successfully fulfil their tasks. This corresponds to the company's job descriptions. Moreover, people leads mentioned to be showing "supportive", "encouraging", and "enabling" behaviours. These can be classified as relationship-oriented leadership behaviour (Yukl, 2012a). This means that how the employees perceive the leaders to behave (based on the survey results) is similar to how the leaders describe their own behaviour.

In this sample, tribe leads described their leadership style as cooperative and explicitly not authoritarian. According to the tribe leads, their main responsibility is setting up structures for their employees to be able to succeed. According to one lead, he "accompanies the solution finding process, but does not push for the solution itself." Across all interviews, leaders saw themselves responsible for enabling employees to fulfil their tasks autonomously and stressed the employees' self-responsibility. Further, one tribe lead stressed that she does not have a "universal leadership style, but a leadership style that corresponds to the employee and their experience", emphasizing the selective nature of her leadership behaviour. For experienced employees, the tribe lead describes herself to be functioning as a coach. Coaching is, based on

literature, considered to be relationship-oriented leadership behaviour (Yukl, 2012b). Thus, this shows that the tribe lead expands their original role with some relationship-oriented leadership behaviours. This was also discovered in the survey, which means that employees and leaders perceive this deviation from the tribe leads' original role (according to the company's job descriptions) similarly.

Regarding the overall understanding of leadership, the importance of building trust is stressed by all leaders. In addition, the importance of intrinsic motivation was highlighted several times, e.g., by one leader stressing that it is essential "to establish [motivation] through something, through visions, through a very clearly communicated understanding of roles [...] carried by images that then lead to motivation again." This hints at the fact that leaders seem to show some identity leadership behaviours which is also apparent in the survey results. However, not only the group identity is considered to be important. One participant stressed to also keep in mind the corporate-identity and the company's interests. The participant mentioned that it was important to consider the employees' satisfaction and ability to contribute to the group's goals, but to also consider whether the employee is needed or a better fit somewhere else in the company. According to the participant, this can be accomplished by questioning whether "the employee [is] happy in this position, are they satisfied with it, can they be better employed somewhere else in the company?"

Leadership in the company is perceived similarly by the leaders that took part in the interviews and by the employees completing the questionnaire. People leads mostly show relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, while tribe leads show both relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviour. In addition, both leaders show behaviours that can be categorized as identity-leadership behaviour. However, additional insights were gained by the participants responses when asked about leadership across the company in the interviews. Participants mentioned a large discrepancy between different leaders and their leadership styles in stressing that they "represent a very small percentage [in the company] with my way of working with my people and my team." According to the participants, some managers still lead their teams according to old structures and old role perceptions. At the same time, other managers have fully adapted to the transformed structure of the company and changed their leadership behaviour accordingly. Others, in turn, employ a mixture of both. To give an example, some leaders give strict instructions, while others stress and enable self-responsibility of their employees. As possible explanations for these differences, the leader's personality, their level of development, and their superiors were mentioned. According to one participant, the requirements towards the leaders differ between superiors. However, while participants suggest

that “the will to commit to the transformation and also to go into the culture and into the new forms of work is there”, they stress that it is important for the team to also (be willing to) change. Therefore, leaders and their teams need a perspective of how and what to change, and they also need a shared definition and understanding of the new roles.

To sum up, most of the behaviours shown according to the leaders correspond to the company’s job descriptions and can be classified as task- and relationship-oriented behaviours. In addition to these behaviours, the importance of developing a group identity to enhance the employees’ intrinsic motivation was stressed. This can be classified as identity leadership behaviour. The results stated will be integrated to the results from the quantitative analysis in the following.

## **Discussion**

### **Interpretation of results**

Companies ultimately strive for effective leaders, enabling their employees to work freely and self-responsibly (Müller-Friemuth & Kühn, 2019). According to Van Dick and Kerschreiter (2016), leaders should be more successful if they not only show relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviour but also implement identity leadership behaviours.

Determining whether identity leadership behaviour can enhance the leadership effectiveness in organizations, this study compared the effects of relationship-oriented, task-oriented, and identity leadership behaviour on various work-related outcomes. Trust towards the leader, identification with the team, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship, and innovative work behaviours were investigated in a sample of 309 employees of a German company and related to the leadership behaviour of the participants’ leaders. Additionally, interviews conducted with four leaders enhanced the findings by the leaders’ perspective.

### ***Leadership behaviours of people leads and tribe leads***

As described above, leadership behaviours that are commonly classified as relationship-oriented are behaviours such as asking for ideas, encouraging, and showing personal interest (Hoogeboom & Wilderom, 2015; Yukl et al., 2002). According to the company’s job descriptions, the people leads should be showing these behaviours. However, it was found that both people leads and tribe leads in this sample show equal amounts of relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, which proves hypothesis 4 to be false. Moreover, insights from the interviews suggest that tribe leads consider some relationship-oriented behaviours to be a part of their tasks and regularly show these behaviours. Most of the leaders interviewed named at least some relationship-oriented leadership behaviours when they were asked to describe an

ideal tribe lead. This hints at the fact that some of the relationship-oriented leadership behaviours are not categorized as such by the leaders. This might be the case because behaviours such as supporting, empowering, agreeing, and providing positive feedback (Hooigeboom & Wilderom, 2015; Yukl, 2012a) can be seen as kind behaviours that are commonly shown in interactions. Additionally, relationship-oriented behaviour facilitates the completion of group goals, which task-oriented behaviour concentrates on (Behrendt et al., 2017). Therefore, tribe leads might need to additionally show relationship-oriented leadership behaviour to reach their goals.

However, hypothesis 5, proposing that tribe leads show more task-oriented leadership behaviour than the people leads, can be accepted. This means that the employees perceive their tribe lead to show significantly more task-oriented leadership behaviour than their people lead. This finding was also reflected in the interviews with the leaders. None of the people leads named a behaviour that would commonly be classified as task-oriented when asked about their leadership style, the behaviours they show, and the behaviours an ideal people lead would show. This is in line with the company's job descriptions and hence appropriate for the role.

All in all, employees and leaders have stated a similar perception on leadership in the company and the behaviours that are commonly shown.

### ***Relationship-oriented leadership behaviour***

In this sample, the more relationship-oriented behaviour a leader shows, the higher the followers' (here: the employees') trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviour, and identification with the team are. This corresponds with previous findings, showing relationship-oriented leadership behaviour to predict (inter-)personal outcomes and improved interactions between group members (Behrendt et al., 2017; Yukl, 2012b). Further, it means that an increase in relationship-oriented leadership behaviour leads to an increase in identification with the team, which, in turn, predicts an increase in job satisfaction and innovative work behaviour. This finding extends the results of prior studies regarding relationship-oriented leadership behaviour in suggesting that social support can increase innovative work behaviour (Agarwal, 2014). Employees show innovative work behaviour when they receive proper feedback, feel supported, and a sense of belonging, all of which is fostered by relationship-oriented leadership behaviours (Agarwal, 2014). Therefore, innovative work behaviour might better be predicted by relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, which stresses fairness, offers feedback, and encourages employees (Janssen, 2000) than by task-oriented leadership behaviour as hypothesized.

All in all, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. This goes hand in hand with prior findings in literature (Judge et al., 2004; Tabernero et al., 2009; Yukl, 2012b). Thus, this study confirms the findings that relationship-oriented leadership behaviour has positive effects on the group dynamic and the employees' motivation by enhancing satisfaction and, thus, facilitating the completion of group goals (Behrendt et al., 2017; Tabernero et al., 2009).

### ***Task-oriented leadership behaviour***

Employees are likely to trust their leader more, show more organizational citizenship, have a higher identification with the team, and a higher job satisfaction, when their leader shows more task-oriented leadership behaviour. However, hypothesis 2 can only be confirmed partly. Results show that the extent to which a leader shows task-oriented leadership behaviour predicts organizational citizenship, partly mediated by the identification with the team. However, the extent to which a leader shows task-oriented leadership behaviour does not predict the employees' innovative work behaviour as proposed. In prior studies, task-oriented leadership behaviour enhanced productivity, job performance, and effectiveness in groups (Judge et al., 2004; Tabernero et al., 2009; Yukl, 2012b), for which organizational citizenship and innovative work behaviour were used as indicators in this study. Nonetheless, in this sample, innovative work behaviour was not predicted by the leaders' task-oriented behaviour but by the leaders' relationship-oriented behaviours, as discussed above.

Further, task-oriented leadership behaviour predicts trust towards the leader, identification with the team, and job satisfaction in this study, which are all outcomes that are usually predicted by relationship-oriented leadership behaviours (Judge et al., 2004). In prior studies, evidence regarding the effect of task-oriented leadership behaviour on variables such as job satisfaction has been mixed (Fernandez, 2008). However, it is established that task-oriented leadership behaviours have a small, if any, impact and that relationship-oriented leadership behaviour is a better predictor of these variables (Judge et al., 2004). Nonetheless, the effects found in this study can be explained by the reduction of uncertainty a task-oriented leader facilitates when initiating structure, which causes the employees to be more satisfied, trust their leader, and identify with their team (Adams & Webster, 2022). At the same time, these variables are (to a greater extent) also predicted by the relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, confirming that relationship-oriented leadership behaviour is the better predictor (Judge et al., 2004).

### ***Identity leadership behaviour***

Regarding the effects of identity leadership behaviour, hypothesis 3 can partly be confirmed. It was proposed that identification with the team mediates the positive effect of



identity leadership behaviour on trust towards the leader, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviours, and organizational citizenship. This study's results confirm that identity leadership behaviour has an effect on trust towards the leader. In other words, the more identity leadership behaviour a leader shows, the higher the employees' trust towards the leader is. This finding is in line with previous findings in literature (Van Dick et al., 2018). However, identification with the team itself does not predict trust towards the leader, contrary to what previous studies found (Platow et al., 1990).

Additionally, contrasting previous findings (Stevens et al., 2018; Van Dick et al., 2018), the effect of identity leadership behaviour on identification with the team, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviour, and organizational citizenship is not significant. Instead, this effect seems to be fully covered by relationship-oriented and task-oriented behaviours of the leaders in the sample. By distributing the relationship-oriented and task-oriented behaviours to two leaders per team, high levels of both behaviours are present. This has been shown to maximize leadership effectiveness (Fernandez, 2008). This study's findings add onto the literature by showing that high levels of task-oriented and high levels of relationship-oriented leadership behaviours predict work-related outcomes that were not predicted by these behaviours in prior studies (innovative work behaviour, respectively trust towards the leader and identification with the team). Further, it is apparent that task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours are not strictly separated from each other with the tribe leads showing both types of behaviours. The effects task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership have should therefore not be perceived as independent, but rather as having additive effects (Fernandez, 2008).

### **Implications**

Good leadership is essential for ensuring group effectiveness (Yukl, 2012b). In this study, it is apparent that task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours better predict the work-related outcomes investigated than identity leadership behaviour. However, this does not mean that identity leadership behaviour does not have any effects on the variables investigated. Rather, it suggests that the leaders showing task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviour cover the positive effects identity leadership behaviour could have. Edwards (2011) proposes that distributed leadership predicts the development of a shared identity. Having two leaders per team, there is a greater chance of perceiving similarities between one leader and oneself which leads to identification (Kark & Shamir, 2013). Thus, behaviours facilitating the identification with the leader and the team (identity leadership behaviours) are of less importance. This enhances previous literature by suggesting that the effectiveness of identity

leadership depends on the leadership structure. It has been established that identity leadership predicts work-related outcomes in teams with a single leader (Stevens et al., 2018; Van Dick et al., 2018). However, this study suggests that the findings cannot fully be applied to teams with more leaders (in this example a team with leadership distributed between two leaders).

Moreover, identity leadership behaviour is highly correlated with relationship-oriented leadership behaviour in this sample. This means that if a leader shows high levels of relationship-oriented leadership behaviour, it is likely that they also show high levels of identity leadership behaviour and vice versa. This suggests that either the measures chosen are unable to distinguish between the behaviours or that the concepts are strongly related. However, the researcher opted for items that highlight the differences between the behaviours to be able to distinguish between the behaviours. Therefore, still finding strong correlations between the behaviours suggests that they might be more similar than priorly established in literature. Based on the descriptions of the behaviours, identity leadership behaviour could be considered to be a part of relationship-oriented leadership behaviour as well (Steffens et al., 2014; Yukl, 2012b). “Use symbols, ceremonies, rituals, and stories to build team identity” is given as an example for relationship-oriented leadership behaviour by Yukl (2012b, p. 52), while this could be considered an example for identity impresarioship according to the definition of identity leadership behaviour as well (Steffens et al., 2014). Therefore, the question whether identity leadership is a better predictor of the work-related outcomes investigated than relationship-orientation leadership behaviour might be wrong. Instead, relationship-oriented and identity leadership behaviour could be united in the same category of leadership behaviour, which could be described as people-centred. Because relationship-oriented leadership behaviour is the more comprehensive category of the two behaviours, it possibly also covers the positive effects identity leadership behaviour was found to have on the employees in other studies in the present sample (Stevens et al., 2018; Van Dick et al., 2018).

Additionally, especially people leads consider identity leadership behaviour to be important to their role. In the interviews, the leaders mentioned that identity building behaviours are important to increase identification with the team and, subsequently, intrinsic motivation. This shows that the leaders in this sample are aware of the positive outcomes a shared identity has on the group, its interactions, and its productivity. Nonetheless, the results show that identity leadership behaviours are not crucial for team success. The identification with the team is already high across the study’s sample, possibly making further identity building behaviours less relevant.

In the given study, identification with the team is high and identity leadership behaviours thus do not enhance job satisfaction, identification with the team, innovative work behaviour and organizational citizenship further. Instead, these positive outcomes are covered by the relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviour of people leads and tribe leads in the company. This proves Van Dick and Kerschreiter's (2016) statement, that leaders need identity leadership behaviour to be effective to be wrong. Instead, the results suggest that leaders might not need identity leadership behaviours to be successful. The distribution of leadership behaviours, which allows a deeper focus on relationship-oriented behaviour, shows promising results. Distributed leadership, with high levels of task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours present at the same time, allows for effective leadership without identity leadership behaviours. However, these findings should be validated with further studies in different companies to allow for broader generalization.

### **Critical reflection**

Even though this study delivers significant results, there are some limitations to be considered. Firstly, in this study the overall very high means of the dependent variables are striking. Especially for the dependent variables there might be a ceiling effect, allowing for less variation in the data. The ceiling effect is likely caused by a self-selection bias which results in mainly employees with high identification with the company participating. Similarly, only leaders who are reflecting on their leadership style and who are interested in leadership theories might have chosen to participate in the interviews. This was confirmed by the leaders in the interviews, stressing that there is a great variation in behaviour and attitude across the leaders in the company. The lack of variation in the data needs to be considered when confirming or rejecting hypotheses. Consequently, the results are less reliable even though robust analyses were used to account for the skewness of the data. For future studies, it is advised to either choose scales that allow for more variation or to use a different sampling method.

Secondly, the questionnaire asked employees to indicate how much relationship-oriented, task-oriented, and identity leadership behaviour their leaders show. When interpreting the results it is important to consider that there are differences between the perception of behaviours and the actual behaviours (Behrendt et al., 2017). One employee might have a very different perception on the leader's behaviours compared to another employee or the leaders themselves. However, comparing the results of the questionnaire and the interviews, there is an overlap between the employees' perceptions and the leaders' descriptions. Thus, the perceptions of the leaders' behaviour and the leaders' actual behaviour are somewhat similar.

Moreover, the descriptions of the leaders of their own behaviours and leadership styles might be inaccurate due to social desirability effects or incorrect self-assessment. While incorrect self-assessment can be put into perspective by comparing the interview results to the questionnaire results, social desirability bias can only be prevented to a certain extent. The leaders were informed about the fact that the interview will be analysed anonymously, without any inferences about the leader being possible. In addition, the interviews were set in a professional context and the respondents are not in the same peer group as the researcher. Even though this should reduce the social desirability bias, it cannot be fully ruled out (Nederhof, 1985). This should be considered in future studies and methods with minimal social desirability bias should be chosen.

Additionally, there is a high correlation between some of the items measuring relationship-oriented behaviour and identity leadership behaviour. This is caused by the similarities and an overlap of behaviours between these leadership styles. However, this is not troubling for the results, as only behaviours that could clearly be assigned to one of the categories were used in the questionnaire (Yukl et al., 2002).

Lastly, it is important to consider that work attitudes and the employees' behaviours are formed by previous leaders and experiences, in addition to their current leaders. Thus, it is likely that, e.g., a breach of trust by a previous leader is associated with lower trust towards the current leader, independently of their characteristics. Questions about previous leaders could enhance the findings and ensure that the effects are caused by the current leader in future studies.

## **Conclusion**

This study's results show that if task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours are distributed onto two leaders, they better predict work related outcomes such as trust towards the leader, identification with the team, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship, and innovative work behaviour than identity leadership behaviour. Thus, identity leadership behaviour might not be necessarily needed for a leader to be more successful, contrasting Van Dick and Kerschreiter's findings (2016). Instead, it is beneficial if high levels of both task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviour are present (Fernandez, 2008), which is facilitated through distributed leadership. Additionally, based on the high correlations of relationship-oriented and identity leadership behaviour, it is suggested that these types of behaviours could form one common category of leadership behaviour, instead of being considered to be separate types of leadership behaviour.

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## Appendix A

### Items of the questionnaire

Identity Leadership Inventory (Steffens et al., 2014; Van Dick et al., 2018)

1. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] verkörpert wofür das Team steht. (*My people lead [tribe lead] embodies what the team stands for.*)
2. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] ist ein Verfechter der Interessen des Teams. (*My people lead [tribe lead] acts as a champion for the team.*)
3. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] schafft ein Gefühl des Zusammenhalts im Team. (*My people lead [tribe lead] creates a sense of cohesion within the team.*)
4. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] organisiert Events, die dem Team helfen, effektiv zusammenzuarbeiten. (*My people lead [tribe lead] arranges events that help the team function effectively.*)

Task-oriented leadership (based on the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviours (Yukl, 2012a))

1. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] macht die Verantwortlichkeiten für die einzelnen Aufgaben deutlich. (*My people lead [tribe lead] clearly explains the responsibilities involved in each task.*)
2. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] legt die Handlungsschritte und Ressourcen fest, die zur Durchführung einer Aufgabe erforderlich sind. (*My people lead [tribe lead] determines the action steps and resources needed to accomplish a task.*)
3. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] überwacht den Fortschritt und die Qualität der Arbeit. (*My people lead [tribe lead] checks on the progress and quality of the work.*)
4. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] erkennt und löst arbeitsbezogene Probleme, die den Betrieb stören können. (*My people lead [tribe lead] identifies work-related problems that can disrupt operations and takes action to resolve the problems.*)

Relation-oriented leadership (based on the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviours (Yukl, 2012a))

1. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] nimmt Rücksicht auf die Bedürfnisse und Gefühle der einzelnen Teammitglieder. (*My people lead [tribe lead] shows concern for the needs and feelings of individual members.*)
2. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] erkennt die Leistungen der Teammitglieder an. (*My people lead [tribe lead] provides recognition for member achievements.*)

3. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] gibt hilfreiches Feedback. (*My people lead [tribe lead] provides helpful feedback.*)
4. Mein People Lead [Tribe Lead] bezieht die Teammitglieder in wichtige arbeitsbezogene Entscheidungen ein. (*My people lead [tribe lead] involves members in making important work-related decisions.*)

Trust towards the leader (adapted from Schoorman, Mayer & Davis (2016))

1. Ich würde meinem People Lead [Tribe Lead] für mich wichtige Entscheidungen überlassen.  
(*If I had my way, I would let my people lead [tribe lead] have any influence over issues that are important to me.*)
2. Ich wünschte ich hätte die Möglichkeit, die Handlungen meines People Leads [Tribe Leads] im Auge zu behalten. (*I really wish I had a good way to keep an eye on my people lead [tribe lead].*)
3. Ich würde mich damit wohlfühlen, meinem People Lead [Tribe Lead] eine wichtige Aufgabe zu übertragen, auch wenn ich seine/ ihre Handlungen nicht kontrollieren könnte. (*I would be comfortable giving my people lead [tribe lead] a task or problem which was critical to me, even if I could not monitor their actions.*)

Identification with the team (adapted from Doosje et al. (1995))

1. Ich identifiziere mich mit den Mitgliedern meines Teams. (*I identify with the members of my team.*)
2. Ich sehe mich als ein Mitglied des Teams. (*I see myself as a member of the team.*)
3. Ich bin froh, ein Mitglied des Teams zu sein. (*I am glad to be a member of the team.*)
4. Ich fühle mich mit den anderen Teammitgliedern stark verbunden. (*I feel strong ties with the other team members.*)

Job satisfaction (Job Diagnostic Survey (Van Dick et al., 2001))

1. Alles in allem bin ich mit meinem Beruf sehr zufrieden. (*Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.*)
2. Mit der Art der Tätigkeiten bin ich im Allgemeinen zufrieden. (*I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.*)
3. Ich denke häufig darüber nach, den Beruf zu wechseln. (*I frequently think of quitting this job.*) (-)

Innovative work behaviours (adapted from Janssen (2000))

How often do you perform the following behaviours:

1. Neue Ideen für schwierige Fragen entwickeln. (*Creating new ideas for difficult issues.*)
2. Finden von neuen Arbeitsmethoden, Techniken oder Instrumenten. (*Searching out new working methods, techniques, or instruments.*)
3. Erarbeitung origineller Lösungen für Probleme. (*Generating original solutions for problems.*)
4. Mobilisierung von Unterstützung für innovative Ideen. (*Mobilizing support for innovative ideas.*)
5. Einholen von Zustimmung für innovative Ideen. (*Acquiring approval for innovative ideas.*)
6. Transformation innovativer Ideen zu nützlichen Anwendungen. (*Transforming innovative ideas into useful applications.*)
7. Systematische Einführung innovativer Ideen in das Arbeitsumfeld. (*Introducing innovative ideas into the work environment in a systematic way.*)
8. Bewertung des Nutzens von innovativen Ideen. (*Evaluating the utility of innovative ideas.*)

Organizational citizenship (adapted from Van Dick et al. (2006))

1. Ich bin immer pünktlich. (*I am always punctual.*)
2. Ich befolge die Regeln immer sehr genau. (*I always follow rules very thoroughly.*)
3. Ich helfe gerne bei der Einarbeitung neuer KollegInnen. (*I gladly help orienting new colleagues.*)
4. Ich unterstütze KollegInnen, die viel zu tun haben. (*I help colleagues who have heavy workloads.*)
5. Ich informiere meine KollegInnen und Vorgesetzten frühzeitig, wenn ich nicht zur Arbeit kommen kann. (*I inform my colleagues and supervisors early when I am unable to come to work.*)

Control variables:

1. Wie alt sind Sie? (*What is your age?*)
2. Mit welchem Geschlecht identifizieren Sie sich? (*What is your gender?*)

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview questions**

1. Seit wann bist du als Führungskraft tätig? (For how long have you been working as a manager?)
2. Wie viele Personen sind in deinem Team? (*How many people are in your team?*)
3. Wie würdest du deinen Führungsstil beschreiben? (*How would you describe your leadership style?*)
4. Welche Verhaltensweisen zeigst du als Führungskraft? (*What behaviour do you show as a leader?*)
5. Wie nimmst du das Führungsverhalten im Unternehmen insgesamt wahr? (How do you perceive leadership behaviour in the company as a whole?)
6. Wie würdest du die perfekte Führungsperson beschreiben? (*How would you describe an ideal leader?*)