Perceived Leader Effectiveness across Organizational Roles: Exploratory Evidence from Central Eurasia [1]

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Abstract

SYMLOG methodology was used by a sample of respondents from Central Eurasia to rate their perceptions of the values shown in the behavior of leaders occupying three kinds of organizational roles: (1) chief executive officers of business enterprises, NGO's, or key governmental agencies; (2) immediate supervisors of the respondents in their respective organizations; and (3) country leaders or Heads of State (e.g., President, Prime Minister, etc.) of the respondents' home country. Respondents were participants who took part in a two-week leadership development program in their region. Respondents also rated the leaders' role performance and their satisfaction with the leaders. Respondents who categorized themselves as transformational leaders evaluated the supervisor role occupants as most effective while non-transformational leaders perceived the CEO role occupants to be most effective. The results are discussed in light of future needs for cross-cultural leadership research.

Keywords: Role Perceptions, Leader Effectiveness, SYMLOG, Central Eurasia

JEL Classifications: D23, M14, M16

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1. Introduction

The study of leaders and leadership as a field of inquiry has undergone important changes and advancements over the past sixty years. While much has been learned during this time, there remain many unanswered questions. One approach to the study of leadership has been through the lens of SYMLOG. Leadership is defined in SYMLOG terms as the ability to have consistent and significant influence on the development and structure of the social interaction field, and the power to shape the unification-polarization dynamics according to the leader's own interests and goals (Bales & Cohen, 1979; Bales & Isenberg, 1980; Nadler, Ellis, & Rabin, 1996; Hogan, 2005). As a values-based assessment tool that incorporates norms of effective behavior and values derived from ratings made by managers of organizations, SYMLOG provides a means for determining the changes that may be necessary so that leaders and members can bring about desirable changes in organizational performance. Studying the perceptions of persons from this perspective reflects a departure from the manner in which leadership in general, and specific theories in particular, have been examined in the past. The present study was undertaken, in part, to examine perceived leadership behaviors within the context of leaders' organizational roles

As noted by House & Aditya (1997) in their review of major leadership theories at that time, the dominant proportion of the more than 3,000 leadership studies identified by Bass (1990) largely ignored the characteristics of the organization and culture in which leaders function, the relationships between leaders and superiors, external constituencies, peers, and the kind of product or service provided by the leader's organization. In other words, a large portion of the social interaction field had been ignored in these studies. Instead, these studies focused primarily on the relationship between leaders and their immediate followers, thus leaving many questions unanswered. However, in its evolution in recent years, the leadership literature has begun to address a number of areas neglected along the way. Indeed, recent cross-cultural leadership research has focused on examining contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of different styles of leadership. An

underlying premise of this research is that the relationship between leader behavior and follower attitudes or perceptions of such behavior will be moderated by the cultural or situational context (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishi, & Bechtold, 2004; Pittinsky & Zhu, 2005; Walumbwa, Lawler, & Avolio, 2007). The field has also been enlightened by the 62-country study referred to as the GLOBE project (cf. House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007). A comprehensive review of the literature is beyond the scope of this paper. We do, however, review briefly several theories that are relevant to the present study. We also provide a brief introduction to the SYMLOG assessment methodology utilized in the present study.

2. SYMLOG Measurement System

The name "SYMLOG" is an acronym for (1) Systematic, (2) Multiple Level, (3) Observation of Groups. In the "field theory" represented by SYMLOG, values, behaviors, and other factors in the social-psychological field can be represented in terms of three dimensions: Values on Dominance vs Submissiveness, Values on Friendliness vs Unfriendliness, and Values on Acceptance vs Non-acceptance of the Task Orientation of Authority (Bales, 1970; Bales & Cohen, 1979; Bales, 1988; Bales & Koenigs, 1992). SYMLOG is a theory of personality and group dynamics, that uses one's own and others' observations about individual values and behaviors, that is integrated with a set of practical methods of measuring and changing behavior and values in groups and organizations in a democratic way. Norms of effective behavior and values, derived from thousands of ratings made by managers of organizations, are used as criteria or standards for indicating the changes that may be necessary so that leaders and members can bring about desirable changes in group performance. The SYMLOG value questionnaires used in the various studies are composed of 26 items that each represent a different combination of these three dimensions (see Figure 1). Next to the number for each rating item is a one to three letter code representing the directional indicators for that item. For example, item 1 is coded "U" for Upward, indicating that it is intended to measure only the Upward (i.e., Dominant) direction. Item 2 combines two directions – "U" for Upward and "P" for Positive (i.e., Friendly). Item 3 combines three directions with

the addition of "F" for Forward (i.e., accepting established authority). The remainder of the codes for the rating items indicate various combinations of Upward or Downward, Positive or Negative, and Forward or Backward in the value field.

SYMLOG rating data are reported and displayed in a number of different ways. The report most relevant to the present study is the SYMLOG frequency bargraph, which shows the average ratings received by an individual, a group, or a concept, for each of the 26 rating items. The zigzag line in the bargraph shows the frequencies for the "most effective profile" (*mep)*. The "most effective profile" (*mep*) location is the location of the value position, derived from thousands of ratings by managers, of effective leadership and experience with effective teams and found to be optimal for the American business culture. It represents a balance between an emphasis on accepting the task-orientation of established authority and emphasis on friendly behavior. In particular, *mep's* location in the field diagram represents the empirical solution to the dynamic puzzle of leadership (Koenigs, 1993; Bales, 1999). The frequency indication associated with each item represents the average rating for that item on the given image, on a continuum of "Rarely", "Sometimes", and "Often." Several frequency bargraphs are presented later in the paper where the data are reported and discussed.

In many systems for assessing effective individual or group performance, all items on a questionnaire are given equal weight. This is not true for the SYMLOG questionnaire. Some values are seen to contribute to effective teamwork, some may be necessary sometimes but dangerous, and still others almost always interfere with teamwork. Figure 1, alluded to previously, classifies the 26 SYMLOG values according to these impact categories. The SYMLOG Consulting Group's website (www.symlog.com) notes that the profiles contained in its research data base are drawn from organizations in 17 languages in over 60 countries across the world. Therefore, SYMLOG is indeed a valid measurement system for use inside and outside the USA and is extremely reliable and robust compared to other measurement systems in use (cf. Van Velsor & Leslie, 1991; Ford & Ismail, 2006).

SYMLOG RESEARCH SUMMARY

SYMLOG
CONSULTING GROUP

A. Values which CONTRIBUTE to effective teamwork:

2	UP	Popularity and social success, being liked and admired
3	UPF	Active teamwork toward common goals, organizational unity
4	UF	Efficiency, strong impartial management
8	UB	Having a good time, releasing tension, relaxing control
9	UPB	Protecting less able members, providing help when needed
10	P	Equality, democratic participation in decision making
11	PF	Responsible idealism, collaborative work
16	B	Change to new procedures, different values, creativity
17	PB	Friendship, mutual pleasure, recreation
18	DP	Trust in the goodness of others
19	DPF	Dedication, faithfulness, loyalty to the organization
20	DF	Obedience to the chain of command, complying with authority
21	DNF	Self-sacrifice if necessary to reach organizational goals

B. Values which are NECESSARY sometimes, but dangerous to teamwork

1	U	Individual financial success, personal prominence and power
5	UNF	Active reinforcement of authority, rules, and regulations
6	UN	Tough-minded, self-oriented assertiveness
12	F	Conservative, established, "correct" ways of doing things
13	NF	Restraining individual desires for organizational goals

C. Values which almost always INTERFERE with teamwork

7	UNB	Rugged, self-oriented individualism, resistance to authority
14	N	Self-protection, self-interest first, self-sufficiency
15	NB	Rejection of established procedures, rejection of conformity
22	DN	Passive rejection of popularity, going it alone
23	DNB	Admission of failure, withdrawal of effort
24	DB	Passive non-cooperation with authority
25	DPB	Quiet contentment, taking it easy
26	D	Giving up personal needs and desires, passivity

This section of the paper was intended only as a brief introduction to the SYMLOG measurement system and the forms in which results of research are usually displayed. The sections that follow present a brief review of the relevant literature, a brief description of the leadership development program in which some of the study participants took part, the research methodology, and the study results, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies.

3. Leadership Theory

To understand how people perceive leaders, it is essential to understand how they process information and interpret organizational performance in different situational contexts. Implicit leadership theory, which is most appropriate and relevant for the present study, has been advanced by Robert Lord and his associates (Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986; Lord & Maher, 1991, 1993) who define leadership as *the process of being perceived by others as a leader* (Lord & Maher, 1991, p. 11). This theory concerns the evaluations people make about leaders and the cognitive processes that underlie the evaluations and perceptions of leadership (recognition-based processing) and outcomes of events (inference-based processing). Such an approach represents a departure from other works on leadership (House & Aditya, 1997) and operates in such a manner that either automatic and spontaneous recognition-based processes or controlled and deliberate inferential processes are used to form perceptions of leaders and event outcomes (Lord & Maher, 1991).

According to the theory, leadership perceptions are seen to form a number of hierarchically organized cognitive categories, each of which is represented by a prototype. The prototypes are formed through exposure to interpersonal interactions and social events. An observer's prior knowledge and understanding about human behavior and underlying traits comprise her or his implicit leadership theory, which is used to make a *connection* between the observed leader's characteristics and the prototypes of a leader in the observer's mind (recognition-based processing) (Lord, Foti & DeVader, 1984). According to Ensari & Murphy

(2003), both experimental and correlational studies have indicated that categorization affects perceptions of leaders and descriptions of their actual behavior. A large contribution of the connectionist approach to information processing is that it allows for larger consideration of situational factors such as culture (Hanges, Lord, & Dickson, 2000) and other context effects (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). Thus, team leadership, vertical supervisory leadership, or strategic leadership might be better understood in terms of effective management of the prototype matching processes.

In a SYMLOG-based study of implicit leadership theory, Nye & Forsyth (1991) had subjects who endorsed a number of different leadership prototypes, as measured by the SYMLOG behavior questionnaire, evaluate a male and female leader who acted in a task-oriented or socioemotionally-oriented manner. In rating leader effectiveness, subjects showed a clear bias in favor of leaders who matched their particular prototypes (high or low on dominance or friendliness or a control type), although male subjects tended to base their ratings on prototypes more so than female subjects. On the other hand, in ratings of leader collegiality prototype-based biases were noted only when subjects evaluated female leaders. Further, these ratings were not always consistent with the predictions of leadership categorization theory. The findings suggested that biases against female leaders may stem, in part, from the incongruity between subordinates' leadership prototypes and stereotypical conceptions of men and women (Nye & Forsyth, 1991).

Inference-based processing involves making attributions for leaders' characteristics based on outcomes of salient events such as a group's level of performance (Lord, 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). In one study, participants who were told that group performance was good provided higher leadership ratings than those who were told performance was poor (Rush et al., 1981). Further, Shamir (1992) showed that when a business is successful, a leader is perceived as charismatic compared to when business failures occur, which are attributed to a lack of leadership. Such failures also can detract from the leaders' perceived leadership qualities (Lord & Maher, 1993).

One of the most comprehensive studies of cross-cultural leadership, the GLOBE study, has sought to understand how implicit leadership theories vary across cultures (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999; House et al., 2004). In general, this research reveals large common themes and specific differences regarding the detail of leader behavior. The GLOBE study found that three factors of leader behavior, Charismatic/Value Based, Team-Oriented, and Participative, were prototypical for leaders across 62 different cultures.

The present study was undertaken, in part, in an attempt to examine perceived leadership behaviors, taking into account the broader cultural, organizational and environmental context. The organizational/environmental context concerns the organizational level at which the leader behavior occurs, e.g., immediate supervisory level, chief operating officer or chief executive officer level, or national country leader level. The exploratory study sought to examine persons' perceptions of key organizational leaders from the perspective of their primary leadership role in society. Controversy and media scrutiny of leaders that had occurred and been reported in the public press is assumed to have influenced how these leaders enacted their roles in the public view as well as within their organizations. Given that much of the existing comparative management research can be interpreted as showing culturally influenced differences in leader prototypes (Shaw, 1990), the present study attempts to identify and explain differences in leader prototypes in terms of the values perceived to be evident in the leaders' behavior for a particular region of the world where leadership-related research studies has been lacking, namely, Central Eurasia.

The growing importance of effective leadership to organizational success in Central Eurasia begs the question as to why very limited research data are available on the topic of leadership in this part of the world. Clearly, few scholars have included the countries of Central Eurasia in their cross-cultural research studies on leadership. Therefore, inferences about leader behavior in the Post-Soviet Central Eurasian countries must largely be made, for the most part, from studies of Russian organization leaders. That is because all of the countries in Central Eurasia were

formerly under strong Russian influence in past. However, attention is starting to be paid by researchers interested in examining leadership issues in the region, and several of those exceptions are discussed below.

The Central Eurasia Region and Leadership

Central Eurasia is defined as the five Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and three southern Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) that surround the Caspian Sea. The Central Eurasia region is of enormous geopolitical importance and holds considerable economic potential, but, at the same time, is threatened by domestic instability and trans-border conflict. Following the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, as the countries have leaped from a highly centralized and autocratically managed economy into the privatization and market liberalization era, they have been welcomed by both numerous opportunities as well as some serious threats (Ardichvili & Gasparishvili, 2001).

According to Abdelal (2001), "Post-Soviet states inherited a material reality that was similar for all of them. Russia was clearly the dominant state in the region, and all the other fourteen states in the Soviet Union interpreted that material reality through their specific cultural lenses, which varied substantially among them" (p. 203). Although many of these countries are trying to get into the roots of their own distinct history and culture, since 1991 the influence of the Russian Empire and the communist USSR have been too strong to be erased within a short, twelve-year period (Bakacsi, et al., 2002; Ardichvili & Gasparishvili, 2001; CIA, 2002).

One of the few prominent empirical works focusing on leadership in the Central Eurasian countries is that of Ardichvili & Gasparishvili (2001). The authors conducted a study based on the leadership styles of 695 managers in nine manufacturing firms in Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. The study demonstrated that leadership profiles of managers from these countries were significantly different from the profiles of Western managers. The managers of the former USSR countries rated low on charismatic or transformational leadership, and higher on transactional and laissez-faire leadership dimensions. The study also indicated that managers from Georgia, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz

Republic demonstrated more nurturing leadership behavior and demonstrated that taking care of their employees was a part of their responsibility, while Russian leaders were comparatively more "autocratic, ruthless and isolated" (p.238).

Ardichvili & Kuchinke (2002) compared leadership styles of over 4000 employees in ten businesses in Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Germany, and the US. The results on leadership indicated that while the dimensions of contingent reward and inspirational motivation received the highest scores in the former USSR countries, the two less efficient leadership styles, laissez-fair and management by exception, also received significantly higher scores in these countries.

One of the most thorough and in-depth studies on leadership that involved countries from the Central Eurasian and Eastern European regions conducted to date has been performed under the GLOBE Project umbrella. Using part of the GLOBE data, Bakacsi, et al. (2002) reported results based on a study of the Eastern European cluster of GLOBE countries consisting of Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia. With the cluster's distinctive practices of high power distance and high collectivism (Hofstede, 1991; Ardichvili & Gasparishvili, 2001), the results contradicted somewhat those of the other studies mentioned previously, since it was found that transformational-charismatic and team-oriented leadership were the most popular factors contributing to effective leadership, while humane-oriented and autonomous leadership received relatively modest average scores. There was also a strong endorsement of participative leadership. Further, many of the countries rated self-protective behavior as least desirable. The results for Russia are somewhat counter to what has traditionally been found regarding leadership preferences among Russian managers, as noted above.

In summary, a number of the non-GLOBE studies on leadership in Russia and the Central Eurasian region observed that the managers scored high on the laissez-fair style of leadership and scored low on the charismatic/ transformational style of leadership (cf. Ardichvili, 2001; Luthans, Welsh, & Rosenkrantz, 1993; Puffer & McCarthy, 1995). In contrast, the GLOBE findings are somewhat contradictory to the

other studies' findings as are the findings of a recent study of leadership in the Central Eurasian region by Ismail & Ford (2008). This latter study's findings were more consistent with the GLOBE findings. However, these contrasting results certainly remain to be reconciled through further research.

4. Research Approach

Based on the literature reviewed earlier, the present authors sought to examine from an implicit leadership theory perspective, the manner in which leadership was perceived to be enacted within three different situational contexts or leadership roles. Our central thesis is that organizational member proximity to the leader determines the degree to which the member perceives the leader in a positive light and the degree to which the leader exhibits charismatic behaviors in his or her respective role. Further, a key strength and contribution of the study is the application of a methodology – SYMLOG – not normally used for examining leadership issues in management and organizational contexts.

Research Questions

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, as well as due to the fact that SYMLOG analyses and reports are different from more traditional quantitative analytical approaches for hypothesis testing, specific research hypotheses were not developed for testing in the study. Rather, two research questions were posed for examination:

1. *"Will leaders whose organizational roles are more distal from the focal member be perceived as exhibiting values in their behavior that are less effective than leaders whose roles are more proximal to the focal member?"*

2. *"Will respondents who perceive themselves as transformational in their own leadership style rate the performance of leaders in the three organizational roles differently than respondents who perceived themselves as non-transformational leaders, and will they likewise be more satisfied with each type of leader than would the non-transformational respondents?*

Participants

The 40 respondents in the study were participants in the *Central Eurasian Leadership Academy (CELA)* leadership development program. *CELA* is a first-of-its-kind undertaking, initially by the EastWest Institute (EWI) and the Society of International Business Fellows (SIBF), but EWI is no longer involved in the Program. The Program is an on-going, multi-year effort that seeks to train a comparable number of mid-career leaders each year over a 10-year period. Reflected in CELA's mission is the goal of building a new transnational network of forward-thinking business and political leaders who can help enhance regional cooperation, security, and prosperity (SIBF, 2006; Walker, 2002). Approximately 40 - 45 participants, equally divided between men and women and drawn from the eight countries of the region, the five Central Asian countries and the three Caucasus countries, are selected annually to take part in the two-week CELA Leadership Development Program held in mid-July of each year at Koc University in Istanbul, Turkey. The participants were all professionals who represent the next generation of leaders in their nations and were drawn from a broad spectrum of society, including private business, government, civil society, media, education, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We administered the survey described below to 40 participants from the third class of 2004, approximately one year after the class, in order to provide time for the most recent participants to begin to be integrated into the CELA network. All of the participants volunteered to participate in the study. They ranged in age from late 25 to 51. Fifteen were from business, seven were from government, and 18 represented NGO agencies. The participants' work experiences and fluency with the English language were key screening factors for selection to the program.

The authors classified the participants into two leader categories, transformational (1) vs non-transformational (0), based on their own approaches to leadership that were described in responses to the leadership profile interviews conducted during the selection process. Approximately one third of the participants were categorized

as transformational leaders. The authors' inter-rater reliability in classifying the participants exceeded ninety percent.

Procedures

The procedures asked study participants to respond to a leadership survey that required them to assess several leadership concepts using the SYMLOG rating system. More specifically, the participants were asked to rate the kinds of values that each of three kinds of leaders show in their behavior. These included: (a) immediate supervisor (SUP), (b) President or Chief Executive Officer of the enterprise (CEO), and (c) President, Prime Minister, or Head of State of their country (HOS). This analysis is intended to provide insight and understanding of how leadership is actually perceived and practiced in the region as well as tap the participants' comprehension of the content presented on leadership perspectives in the program. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked to rate the performance of leaders in each of the three roles along with how satisfied they were with the leaders' performance. Both the performance and satisfaction ratings were made on scales that ranged from 1 (very poor performance) to 99 (outstanding performance), with a mid-point of 50 (average performance). The leadership survey assessment was administered on the last day of the CELA Program.

5. Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, inter-correlations, and reliability coefficients for the three SYMLOG dimensions. As seen in Table 1, the respondents perceived the UD dimension to be significantly negatively related to the PN dimension and significantly and positively related to the FB dimension; the PN and FB dimensions were perceived to be unrelated. The more dominant the perceived image, the less friendly the image was perceived to be as well as more conforming or accepting of the task orientation of authority. Based on the final field locations for the images in SYMLOG space, the Head of State leader role was perceived to be the most dominant and most negative of the three images. The Supervisor role was perceived to be the most friendly of the three roles rated. Thus, this pattern of

results indicates that the three SYMLOG dimensions distinguished among the three leadership roles, although some of the differences were not statistically significant.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations among the SYMLOG Dimensions for CELA Respondents [+]

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev.	UD	PN	FB
UD	2.45	3.45	(.64)	-.35**	.23**
PN	1.66	6.22		(.63)	-.09
FB	3.17	3.59			(.67)

** $p < .01$

+ Reliability coefficients appear in parentheses on diagonal.

The SYMLOG analysis produces a SYMLOG bargraph for each concept or image that was rated, along with a bargraph synopsis report that compares the average ratings for each of the SYMLOG values to the "optimum" rating for effective teamwork (*mep*). The comparisons are noted as "close" , "under", or "over", indicating whether the average rating on the value statement was close to the mep norm, significantly underrated, or significantly overrated. According to Bales (1988, 1999), a difference of five or more spaces between the average rating and the *mep* rating for a particular value on a bargraph represents a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$). Figure 2 presents "abridged" SYMLOG bargraph results for the Head of State, CEO, and Immediate Supervisor roles, respectively, and shows the results associated with the 13 Individual and Organizational SYMLOG values that contribute to effective teamwork. Figure 3 provides SYMLOG bargraph results for the three organizational roles across all 26 SYMLOG values.

Focusing on the values that contribute to teamwork, Figure 2 indicates that the SUP image had 6 of 13 values close to the *mep* norm, the CEO image had 5 of 13 values close to the norm, and the HOS image had none of the 13 values close to the norm. This is consistent with expectations for these images. Though not presented here, SYMLOG field diagram results would show that the HOS image was located on the negative side of SYMLOG space, away from the PF quadrant that contains the *mep*

image location in the Most Effective Core area of the field diagram. Therefore, one would expect that the HOS image would have fewer values that contribute to effective teamwork associated with it, compared to the SUP and CEO images, both of which were located in the PF quadrant of the field diagram. Therefore, with respect to Research Question One, we conclude that there is an ordering of the leader images from least effective to most effective based on their proximity to the rater, with the ordering being HOS – CEO – SUP, wherein the HOS leader role is most distal and the SUP leader role is most proximal to the focal organizational member.

In order to determine the impact of self perceived leader behavior on perceived leader effectiveness and satisfaction across the three organizational roles, a t-test was conducted on the rated role performance scores and rated role satisfaction scores for each organizational role, comparing the average scores for transformational leaders with those for non-transformational leaders. The results of these analyses are shown in Figures 4 and 5 for the performance and satisfaction ratings, respectively.

As seen in Figure 4, persons categorized as transformational leaders perceived the SUP role to have the highest average rated performance, while non-transformational leaders perceived the CEO role to have the highest average performance ratings among the three roles. Both transformational and non-transformational leaders perceived the HOS role to have the lowest performance ratings among the three roles. The differences in rated role performance between transformational and non-transformational leaders were not significant for the SUP role (t = 0.80, ns) and CEO role (t = -0.57, ns), respectively, but were significant for the HOS role (t = 2.40, p < .05). That is, non-transformational leaders perceived significantly higher performance for the Head of State role incumbents than was perceived by transformational leaders.
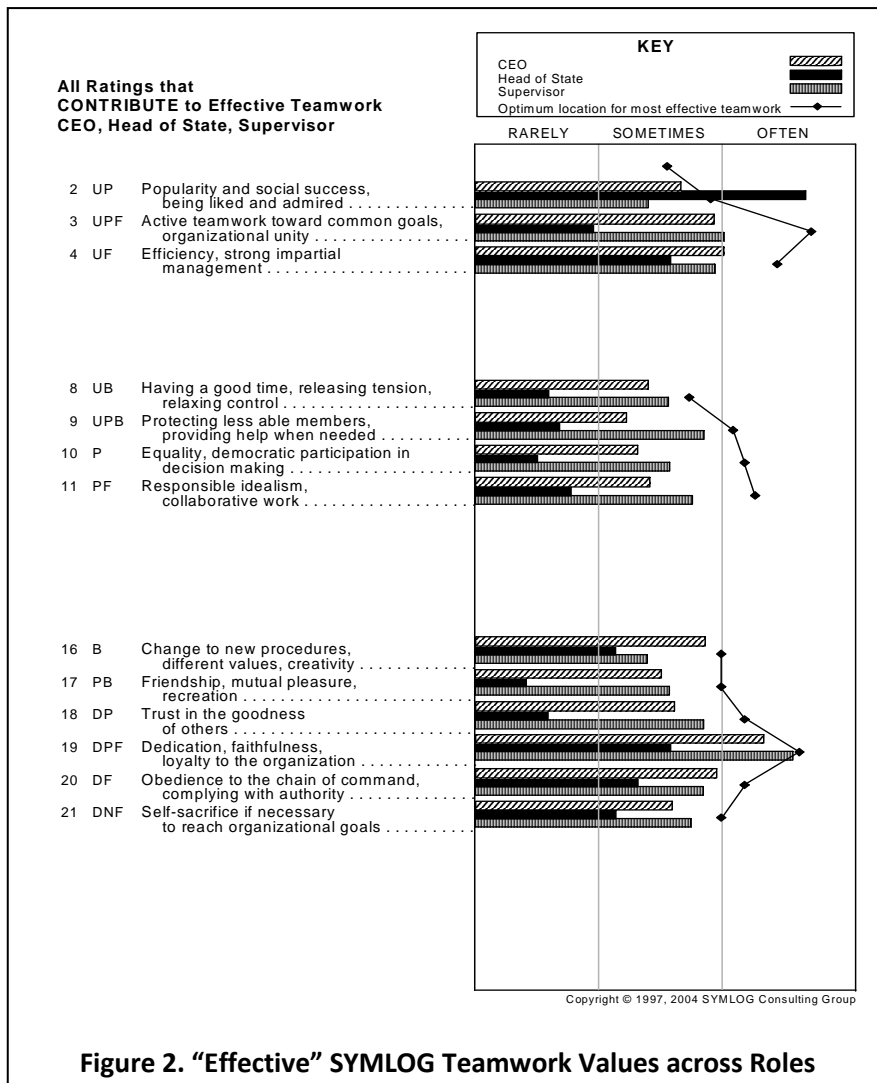
Figure 2. "Effective" SYMLOG Teamwork Values across Roles

Figure 3. Role Effectiveness Results for All SYMLOG Values
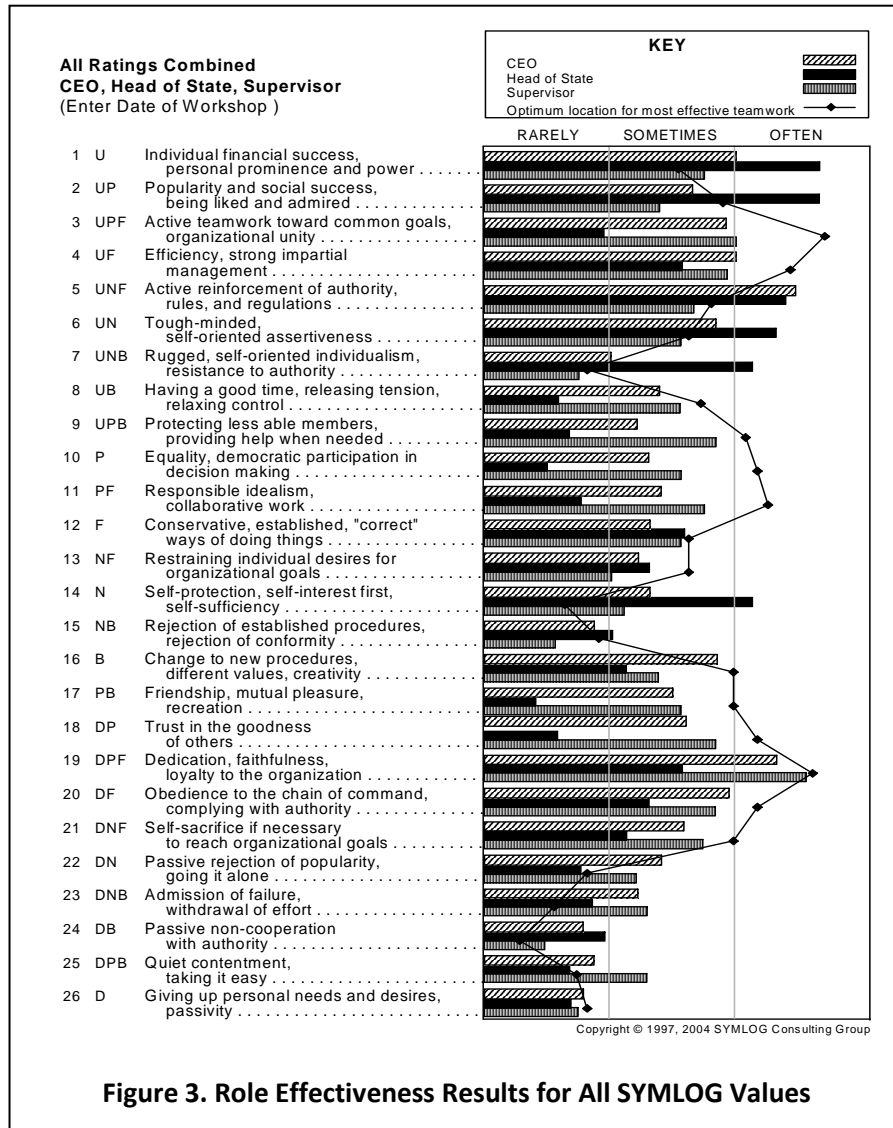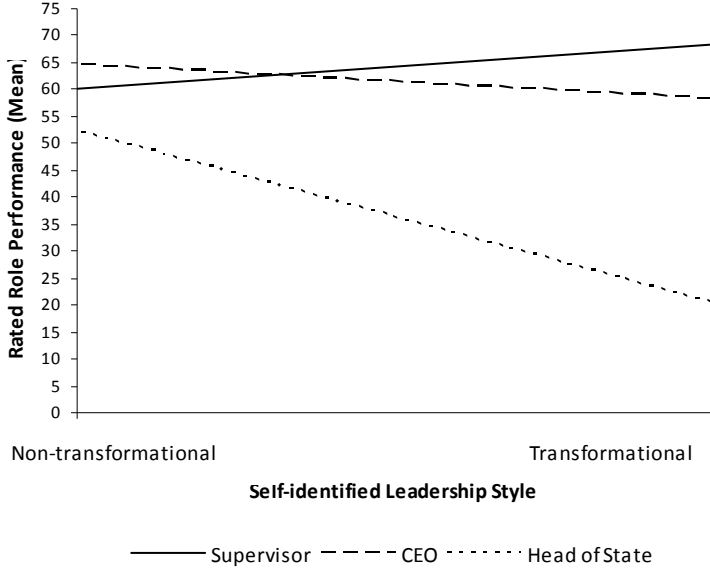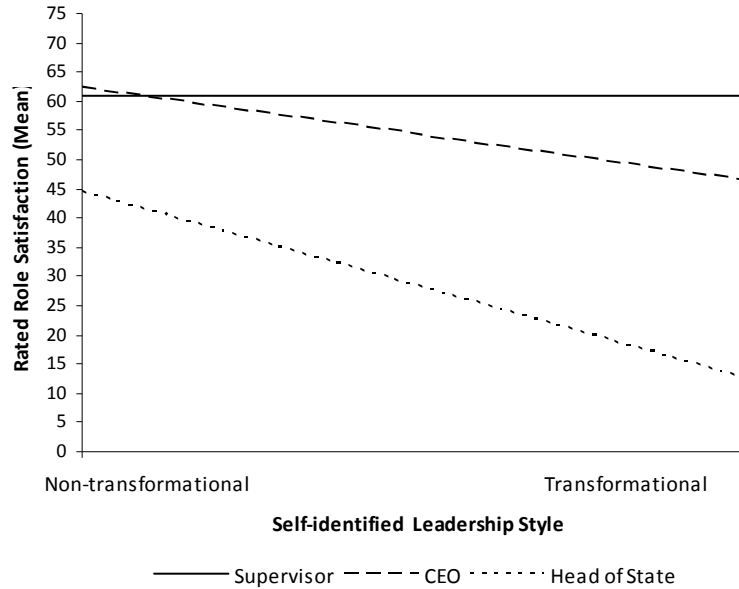
Figure 4. Performance Ratings

Figure 5. Satisfaction Ratings

A similar pattern of results was observed for the respondents' rated role satisfaction scores across the three roles. Only the HOS role was perceived to be significantly different (lower) between transformational and non-transformational leaders (t = 2.79, p < .01). Therefore, with respect to Research Question Two, we find that self-perceived transformational leaders do rate the effectiveness of different organizational roles differently, depending on the particular role. Generally, the Head of State role is perceived least favorably by both types of

leaders, while the CEO and Supervisor roles are perceived more favorably, depending on the perceived role/leader combination. The above results are discussed below, along with suggestions for future research.

6. Discussion

A main purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the situational context wherein more effective leader behaviors would be attributed to the leader. The results indicated that leaders who were more proximal to the focal organization member, such as an immediate supervisor, were perceived to exhibit values in their behavior that were more consistent with effective organizational functioning, while leaders who were more distal to the focal organization member, such as a Head of State or country leader, were perceived to exhibit few, if any, values in their behavior that were consistent with effective teamwork and organizational functioning. Though unlikely in this case, given the political climate in the participants' countries, we are aware, nonetheless, of individual tendencies to commit the "fundamental attribution error" (Forgas, 1998) when evaluating persons other than themselves, and particularly for distal others (e.g., distal heads of state). This matter is a fruitful topic for inclusion in future leadership studies in the Central Eurasian region.

The perceptions of the enterprise leader's role, such as CEO, probably involved some ambiguity about the role. That is, some of the respondents worked in NGO's in their respective countries which are set up to meet the needs of certain segments of society that are not being served by governmental programs. As such, having a humane orientation is especially important for agency heads. Those that had such an orientation probably were perceived as exhibiting effective behaviors. On the other hand, heads of governmental departments, as well as heads of private business enterprises, might have been perceived as not providing the kind of leadership needed to help meet the needs of employees and, as such, were not perceived as displaying much effectiveness in their behavior. This, of course, is quite speculative and serves as a topic to be examined further in future studies.

Language may also have been a contributing factor in the way the results turned out. Conceptual issues experienced by participants in the first CELA class in 2002 may have still been problematic for the 2004 participants in the present study. For example, in trying to "get a handle" on the term "Leadership," some participants may have struggled to find a comparable word in their own respective language that was an equivalent counterpart. For example, exact parallels to the term "Leadership" existed in the languages of participants from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. On the other hand, the participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan struggled for some time before deciding that "ulbasti", defined broadly as "he who shows the (correct) path," was the closest word but not in the same connotation as "Leader" in the American context. Thus, language may have played a role in determining the results.

A second objective of the study was an inquiry into whether and how the different organizational roles would be perceived by transformational versus non-transformational leaders. The results indicated that the two types of respondents not only differed in the manner with which they rated the performance and satisfaction with the performance of their supervisors, chief executive officers, and Heads of State (within comparisons), but they also differed in their relative ratings for each type of leader role (across comparisons). Respondents who perceived themselves as transformational gave lower ratings to, and showed higher dissatisfaction with, directive, laissez-faire, and other non-transformational leaders who are responsible for imposing bureaucratic practices and governance mechanisms which may interfere with their subordinates' own ideologies and vision. Respondents gave the lowest ratings to Heads of State, followed by chief executive officers, since Central Eurasian leaders who occupy both these roles tend to follow directive leadership styles and support bureaucratic forms of governance.

In contrast, we found that respondents who perceived themselves as non-transformational leaders would tend to have greater preference to comply with existing norms and be less willing than transformational leaders to challenge those who hold powerful positions or who have authority as well as proximity to impose rules that may restrict or govern their behavior. While the heads of state are too distal to be able to directly influence such respondents, the chief executive officers

satisfy the criteria for both proximity and power, and therefore received highest performance ratings by non-transformational leaders, even though such ratings were only marginally – though not statistically – higher than the ratings given to other leader roles.

The results of the study could easily be viewed as having limited usefulness, in light of the small sample of participants in the study. However, the respondents were from a unique region of the world in which few leadership studies have been conducted or reported. Similar to Central Eurasian participants in an earlier study who were able to make distinctions between leader-centered and team-centered leader behaviors (cf. Ford & Ismail, 2006), the participants in the present study did comprehend the differences in leader effectiveness across different organizational roles, given their proximity to the raters, and were able to assess these differences through their SYMLOG ratings. Indeed, SYMLOG profiles for perceived "effective leaders" have, in previous research, shown remarkable cross-cultural consistency (cf. Leslie & Van Velsor, 1998).

Ideally, we would like to have had a sufficient number of respondents so that their results could be examined individually by country, rather than grouped together for a total Central Eurasian region result. That was not possible in the present study but will be undertaken in future studies as the population of CELA alumni increases in size. We understand that a number of cultural differences exist among the eight countries of the Central Eurasia Region so that country comparisons for the issues investigated here would be quite desirable, thus allowing for a true cross-cultural perspective to be taken. Future studies will be undertaken to correct such deficiencies of the present study. Such studies would have both theoretical and practical payoffs. A theoretical payoff would be the identification of Central Eurasian etic and emic behaviors and values that contribute to leadership effectiveness – an area not covered in the GLOBE (House et al., 2004) studies. A practical payoff from such studies would be findings that could inform leadership development programs that get established in the region that are designed to improve Central Eurasian leaders' competencies (Doh, 2003).

David L. FORD & Ismail M. KIRAN

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David L. FORD & Ismail M. KIRAN

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