
Leadership Style in Relation to Organizational Change and Organizational Creativity Perceptions from Nonprofit Organizational Members

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As the environment within which organizations act continues to change and becomes increasingly competitive, maintaining an organizational climate that supports change and encourages creativity is a key objective for organizational leaders. This article examines the relationship between leadership style (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and members' perceptions of the psychological climate for organizational change readiness and psychological climate for organizational creativity. Results indicate that transformational leaders have a direct positive relationship with psychological climate for organizational change readiness and organizational creativity, while laissez-faire leaders have a negative relationship.

Keywords: leadership, organizational culture, change readiness, faith-based service

MANY ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS have argued that leadership is key in maintaining organizational viability (Bass and Avolio 1994; Collins 2001; Peterson et al. 2008; Waldman, Ramirez, House, and Puranam 2001). For instance, in a

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study of organizations that made the shift from mediocre to sustained profitability, Collins (2001) identified leadership as the first and most important element in helping companies achieve greater effectiveness. Further support for the importance of leadership on organizational performance is evident in Waldman et al.'s (2001) study linking leader charisma to organizational performance in uncertain environments.

With today's ever-changing and competitive environment, one approach leaders can take to create a competitive advantage is to foster an organizational climate that encourages and supports change and creativity. Organizations that are effective at making incremental as well as radical organizational changes are oftentimes better positioned to survive in today's environment (Haveman 1992; Henderson and Clark 1990). Furthermore, organizations that develop creative ideas that lead to innovative products and services can also gain a competitive advantage (Damanpour and Schneider 2006; Oke, Munshi, and Walumbwa 2009; Tellis, Prabhu, and Chandy 2009; Yuan and Woodman 2010). This article examines leadership style in relation to the psychological climate for organizational change readiness and the psychological climate for organizational creativity.

The article contributes to the literature by examining leadership, change readiness, and creativity within the nonprofit context of churches. While most of the research in this area has focused on for-profit corporations, nonprofit organizations also need to adapt to meet the needs of a changing mobile society (Heuser and Shawchuck 1993). Specifically, churches have been criticized for being stuck in the past (Parsons and Leas 1993), lacking a vision or direction (Malphurs 1999), and being fearful of change (Heuser and Shawchuck 1993). Therefore, to revitalize a church, leadership is critical (Phelan 2005), and thus the pastor of the congregation plays a crucial part in rejuvenating the church's role in our society.

In addition to change readiness, researchers (for example, Barrett, Balloun, and Weinstein 2005; Jaskyte 2004) have also acknowledged the importance of creativity within nonprofits, and again, there has been limited attention in this field. Similar to for-profit organizations, nonprofits must create innovative products and services in order to meet the needs of the individuals they serve. A key determinant of whether an organization is innovative is its leadership (King and Anderson 1990; Osborne 1998; Schein 1985). Thus, leaders need to create and manage an organizational climate that promotes creativity and innovation.

We begin our discussion with leadership and the three broad types of leader styles, followed by a discussion of psychological climate and the specific domains of organizational change readiness and organizational creativity.

Leadership Theory

Bass's (1985) full range leadership model is one of the most empirically studied theories of leadership (Bono and Judge 2004; Carter 2009; Judge and Piccolo 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam 1996). Bass categorized leaders into three types: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Bass suggested that these three types form a continuum, with transformational leaders being the most active and effective form of leadership and laissez-faire being the least active and effective leadership style, with transactional falling in the middle. Transformational leaders inspire followers with a common vision, which gives a conceptual map of where the organization is headed. These leaders are concerned about the transformation of both the organization and the individuals within it, and to that end influence their followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group by raising their commitment to the importance of the organization's vision. It involves binding employees around a common purpose. These leaders act "as change drivers, actively involved in creating an environment and culture that foster change and growth" (Oke et al. 2009, 65). For example, in a study within the Methodist church, Onen (1987) found that clergy rated as being transformational by church members led churches with higher Sunday church attendance and membership growth than did clergy who were not rated as transformational. Thus, one of the key characteristics of a transformational leader is his or her ability to change the organization for the better.

In contrast, transactional leaders, Bass's second type, try to work within the existing system as opposed to trying to change it (Bass 1997). Transactional leaders attempt to satisfy the needs of their followers by offering rewards when the leader's expectations are met. Transactional leaders emphasize the transaction or exchange that takes place between leader and follower, such that there is clarity about what is expected and what rewards will be offered if expectations are met.

Finally, laissez-faire leaders avoid leadership responsibility, and nothing is transacted or made clear between the leader and follower (Avolio and Bass 2002). These leaders are also called passive-avoidant leaders. As these terms imply, these leaders abdicate responsibility, delay decisions, give no feedback, and make little effort to help their followers grow (Northouse 2004). Laissez-faire leaders are the antithesis to the definition of leadership.

The full range leadership model has been well researched and linked to a variety of outcomes, such as leader effectiveness and subordinate effectiveness, effort, satisfaction, and commitment (DeGroot, Kiker, and Cross 2000). Furthermore, Bass (1997) asserted that the full range leadership model holds up across

organizational types and cultures, with few exceptions. Research bears this out, as the model has been studied in a variety of organizational settings, such as African American churches (Langley and Kahnweiler 2003), the U.S. military (Bass, Jung, Avolio, and Berson 2003), a Singaporean hospital (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia 2004), and religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church (Druskat 1994). The model has been examined across a variety of leader positions, such as school principals (Leithwood and Steinbach 1991), community leaders (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, and Popper 2001), and business leaders at all levels (Bono and Judge 2003; Howell and Higgins 1990; Howell, Neufeld, and Avolio 2005; Madzar 2001; Waldman and Yammarino 1999).

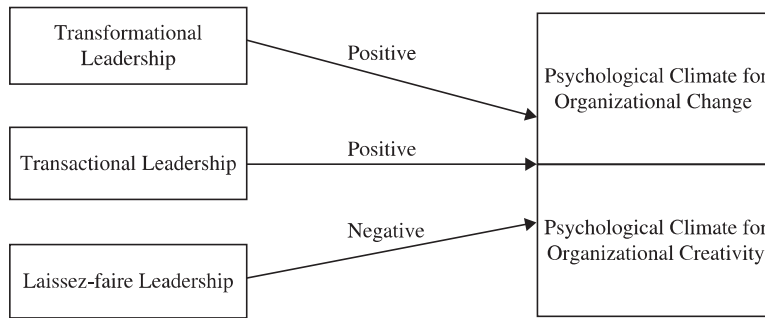
Psychological Climate

An organization's *climate* is broadly defined as a set of measurable organizational characteristics that are relatively enduring over time. These characteristics affect the behavior and motivation of individuals in the organization (Forehand and Vonhallergilmer 1964; Litwin and Stringer 1968). Although the leader sets the tone for the organization by clarifying the vision and values of an organization, leadership style and climate are not synonymous. Al-Shammari (1992) clarified the two constructs in the following statements: "Organizational climate is a description of the characteristics of the work environment as perceived by employees in the organization, whereas leadership style represents the views of subordinates regarding the leadership traits of a single individual" (32). In assessing organizational climate, all the individuals in the organization are the targets, whereas in assessing leadership, a single individual is the target.

To clarify the construct of organizational climate further, Jones and James (1979) coined the term *psychological climate*. Psychological climate is individuals' perceptions of the work environment, and organizational climate is the aggregation of these individuals' perceptions (Jones and James 1979). Thus, psychological climate is measured at the individual level, while organizational climate is measured at the organizational level. Most organizational researchers recognize and continue to use this distinction (for example, Baltes, Zhdanova, and Parker 2009; Denison 1996; James et al. 2008; Patterson, Payne, and West 1996; Schneider and Reichers 1983).

In addition to clarifying the level of analysis, there has been a shift in the climate literature toward studying specific dimensions of climate rather than an overarching concept of climate. Schneider (1975) distinguished between a global climate for an organization and subclimates. The latter perspective, according to Schneider, is more meaningful because a generic concept of organizational climate is so vague that results from the measurement of a global climate

Figure 1. Hypothesized Relationships



will be amorphous. Hence, Schneider argued that climate has to have a referent or target, and since work settings can have various climates, one must measure a climate *for* something (Hetland, Skogstad, Hetland, and Mikkelsen 2011; Schneider 1975; Schneider and Reichers 1983).

Researchers have followed Schneider's argument, and there are numerous empirical studies examining psychological climate for safety (Zohar 1980), psychological climate for creativity (Amabile et al. 1996; Scott and Bruce 1994), psychological climate for service (Schneider 1980), and psychological climate for learning (Hetland et al. 2011), to name a few. Consistent with previous research, this article assesses psychological climate for organizational change, specifically readiness for organizational change and psychological climate for organizational creativity. Figure 1 diagrams the hypothesized relationships.

Leadership and Psychological Climate for Organizational Change Readiness

Schneider, Brief, and Guzzo (1996) discussed the importance of creating a climate for organizational change. People make up an organization, and if the people in the organization do not change, then there is no organizational change (Schneider et al. 1996). Schneider et al. noted that management can implement new technologies, can change organizational structure, and so on, but these changes are effective only if the organization's members adapt to these changes.

Lewin's (1951) seminal papers described implementing change as a three-step process. First, the organization must "unfreeze" from its present state. Second, the organization makes the desired changes, and third, there is the "refreezing" stage, in which the organization is now in the desired state and the changes become institutionalized. Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder suggested that readiness for change is similar to Lewin's concept of unfreezing (Armenakis et al. 1993; Armenakis and Harris 2009).

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Armenakis et al. (1993) defined readiness for change as the “organizational members’ beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully make these changes” (681). Similarly, Bernerth (2004) defined readiness for change as “a state of mind reflecting a willingness . . . to change the way one thinks” (39). Armenakis et al. contended that although there are many factors that contribute to a successful organizational change initiative, readiness for change is a key factor.

Armenakis and his colleagues (1993; 2009) argue that the primary mechanism for creating readiness for change among organizational members is the message for change. The readiness message should describe the need for the change and should build employees’ confidence that they have the capability to make the changes. The importance of the message in creating readiness for change has been supported in several case studies (for example, Armenakis et al. 1993; Armenakis and Harris 2002).

Armenakis et al. (1993) also noted that the individual who presents the message to the organizational members has a significant impact on whether the message will be heard. Readiness-creating messages will have more influence if the change agent is credible, trustworthy, and sincere (Armenakis et al. 1993; Armenakis and Harris 2009). Therefore, in relation to leadership, if the leader is the change agent, as is often the case, then change readiness is more likely to occur in organizations that have leaders that employees trust and respect. As noted by Armenakis and Harris (2009), “If change agents lack credibility then there is a likelihood change recipients may not believe the change message” (135).

Since credibility, trustworthiness, and sincerity are attributes often associated with transformational leaders, we postulate that transformational leaders, in comparison to transactional and laissez-faire leaders, are more likely and better able to create a psychological climate that inspires change readiness (Armenakis et al. 1993; Armenakis and Harris 2009).

Furthermore, by definition, transformational leaders are focused on change. At the employee level, an effective transformational leader changes the values, beliefs, and attitudes of followers (Podsakoff et al. 1990). At an organizational level, transformational leaders act as change agents who initiate and implement new directions within organizations (Northouse 2004). Thus, an effective transformational leader is able to foster a psychological climate that embraces readiness for change.

Previous research supports this proposition. For instance, Graetz (2000) used a qualitative case study approach involving three multinational companies to demonstrate that change leadership involves two roles: an instrumental role in which the leader has the knowledge to design the change and a charismatic role in which the leader has strong interpersonal skills. Graetz argued that a leader

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endorsing a significant organizational change must be able to envision, empower, and energize his or her followers. The characteristics that Graetz described are exemplars of transformational leader behaviors.

In a different context, Pepper and Thomas (2002) presented an autoethnographical approach of Pepper's experiences as a new principal for an elementary school. Pepper describes how her change from an authoritarian principal to a transformational principal enabled her to make significant changes in the school and created a more positive place to learn and work.

Bommer, Rich, and Rubin (2005) employed a longitudinal design to empirically assess the link between leadership and organizational change. Bommer et al. surveyed 372 employees within an organization and found that transformational leader behaviors were associated with lower levels of employee cynicism regarding organizational change.

In comparison, we expect that transactional leadership will also be positively related to psychological climate for organizational change but less so than transformational leadership given that transactional leaders do not provide a vision for the organization. Without a vision or convincing change message, organization members may be uncertain or hesitant to engage in what they perceive as ambiguous change initiatives.

At the other end of the continuum, because laissez-faire leaders are avoidant in their role as leaders, organizational members do not perceive them as sincere, credible, or trustworthy. Thus, we expect laissez-faire leaders to create a psychological climate in which members are resistant rather than ready for change. Furthermore, laissez-faire leaders are passive and offer little direction and guidance, so any change effort they suggest would be negatively related to a readiness for change. Therefore, our hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership will be positively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness.

Hypothesis 2: Transactional leadership will be positively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness but less so than transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 3: Laissez-faire leadership will be negatively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness.

Leadership and Psychological Climate for Organizational Creativity

Creativity in the workplace is defined as the process in which employees generate ideas to create, improve, or modify organizational products, policies, or procedures (Amabile 1996; Oldham and

Cummings 1996). *Innovation* is the implementation of these ideas (Amabile 1988; Bunce and West 1995). Thus, “all innovation begins with creative ideas” (Amabile et al. 1996, 1154).

Amabile et al. (1996) departed from the traditional view of creativity that focuses on the characteristics of creative persons and assumes that the organizational environment can influence the level and frequency of creative behavior. Thus, anyone in the organization can generate a creative idea, an idea that is novel and useful for the organization. Numerous studies have examined different aspects of the work context in predicting employee creativity, such as job complexity, financial rewards, and organizational resources (Oldham 2002). Of particular relevance to this article, researchers have examined leadership style in relation to workplace creativity.

Amabile et al. (1996) pioneered the study of creativity in the workplace and developed both a framework and an instrument to assess psychological climate for organizational creativity. The framework includes supervisory encouragement in predicting workplace creativity. Leaders who support employees and articulate clear goals create an environment in which employees are less likely to experience the fear of negative criticism and are more likely to make suggestions to improve the organization’s functioning.

Numerous empirical studies have supported the notion that leadership style is an important determinant of an environment that fosters employee creativity. For instance, Oldham and Cummings (1996) found that supportive supervision was positively related to the number of patent disclosures written by employees. Tierney, Farmer, and Graen (1999) found that employees who had positive relationships with their supervisors were more creative in the workplace. Redmond, Mumford, and Teach (1993) demonstrated that subordinates who were exposed to supervisors who encouraged them to view problems in alternative ways, and to spend more time thinking about the problems, produced more creative solutions than did subordinates who were not exposed to such supervisors. Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, and Kramer (2004) examined employees across companies in three different industries and found that perceived leader support was positively related to employee creativity. This is consistent with Yong’s (1994) assertion that one of the most significant forces for encouraging a creative climate is a trusting relationship between supervisor and subordinate.

Literature relevant to Bass’s three leadership styles suggested several mechanisms through which transformational leaders create a climate that enhances organizational creativity. For instance, transformational leaders encourage intellectual stimulation (Bass et al. 2003). That is, they encourage their followers to question assumptions, reframe problems, and approach old situations in new ways; all these behaviors are consistent with developing creative

ideas (Wang and Rode 2010). Transformational leaders also engage in individualized consideration in which the leader considers each follower's needs and supports individual initiatives (Bass et al. 2003). These supportive behaviors have been shown to promote employee creativity (for example, Oldham and Cummings 2006). Furthermore, transformational leaders use inspiration motivation (Bass et al. 2003) by emphasizing the importance of employee contributions to the organization, which motivates employees to develop and offer more ideas to facilitate organizational success (Bass 1998; Vera and Crossan 2004).

Although there has been some research that has not supported the relationship between transformational leadership and follower creativity (Jaussi and Dionne 2003; Kahai, Sosik, and Avolio 2003), the majority of empirical studies have found that followers of transformational leaders had higher creative performance than did followers of transactional leaders. These findings have been found in experimental studies (Jung 2001; Jung and Avolio 2000), laboratory studies (Sosik, Avolio, and Kahai 1998, 1999), and field studies (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev 2009; Shin and Zhou 2003). Thus, we hypothesize that transformational leadership will be positively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity.

In contrast, because the premise of transactional leadership is based on a clear-cut exchange process, as Liu, Liu, and Zeng (2011) noted, employees are not expected to go beyond their leader's initial expectations, nor are they incentivized or motivated to try out creative solutions. A transactional leader is one who works within the existing organizational culture and may be more risk averse than a transformational leader and thus will not be as likely to support employee creativity. Therefore, we postulate that transactional leadership will have some positive relationship to psychological climate for organizational creativity but significantly less so than transformational leadership.

Finally, laissez-faire leaders provide no support and no direction to their employees. These leaders do not create a psychological climate that encourages new ideas and suggestions. In fact, Hetland et al. (2011) argued that laissez-faire leaders "who neglect their duties are in fact likely to create a climate of uncertainty, confusion, and frustration, in which learning and creativity will be difficult, if not impossible" (165). Thus we hypothesize that laissez-faire leadership will be negatively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity.

Hypothesis 4: Transformational leadership will be positively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity.

Hypothesis 5: Transactional leadership will be positively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity but less so than transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 6: Laissez-faire leadership will be negatively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity.

Method

The following sections discuss sampling and data collection procedures.

Participants and Procedure

Based on DeGroot and others' (2000) finding that studies using others' reports of their leader showed less inflated results than studies using self-report of a leader, participants in this study were church members reporting on the leadership style of their pastors. The church members also rated their perceptions of the psychological climate for organizational change readiness and climate for organizational creativity of their church as an organization. These members were recruited from six churches within a West Coast presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) in which the pastor had been in the present position for at least five years, to ensure that organization members would have had an opportunity to fully develop perceptions of his leadership.

The pastors in all six churches were men, so gender was not a confounding variable. An announcement was made during the Sunday morning church service, asking the members to fill out a paper-and-pencil survey after the service. Of the 870 church members who were invited to participate in this study, 182 people returned surveys, for a response rate of 21 percent. However, analyses were based on a sample of 178 participants who had complete data. The sample was mainly older, longer-tenured church members, a majority of whom were female, which is reflective of church membership in the PCUSA. Age was assessed with grouped categories; the average age was fifty-five. The average tenure in the church was seventeen years ($SD = 12.41$), and 66 percent were female, with 34 percent male.

Measures

Leadership Style. Leadership style was assessed using a form of the thirty-six-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X) (Avolio and Bass 2002). The items were adapted for use in a congregation; for instance, the term *leader* was changed to *pastor*. Participants were asked to respond to statements using a five-point Likert-type response (0 = Not at all to 4 = Frequently, if not always). Three leadership styles were assessed: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire.

An example of a transformational item was “The pastor articulates a compelling vision of the future.” Transactional leadership was assessed with items such as, “The pastor provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts;” and an example item for laissez-faire leadership was “The pastor avoids making decisions.”

Psychological Climate for Organizational Change Readiness. Psychological climate for organizational change readiness was assessed by examining parishioners’ perceptions of the extent to which organizational members were ready for organizational change. We used nine items from Daley (1991), Jones and Bearley (1986), and Tagliaferri (1991; cited in Eby et al. 2000) and made slight adaptations for a congregational setting. Two example items were “It is really not possible to change things around here” (reverse coded), and “People here do not take action until a problem has occurred” (reverse coded). Participants were asked to respond using the same five-point Likert-type response as in the MLQ for ease of participation.

Psychological Climate for Organizational Creativity. Psychological climate for organizational creativity was assessed using six items adapted for congregational use from Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-McIntyre (2003), in which participants responded using the same five-point Likert scale as the MLQ. Two example items are “I feel creativity is supported and encouraged here,” and “New ideas are encouraged.”

Results

The descriptives, bivariate correlations, and coefficient alphas are presented in Table 1. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict the psychological climate for organizational change readiness and the psychological climate for organizational creativity; both analyses are presented in Table 2. The overall relationship between the leadership types and psychological climate for organizational change readiness was statistically significant ($R^2 = .40$, $F(3,174) = 38.60$, $p < .01$). The two leadership types that were significant predictors were transformational leadership and laissez-faire leadership ($\beta = .29$, $\beta = -.41$, $p < .05$, respectively). Consistent with hypothesis 1, transformational leadership was positively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness. Members of the congregation who perceived the pastor to have a transformational leadership style were more likely to indicate that the church had a climate in which members were more willing to change. There was no significant relationship between transactional leadership style and psychological climate for organizational change readiness, thus hypothesis 2 was not supported. Finally, consistent with hypothesis 3, a negative relationship was

Table 1. Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations ($N = 178$)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transformational	3.13	.63	.92				
2. Transactional	2.18	.66	.61**	.72			
3. Laissez-faire	1.05	.85	-.52**	-.29**	.85		
4. Psychological climate for organizational change readiness	2.58	.86	.52**	.33**	-.57**	.92	
5. Psychological climate for organizational creativity	3.04	.82	.67**	.46**	-.45**	.67**	.92

Note: Cronbach's alpha on diagonal.

** $p < .01$

Table 2. Multiple Regression Predicting Psychological Climates for Organizational Change Readiness and Organizational Creativity ($N = 178$)

Predictors	Psychological Climate for Organizational Change Readiness	Psychological Climate for Organizational Creativity
	β	β
Transformational	.29**	.55**
Transactional	.04	.08
Laissez-faire	-.41**	-.14**

** $p < .01$

found between members who perceived the pastor to have a laissez-faire leadership style and psychological climate for organizational change readiness.

In predicting psychological climate for organizational creativity, the overall model was significant ($R^2 = .47$, $F(3,174) = 51.95$, $p < .01$), and similar to the previous findings the two leadership types that were statistically significant were transformational leadership and laissez-faire leadership ($\beta = .55$, $\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$, respectively). Transformational leadership was positively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity, and laissez-faire leadership was negatively related to psychological climate for organizational creativity.

Discussion

The study examined whether transformational leaders are more likely than transactional or laissez-faire leaders to lead in such a way that the organizational members think their organization is ready for change and supportive of creativity. As hypothesized, transformational leadership was positively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness and psychological climate for organizational creativity. Surprisingly, transactional leadership was

not related to either type of psychological climate. We also found that laissez-faire leadership was negatively related to psychological climate for organizational change readiness and psychological climate for organizational creativity, which was consistent with our hypotheses.

Implications

This article provides support that church members' perception of the pastor's transformational leadership is positively related to their perceptions of the organization's psychological climate for change readiness and psychological climate for organizational creativity. The more church members perceive that a pastor demonstrates the transformational behaviors of inspiring, motivating, and challenging people, the more likely they perceive that their church is willing to make changes and be supportive of creative idea generation in their organizational life.

Conversely, members' perceptions of the pastor's laissez-faire leadership style are negatively related to readiness for change and supporting creativity. Thus, the more members perceive that a pastor demonstrates a hands-off approach to management, the less likely they perceive that the church would be willing to make changes and support creativity in their midst.

Laissez-faire leadership was the strongest predictor of psychological climate for organizational change readiness, and transformational leadership was the strongest predictor of psychological climate for organizational creativity. Whereas change requires group effort, creativity typically occurs at the individual level. Therefore, laissez-faire pastors who are unwilling to facilitate the communication of a change message will retard the change process. In contrast, the transformational leader behaviors of individual consideration and intellectual stimulation will encourage creativity among individuals within the organization.

The implications of these results for pastors and those who work with them, such as seminary professors or judicatory staff, is that when encouraging change and creativity within the local congregation is a goal, pastors should seek to refrain from solely taking corrective actions after mistakes have already been made or problems have already developed. Pastors should also avoid a hands-off approach in which they abdicate responsibility, delay decision making, and provide no feedback to church members nor put out any effort to help them develop in their abilities as individuals. Refraining from these laissez-faire leadership behaviors is important for congregations looking to make changes.

Likewise, pastors should seek to inspire members toward a shared vision. Pastors should challenge members intellectually to think through significant issues, develop their individual potential as they work together, and be role models for the vision. These

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behaviors are crucial if a church wants to encourage its members to be creative.

Limitations

Some limitations regard the sample size and participants. The sample size is small, with 182 surveys returned and a low, but not atypical, response rate of 21 percent. In addition, asking for volunteers after a Sunday service meant that the sample was not random. The sample was based on six churches within one West Coast presbytery of a Protestant denomination, which limits the extent to which these results can be generalized to other regions of the country and church denominations. The participants consisted of mainly females, over fifty years of age, and although this is reflective of these six congregations' membership, it might make these results less generalizable to other churches and organizations. In addition, because the majority of the sample was female parishioners assessing a male leader, this may affect the generalizability of the study. Future research is needed to assess female pastors and their leadership style in relation to organizational climate for change and for creativity. Future research is also needed in other nonprofit organizations to test the generalizability of our findings.

Furthermore, these results indicate members' perceptions of the congregation's readiness to change and supportiveness of creativity. They do not indicate whether any of these churches are engaging in relevant or effective change and creative behavior in their organizations. Ideally, the perceptions that people in the church are open to change and value creativity would lead to behaviors that would enhance effective change within the congregation, but it cannot be assumed. Future research is needed to explore church members' perceptions and actual change initiatives.

Data from this study were collected at one time point from single source surveys, so we are limited in assessing causal relationships among our variables. Future research is needed that provides data from multiple sources (parishioners, pastors, employees in the pastoral office) and from multiple time points.

Conclusion

Leadership style in a church setting was found to be related to psychological climate for both change readiness and creativity. Little research has examined change readiness and creativity in church organizations, and given the challenges that churches are currently facing, creative problem solving and change efforts may be vital for their organizational longevity. Churches are struggling to address the perception that they are either unwilling or unable to adapt to change. As our results demonstrate, laissez-faire leaders are detrimental to these organizations' efforts toward revitalization and

change, and simply having competent leadership is not enough to create an environment that is conducive to change and creativity. In order to remain relevant and influential in a changing society, church leaders must adopt and incorporate the behaviors of transformational leaders.

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