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Exploring the Relationship between Leadership and Followership of Chinese Project Managers

Abstract

Purpose – Followership is the free will recognition of leadership in the commitment towards realization of the collectively adopted organization vision and culture. The purpose of this paper is to identify the relationship between project managers' leadership and their followership. Most project managers are both leaders and followers at the same time, but research typically investigates only their leadership. This ignores followership as an important aspect in understanding and predicting behavior, and further in the selection of project managers.

Design/methodology/approach – The method used for this paper is explanatory and a deductive, through which the above research hypothesis is tested using quantitative techniques. Data are collected through a nation-wide survey in China. Data analysis is done through Factor Analysis, Canonical Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis.

Findings – The results show that transformational leadership is positively correlated with transformational followership and transactional followership, and that transactional leadership is negatively correlated with transactional followership.

Research limitations/implications – The paper supports a deeper investigation into leadership *and followership theories*. A *model* for both leadership and

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followership is developed. The findings from this paper will help organizations in choosing their project managers.

Originality/value – The originality lies in the new way to examine the relationship between leadership and followership. It is the first study of this type on project managers. Its value lies in a new perspective towards the relationship between leadership and followership in project management.

Key words Leadership, Followership, Transactional leadership, Transformational leadership, Project management

Paper type Quantitative analysis

1 Introduction

In most organizations project managers are both leader and follower at same time. However, past studies have mainly focused on leaders and their styles only (Howell, 2007). Leadership is generally viewed as important and vital for organizations (Alvesson and Blom, 2015). Meanwhile, a significant number of studies looked at leadership in various organizational context, which added multiple and interdisciplinary perspectives to the existing body of knowledge on leadership (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; etc.).

These studies often focus on the project manager in his or her leadership role, even if it is not the leader alone who makes leadership effective. Although organizations continuously devote time and money to the development of leadership, followership is what enables leadership to succeed (Behery, 2016). Manning and Robertson (2016) suggests it is leadership in conjunction with followership which provides for effectiveness.

Dixon and Westbrook (2003) by using the followership profile (TFP) have shown

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that there are following behaviors at every hierarchical level in an organization. However, only a few investigations considered followership as a component of the leadership process (e.g., Manning and Robertson, 2016; Leroy, et al., 2015; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Chaleff, 2016), and studied the correlation between followership styles and leadership styles. This potentially broadens the understanding of both leadership and followership (Burke, 2009). Moreover, for some people, leadership and followership are practiced simultaneously. So far, only a few studies have investigated the relation of individual's followership and leadership as an intra-relationship (i.e. within an individual). Transformational and Transactional leadership theory (Bass, 1990) is one of the most widely accepted leadership theories (Bass and Riggio, 2006). It is robust and effective. When Defee (2009) brought up his followership model, which also categorized followership into transactional and transformational, it enabled the possibility to examine the correlation of transactional/transformational leadership and followership. We argue that this applies also in the realm of project management.

Project managers are the leaders within their project team and, at the same time, the followers of their supervisors in the wider organization. Through this duality in roles, project managers exercise not only leadership of their team, but also followership for their managers. To understand the implications of this dual role, it is necessary to understand the relationship of leadership and followership within a project manager. Also, by clarifying the relationship, it can be used to understand project managers' selection criteria, which only a few studies investigated so far (Müller et al., 2018c).

The research question of this study is:

RQ: What is the relationship between leadership behavior and followership behavior of an individual project manager under the transactional and transformational lens?

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By answering this question, we can understand how one's leadership and followership influence each other. The unit of analysis is the project manager in his or her dual role of leader and follower. The study takes a post-positivist perspective and uses a quantitative, questionnaire-based assessment of both leadership and followership, based on the Full Range of Leadership Model (Bass, 1990) and Defee's followership model (2009).

The paper continues with the review of the most relevant literature, followed by sections on methodology, analysis and discussion, and it concludes with a model, demonstrating the relationship between transformational/transactional followership and leadership of a project manager.

2 Literature review and research model

In this section, we first review the relevant literature on leadership and followership in the domain of project management and then develop the study's research model and hypotheses.

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is a combination of management, motivation, interpersonal behavior and the process of communication. The effectiveness of delegation and empowerment determines the quality of the leadership. By emphasizing the importance of the work, leaders can aid intrinsic motivation, which helps to develop teamwork and integration of individual and group goals in the organization (Tustin, 1989). The nature of management is moving away from an emphasis on getting results by closely controlling the workforce and develops towards setting an environment for coaching, support and empowerment (Gretton, 1995).

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Today, organizations use project management to support the execution of their competitive strategies to deliver desired outcomes, such as fast time-to-market, high quality, or low-cost products (Milosevic and Srivannaboon, 2006). In this context, project management has emerged as a profession in its own right and is increasingly popular as a way for organizations to accomplish their objectives (Lindbergh, 2009).

Leadership is widely considered to be an important aspect of projects (Keegan and Den Hartog, 2004). We briefly review the main categories relevant for the present study.

The trait school assumes that project managers are born rather than made. The trait school focused exclusively on the leader's personal qualities and not the follower or the situation (Vroom & Jago, 1995). Attempts to identify the traits of effective leaders have focused on three main areas: Abilities: hard management skills; Personality: self-confidence and emotional variables; Physical appearance. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) identified six traits of effective project managers: Drive and ambition; The desire to lead and influence others; Honesty and integrity; Self-confidence; Intelligence; Technical knowledge. Criticism was raised on the trait school, since the situation and follower had no consideration. Therefore, critics argue that leadership must be invariant, because of the stableness of the traits. (Adler & Rodman, 1991).

The behavioral school, also known as the style school, differentiate project managers by what they actually do. The foundation of behavioral school is called theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 1960). Theory X leader beliefs the followers are only motivated by money and they should be led by setting goals and giving directions. Theory Y leader treat subordinates as motivated followers who can be led through participative approaches. The behavioral school of leadership emphasizes leader's action, ignoring the situational factors. There are difficulties to isolate specific leadership behavior without considering situational factors.

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The contingency school suggests that effective project managers can adapt their leading behaviors to their followers' need, based on their perception from the environment. Fiedler (1967) brought up the contingency leadership school, he indicated that the effectiveness of leadership depends on the interaction between leader and situation. Studies in project management using the contingency school perspective tend to follow particular patterns (Turner & Muller, 2005): Assess the characteristics of the project manager; Evaluate the situation in terms of key contingency variables; Seek a match between the project manager and the situation. A limitation of this approach is that it is from the perspective of leader only, no interaction or exchange between project manager and follower is taking into consideration.

The emotional intelligence school suggests that the project manager's emotional intelligence (EQ) has a stronger influence on project results than intellectual capability (IQ) (Turner & Müller, 2017). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) identified four dimensions to evaluate EI, Self-awareness; Self-management; Social awareness; Relationship management. Derived from these four dimensions, six leadership styles were suggested, which are: Visionary; Democratic; Coaching; Pacesetter; Affiliating; Commanding.

Compared with the trait school, the Competency school of leadership emphasizes the leader skills which can be learned, these include. According to Dulewicz and Higgs (2003), competencies are Cognitive; Behavioral; Emotional; Motivational. They combined emotional, behavioral and motivational competences into EQ and broke cognitive competences into (IQ) (intelligence and problem-solving abilities) and added managerial competences (MQ) (knowledge and skills of management functions).

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2.2 Transactional and transformational leadership

Transformational leadership

Bass (1985) describes the theory of transformational leadership as one in which the leader seeks to engage the full person of the follower. Menon (2014) further suggests that transformational leadership takes place when leaders enhance mutual levels of creativity and motivation with followers. Transformational leadership is concerned with values, ethics, and long-term goals of individuals (Northouse, 2004). It also "involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them (Northouse, 2004, p169).

Transformational leadership can be seen as an extension, or expansion, of transactional leadership, with the subordinates following more intensely to their leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994). A Transformational leader goes beyond engaging in simple exchanges or agreements with their followers or subordinates, they set more challenging expectations, and motivate and inspire others to do more than they originally intended, and achieve higher performances which often go beyond what the followers thought possible (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Within the context of projects, more recently the concept of transformational leadership which refers to charisma, inspiration, consideration and stimulation, has been suggested to bring strong value in project contexts (Savelsbergh et al., 2015). A transformational project manager provides positive expectations and focusses on care and development of the team, as well as inspiring, empowering and stimulating team members to exceed usual levels of performance (Potter et al., 2018). Transformational leadership takes place when leaders enhance mutual levels of creativity and motivation with followers (Aga et al., 2016). Because project managers are conceived of as leading "groups of talented people in an environment of collaborative bureaucracy" (Carpenter, 2002) the emphasis has shifted from control and compliance

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to identification, loyalty and commitment. Such processes are central to transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leading that suit the project context well (Keegan and Den Hartog, 2004), especially for complex projects (Müller, et al., 2018c), with managers often high on EQ, medium to high on MQ, and medium on IQ (Müller, et al., 2018b).

The four the dimensions that make up project manager's transformational leadership are: *Idealized influence*, *Intellectual stimulation*, *Inspirational motivation*, and *Individualized consideration* (Aga et al., 2016).

Idealized influence, both *behavioral* and *attributed*, describes project managers "soft methods" (such as inspiring subordinates' identification, self-esteem, and trust in leaders), which may encourage project participants to follow the vision and mission of the project. This in turn leads to a low level of competitive conflict orientation but a high level of cooperative conflict orientation (Ding et al., 2017).

Through *Intellectual stimulation* project managers encourage subordinates to challenge the status quo and stimulate innovative thoughts (Chi and Huang, 2014).

Inspirational motivation refers to project managers' ability to motivate subordinates with appealing and inspiring goals, convince them of the need for transformation, and explain why transformation is imperative (Blomme et al., 2015).

Individual consideration advocates that project managers provide a supportive climate in which they identify and address the differing needs, competencies, and ambitions of each subordinate (Blomme et al., 2015; Northouse, 2013).

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership concentrates on the leader's actions and behaviors in order to study how the leader influences his/her followers by giving rewards to their followers or giving recognition to their followers' work (Northouse, 2004).

Transactional leadership happens when the leader gives the follower a valued

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outcome as a reward for expected performance (Mekraz & Gundala, 2016). The individual feelings and needs of the followers are not that important to the leader (Northouse, 2004). Just as Bass (1985) states, “if the follower does as agreed, the leader arranges to reward the follower or the leader does not impose aversive reinforcement such as correction, reproof, penalization, or withdrawal of authorization to continue” (p121).

The transactional leader acts as a replacement for any deficiency in the environment, competence, or motivation of the followers, as well as any obstacle in the task itself. Thus, the leader can increase the followers’ motivation, satisfaction, and performance and helps the followers to reach the goal of the organization (House et al., 1988). Bass indicated, the transactional leader emphasizes giving followers something they want in return for something the leader wants, and does not consider personal relationship and intellectual stimulation, transactional leadership is not likely to generate great enthusiasm and commitment among followers (Bass, 1985).

The structure of transactional leadership incorporates contingent reward, management-by-exception active and management-by-exception passive (Zhang et al., 2018). *Contingent reward* is involved in the transactional leadership process. It is a traditional type of bartering and may be used in an effective leader-follower relationship (Bass, 1985). *Management-by-exception*, both *positive* and *negative*, suggests that a transactional leader run the organization by risk avoidance (Yammarino et al., 1993) and relies on hierarchical authority, task completion, and rewards and punishments (Tracey and Hinkin, 1998).

Laissez-faire leadership was illuminated by the only factor remaining (Bass, 1997). *Laissez-faire* project managers avoid providing personal interaction or direction in critical issues and delegate authority completely to subordinates so as to create a free atmosphere (Zhang et al., 2018). A *Laissez-faire* approach might be used by project managers to encourage creativity in team members, but should be less

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efficient when quick decisions need to be made (Drouin, 2018).

The relationship between the project team member and the project manager as leader is likely to be different from the traditional leader-follower relationship in a functional hierarchy. Although the project manager is responsible for the day-to-day work of the team members he or she often has an unclear role to play in the overall development, career plans and longer-term goals of the project team member. However, helping subordinates develop to their fullest potential is an integral part of transformational leadership. This role may be harder to play for project managers than for line managers in a traditional functional hierarchy (Keegan and Den Hartog, 2004). Moreover, as support for career development and progress are widely associated with the leadership role, this may suggest that leadership is less important to project-based personnel than to personnel in more traditional organizational relationships, this can be intensified for project members working across multiple projects and thus under various project leaders (Hastings, 1993). All of these suggests a deeper look into transformational and transactional leadership in project managers.

2.3 Followership

Traditionally, Followership contains negative connotations (McGregor, 2006). This view conjures up images of someone without power, influence, or authority (Todd, 2015), who could not make the grade as leaders, and thus fail to excel (Chaleff, 2003). Leadership in this context is assumed to be a unidirectional model of what a leader does to a subordinate (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992), and the role of followers is based on their perceived susceptibility to the leader's behaviors and style (Howell and Shamir, 2005).

Sanford and Homans are the earliest researchers that treat followership as an active rather than passive subordinate (Woods, 2009). Sanford (1950) demonstrated that "leadership is an intricate relation between leader and followers" that included

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meeting the followers needs to maintain a desirable relationship. Homans (1950) suggested the “human group” with a connection between leader and follower. Sampietro and Villa (2014) propose to define the managerial contribution of the project team members “project followership”. Project followership means “proactive participation in all managerial aspects of the project work within an individual's visibility horizon”.

Under the environment of a prevailing project management, the leader-follower role has changed dramatically in order to enhance efficiency (Zahra, et al., 2015). Good leader-follower relationship is not only the leader behavior resulting in subordinate behavior, but also a two-way process, which influences both individual and organizational performance (Mullins, 2010). Followers are given more autonomy and accountability for pursuing the organization’s mission (Brown, 1995). Then, another view of followers, that of not ‘just following’, or the antithesis of the leaders had been brought up (Kelley, 1992). Follower’s effort and collaboration with the leaders is important for organizational success (Behery, 2016). Collinson’s research in 2006 confirms that followers maintain their own identity in the organization. Their followership style may be influenced by their leader, but will only endorse a leader that aligns with the values forming their own identity (Hogg et al., 2003).

Project followership

The importance of the project team as a key player in project environment has been recognized, and the managerial contribution of the project team members’ is defined as project followership (Sampietro & villa, 2014).

Ng and Aalker (2008) investigated the source and use of power from the perspective of project delivery project leaders in public sector organization. They explored how leadership styles influence the degree of trust and commitment exhibited by followers. Morsley and Patrick (2011) suggested that a combination of the reward-for-performance aspects of contingent reward transactional leadership with the inspiring characteristics of transformational leadership offers the greatest amount

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of followers commitment to project goals. Project followers should be considered as key project stakeholders and building their trust and confidence in the project leadership group is vital (Ng & Aalker, 2008).

Stewart-Mailhiot (2015) indicated the key components of effective followership of project management: creating and sticking to deadlines, the importance of communication, the need for assessment, and an understanding of the value of relationships within an organization and how those relationships can develop into stakeholder support for a given project. Proactive followership influences several performance-relevant aspects of dispersed innovation project teams' work processes. It enhances the quality of task strategies with regard to the individual team members' own area of responsibility (Hoegl & Muethel, 2007).

Followership dimensions

Kelley (1992) proposed two behavioral dimensions of followership style based on two aspects, these are *Thoughts* and *Actions*. The first dimension aims at followers whose characteristics include being independent critical thinkers who consider how their actions will affect others, as well as being willing to be creative and offer criticism regardless of the consequences of doing so. The second dimension covers active followers who take the initiative in decision making and accomplishing tasks without constant supervision from the leader. Kelley (1988) proposed four different followership styles according to the dimensions mentioned above, that were *Alienated*, *Exemplary*, *Passive*, and *Conformist*. "*Alienated* followers are mavericks who have a heavy skepticism of the organization; they are capable, but cynical" (Bjugstad, et al., 2006, p310). They are independent and critical thinkers, but passive in their own role. "*Exemplary* followers are independent, innovative, and willing to question leadership. *Exemplary* followers know how to work well with other cohorts and present themselves consistently to all who come into contact with them" (Bjugstad, et al., 2006, p310). *Passive* followers are dependent and uncritical with a passive approach

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within the organization. “They rely on the leaders to do the thinking for them” (Bjugstad, et al., 2006, p310). “*Conformist* followers are the ‘yes people’ of the organizations. They are active at doing the organization’s work and will actively follow orders” (Bjugstad, et al., 2006, p310). Because the social desirability factor as reported by Kelley (1992), several investigations using Kelly’s model (Pack, 2004; Beckerleg, 2002, etc.), suggest that the majority of participants reported themselves to be exemplary followers, less than a few participants reported themselves to be pragmatists, conformist, and passive.

Chaleff (1995) viewed the followership in two dimensions. The first dimension is the extent followers loyally and enthusiastically supported their leader, and the second dimension is the extent the follower challenging the leader when the leader harms the organization. Based on two dimensions, Chaleff (1995) proposed four kinds of follower, they were *Partner*, *Implementer*, *Individualist*, and *Resource*. The *Partner* provides enthusiastic support for the leader, but may question the leader’s policies or behaviors if the behaviors and policies are thought to be unreasonable or against the organizational values. The *Implementer* will enthusiastically support the leader and carry out their duties but they are unlikely to challenge their leader. The *Individualist* has little regard for the leader and is not certain to question or criticize the leader’s policies or behavior. The *Resource* is the individual who is occupied to his/her own job (Chaleff, 2003). However, Chaleff (1995) designed the model of followership focused only on the roles effective followers play, whereas other aspects of follower examined by most researchers such as traits, behaviors, or personality types are not considered (Smith, 2009).

Defee (2009) proposed a model with the four dimensions *Style of thinking*, *Desire to collaboration*, *Scope of responsibility* and *Commitment*. Every Defee (2009) followership dimension is in two directions. The transformational-transactional paradigm can be used to classify follower styles on the basis of the behaviors

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exhibited in the same way which has previously been applied to leaders.

Transformational followers are most closely associated with critical thinking abilities, expanded scope of responsibilities, active collaboration, and commitment to group goals. Transactional followers are likely to think in a more direct way, interested in maintaining their existing scope of responsibilities, passive collaborators and committed to individual goals. This style of followers prefers a stable environment (Defee, 2009).

Style of thinking can distinguish followers according to critical (transformational) or directed (transactional). The critical (Kelley 1992) followers, who are critical to their leaders, always try to find better ways to complete the task and provide innovative solutions for their leaders (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). On contrast, directed followers try to maintain the current situation, they prefer close supervision, and short-term target. The *Desire to collaborate* with others including leaders and others throughout the organization, can define the followers by their willingness to cooperate. The active (transformational) collaborating followers have the intention to build a close relationship with colleagues. They are intended to help each other when their own expertise is limited (Kelley, 1992), and assist leader to accomplish mutually held goal (Kouzes and Posner 1990). The passive (transactional) collaborating followers don't always try to expand their relationship network. Their interactions with the leader are usually considered to be simply directed, and they cooperate with the leaders and others when their personal interests are greatly infected. Thirdly, the *Scope of responsibility* is another characteristic to identify different followership styles (Chaleff, 2003). Transformational followers, who seek expanded responsibility in the organization, need to demonstrate themselves to be high competence with in-role tasks (Podsakoff et al. 2000), then carrying on extra-role activities (Podsakoff et al. 1990). Extra workloads will be put on to these followers (Banutu-Gomez 2004). Transactional followers are suitable to stable *Scope of responsibility*. They also want

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to prove their in-role competence, however extra scope is often avoided. *Commitment* (Lundin and Lancaster, 1990) can categorize followers into group-oriented (transformational) and self-oriented (transactional) (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). Group-orientated *Commitment* followers show their own commitment through the creation of a shared purpose with the leader (Chaleff, 2003). Their leader's directions can be challenged by these followers, when the directions stray from the mutually-held goals (Chaleff, 2003). Self-orientated *Commitment* followers concentrate their focus base on their own standing; they will only challenge their leaders when their welfare or tasks are directly affected by the leaders' decisions.

Table 1 categorizes transformational and transactional followers' behaviors (Chaleff, 2003). Transformational followers are supposed to actively in performance, and in ways that go well beyond the parameters of their original role. He or she is characterized as more accepting of change and projecting behaviors that is generally more innovative, and based on mutually defined goals. Transactional followers also behave passively, and minimize any extra activities that go beyond the scope of the specified relationship. They resist change, and exhibit in ways that maximize the return to his or her own goals. Although few empirical studies were found in the literature that utilized Defee's (2009) theory to pragmatically investigate followership in specific populations, it is the foundation followership model of this study, since it fits the transactional-transformational paradigm with Bass (1990) leadership theory.

Characteristic	Transformational	Transactional
Style of thinking	"Critical" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek innovative solutions • Champion change initiatives 	"Directed" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimizes existing processes • Status quo
Collaboration	"Active" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports leader's goals • Decisions benefit entire 	"Passive" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplish own goals • Minimizes other's goals

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	Corporation • Network of relationships	• Limited extra contacts
Scope of responsibility	“Expanded” • Quality task completion • Extra-role activities	“Stable” • Solid in-role performance • Stay within defined scope
Commitment	“Group” • Accomplish shared goals • Company success	“Self” • Decisions benefit self only • Self specific success

Table 1: The followership style types (Defee, 2009)

2.4 Relationship between Leadership and Followership

Behaviors required of good followership are similar to those required of good leadership (Nolan & Harty, 2016). Several studies support the idea that particular leadership styles are suitable in different circumstances. Whatever style may be appropriate, distinct styles of leadership must elicit distinct styles of followership. On the other hand, appropriate types of followership will be expected as responses to, and support for, particular types of leadership (Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982).

The followers and the leader influence each other. Kelley (2008) suggested leaders are malleable products of cumulative followership actions. Followers' traits, emotions and attitude will influence their perception of the leader. Bligh et al. (2007) identifies that the followers' emotional stability, working satisfaction, and career opportunity will affect their perception on their leaders. Pestor et al. (2007), show that emotional arousing level will affect preference bias on charismatic leader. Banutu-Gome (2004) identifies that followers' perception can affect their perfection on servant leader.

On the other hand, leadership styles will also influence followers' behavior. Van

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Vugt, et al. (2009) suggested that followers benefit from association with good leader. Good leadership increases group morale and satisfaction with group membership (Van Vugt, 2006). Experimental research on social dilemmas shows that leaders enhance group cooperation, thereby producing outcomes that everyone in the group can enjoy (Van Vugt, 2006). By encouraging participation, authorization and goal-sharing, transformational leadership can unleash followers' potential (Miller, 2007).

Followership and leadership are interrelated and indivisible, as believed by many researchers (etc. Hollander, 1992; Tanoff & Barlow, 2002), therefore, an integrated way of research view has been proposed by Hollander (1992). Hollander (1992) advocates to change the current leader-follower relation, and to establish an open, dynamic, and bilateral relation between each other, and this relation should base on mutually benefit (Gilbert & Matviuk, 2008). Küpers (2007) purposes an integral AQAL (all quadrant, all level, all lines) model, which is divided by the interior and exterior dimension as well as individual and collective spheres of wisdom and its interconnected processes of intentional, behavioral, cultural and systemic domains. The leader-follower trade approach (Malakyan, 2014) suggested leadership and followership functions and roles may be traded or exchanged by the positional leaders and followers in different situations or organizational settings toward mutual respect empowerment and effectiveness.

Bjugstad et al. (2006) integrate Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) situational leadership quadrants model and Kelley's (1992) follower type model together. In this model followership and leadership research can be combined for to maximize the overall productivity. The follower-leader relationship does not operate in vacuum. The leader sometimes functions as the followers, and the followers sometimes function as the leader. The followers and the leader are linked together in interrelated roles and dependent on each other.

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Although most researches (Bjugstad, 2006) focus on the interaction between leader and follower, there are a few researchers made some progress in the subject of individual's leadership and followership performance same as this dissertation focused on. The next section will discuss individual's leadership and followership researches.

2.5 Relationship of individual's followership and leadership

Only examining followership in the follower or leadership in the leader, is restrictive and insufficient. Burke (2009) indicates that "if followership is recognized as a quintessential to leadership and leadership seen as the essence of followership, a collaborative leader-follower relationship could develop. With this viewpoint in mind, collaboration may lead to greater influence, trust, and a shifting of both leadership and followership. In a reciprocal relationship a leader potentially will follow in certain situations and the follower lead in others" (page 79). Rather than view followership as the opposite of leadership, followership is aligned with leadership created a multi-dimensional relationship. On the other hand, since leadership is a process rather than a role (Hughes et al., 2006), and the essence of leadership is a mutual goal, a relationship, a cooperation, and a vision, a leadership theory which integrate leader and follower is needed (Yukl, 2002).

Emerging literature on leadership-followership suggests that effective followers and effective leaders share many of the same characteristics and that cultivating followership skills is a prerequisite for effective leadership (Agho, 2016). Followership encompasses important character traits for any person who aspires to lead others. Effective followers are cooperative and collaborative, honest, enthusiastic, innovative, independent, credible, and intelligent (Chaleff, 1995; Kelley, 1988, 1992).

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Agho (2016) suggested that effective followers play significant roles in fostering leadership and organizational effectiveness. A significant number of the respondents agreed that followership skills should be viewed as prerequisites for effective leadership and that leadership and followership are interrelated roles.

Therefore, researches began to exam the relationship between individual's leadership and followership. Geist (2001) examines 127 NCAA Division II athletic directors' followership and leadership correlations using MLQ 5x short-form (Bass et al., 1995), and Kelley's (1992) survey. Managers had their leader and follower abilities compared. Geist discovered that transformational leadership more correlated with followership than transactional leadership. Three transformational dimensions, idealized influence, active engagement, and inspirational motivation had significant relationship with followership.

In another study, Tanoff and Barlow (2002) examine 130 students in military college for their followership and leadership by Kelley's (1992) survey. The Active engagement and independent thinking of followership dimensions and leadership dimensions were found to be correlated.

Burke (2009) examines the correlations of followership and leadership styles of medical science liaisons within the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industry. Followership dimensions active engagement and critical thinking of followership are found to correlated with leadership.

However throughout the research history, there are only a few studies that investigated the relations of individual's followership and leadership. Moreover, there is no discussion on project managers. The significance of leadership in projects is emphasizes by Müller et al.(2018a), but the analysis of leadership in projects falls in one of the following categories: the personality and leadership style of the project manager, the leadership processes emerging from the team (Müller et al., 2018b). However, the roles between the leader and the follower are usually blurred and both

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occur simultaneously, especially in project management (Müller, et al., 2016; Clarke, et al., 2015; Collinson, 2006). Although the review above shows that leadership and followership are occasionally jointly addressed in studies, the nature of their relationship remains unclear. The present study will address this knowledge gap by investigating this relationship.

2.6 Hypothesis and Research Model

For the majority of project managers, acquiring competencies and skills is an incremental process and without exception, those project managers who acquire luminary and leadership status, would have been followers at some point in their careers (McManus, 2015). They can look back on their lives and quickly recount those who mentored them, and who acted and modelled great leadership for them. They use their followership to experience the actuality of a project manager's approach to leadership and to evaluate it and its effects (McManus, 2015). Project managers walk in the footsteps of previous leaders, and their leadership begins with followership (McManus, 2015). Past studies that jointly addressed leadership and followership of a project manager, such as (Turner et al., 2009; Bjugstad et al., 2006; etc.), implied a relationship between, but did not investigate the nature of this relationship.

Based on the literature review above, we hypothesize:

H1: Leadership behavior is positively (or negatively) associated with followership behavior within an individual project manager.

H1 can be further divided into two sub-hypotheses.

H1a: Leadership behavior positively (or negatively) impacts followership behavior within an individual project manager.

H1b: Followership behavior positively (or negatively) impacts leadership behavior within an individual project manager.

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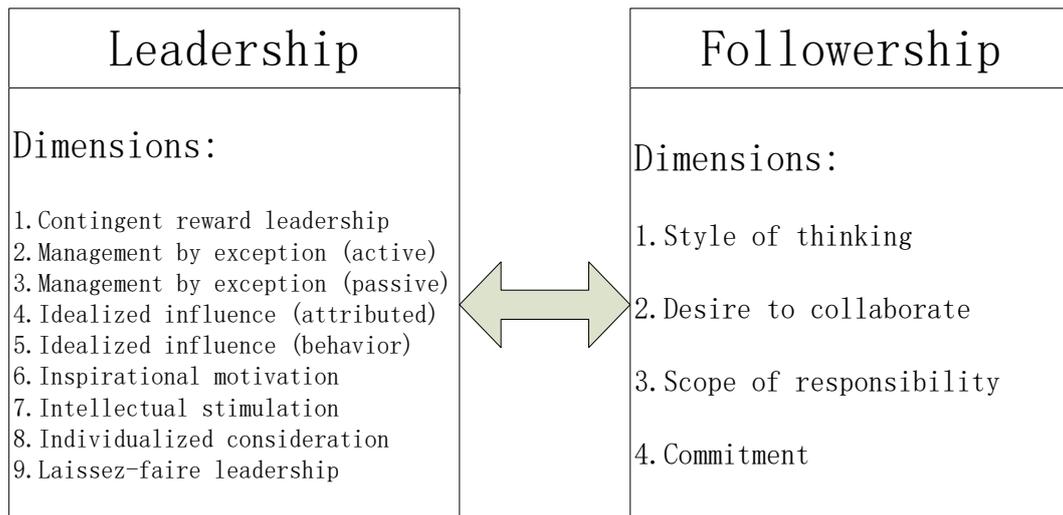


Figure 1: Proposed research model

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The investigation follows Saunder's et al.'s (2007) process for research design. Accordingly, we determined the underlying philosophical stance at the outset and decided for a post-positivist perspective. This stance acknowledges that data collected from human beings cannot be objective and that certain levels of subjectivity prevail, even though objectivity remains as the ideal goal. Accordingly, we are aiming for identification of trends or generalizations limited to settings similar to the one the research was taken in. The study is explanatory in nature and uses a deductive approach, within which the above research hypothesis is tested through quantitative techniques. Data are collected through a nation-wide survey in China.

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3.2 Sampling

In total 215 questionnaires sent out, 185 responses were collected; the response rate is 86%, and all of 185 responses were used for analysis. The duration of the sampling took three months, and no differences were spotted between early and late responses. 185 observations were collected and provide a sufficient sample for this study. Since the sample is random selected, it can represent the population of Chinese project managers. Among these responses, 28% were female, 72% were male. Approximately 14% of respondents had 1-5 years of employment, 25% of respondents had 5-10 years of employment, 42% of respondents had 10-20 years of employment, and the remaining 19% had more than 20 years of employment. Based on the availability of data, the respondents came from 23 Chinese organizations ranging from small startup companies to global enterprises. Diversity of the organizations was achieved with the participants from private corporations, state corporations, and government departments. Data Collection

In order to collect data of respondents' psychological states, the research is based on the self-reporting data which may cause common method bias (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Two approaches were applied to avoid common method bias. First, separate sections for leadership and followership questionnaires were introduced for independent and dependent variables, to avoid the potential confounding effects of common method variance (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Secondly, the anonymity of the participants was strictly protected and the anonymity was declared at the front of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire contains the leadership instrument and the followership instrument, as well as demographic questions. Each of these instruments and rationale for their use is described below.

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3.2.1 The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Bass and Riggio (2006, p19) indicated that "the most widely accepted instrument to measure transformational leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)". The reason why Bass' and Avolio's (1997) MLQ is applied to this study is their theory is the dominant assessment tool to distinguish leadership styles, measuring the constructs of transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership (Sudha, et al., 2016; Taylor, et al., 2015). Bessai (1995) suggested "one of the major strengths of the questionnaire seems to be the empirical support it provides for the new paradigm of leadership that distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership. And it appears to be an adequate test with good construct validity, adequate reliability, and a strong research base" (p651).

For the purpose of this study, the leader form of MLQ 5X short version (leader form) in simplified Chinese translation is adopted (Bass and Avolio's, 1997). It contains 36 questions for the leaders to access the nine leadership dimensions (Avolio and Bass, 2004). Other nine questions evaluate the outcomes of the leader includes leading effectiveness, follower' satisfaction with the leader, and extra effort exerted by the followers as a result of the leader's performance (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

3.2.2 Followership Questionnaire Development

Based on Defee's followership model (2009), four followership dimensions have been proposed: *Style of thinking*, *Scope of responsibility*, *Desire to collaborate*, and *Commitment* of followership. *Styles of thinking* differentiates followers by critical or directed. Critical followers, who are critical to their leaders, always try to search for better ways to complete the task and provide innovative solutions for their leaders (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). The *Desire to collaborate* with others including leaders and others throughout the organization, can define the followers by their willingness to

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cooperate. The active collaborating followers have the intention to build a close relationship with colleagues. They are intended to help each other when their own expertise is limited (Kelley, 1992), and assist leader to accomplish mutually held goals (Kouzes and Posner 1990). The *Scope of responsibility* is another characteristic to identify different followership styles (Chaleff, 2003). Followers, who seek expanded responsibility in the organization, need to demonstrate themselves to be high competence with in-role tasks (Podsakoff et al. 2000), then carrying on extra-role activities (Podsakoff et al. 1990). Extra workloads will be put on to these followers (Banutu-Gomez 2004). *Commitment* (Lundin and Lancaster, 1990) is another element to identify the different followership style (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). Group orientated commitment followers show their own commitment through the creation of a shared purpose with the leader (Chaleff, 2003). Their leader's directions can be challenged by these followers, when the directions stray from the mutually-held goals (Chaleff, 2003). In order to measure the followership more accurately, each dimension consists of five questions, including three forward or active questions and two reversed or passive questions, they all integrated into one survey after the MLQ items.

3.2.3 Pilot Study

Ahead of practicing the final survey, a pilot test was conducted to ten project managers. A copy of questionnaire was sent via email to every participant containing an explanation of the study, an ethical promise and a followership questionnaire. An interview about the perception of the survey was done with each participants. All ten people believed the questions were understandable and appropriate, and they finished the followership part of questionnaire in twenty to twenty-five minutes. These answers were valid and added into the final sample.

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3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Approaches

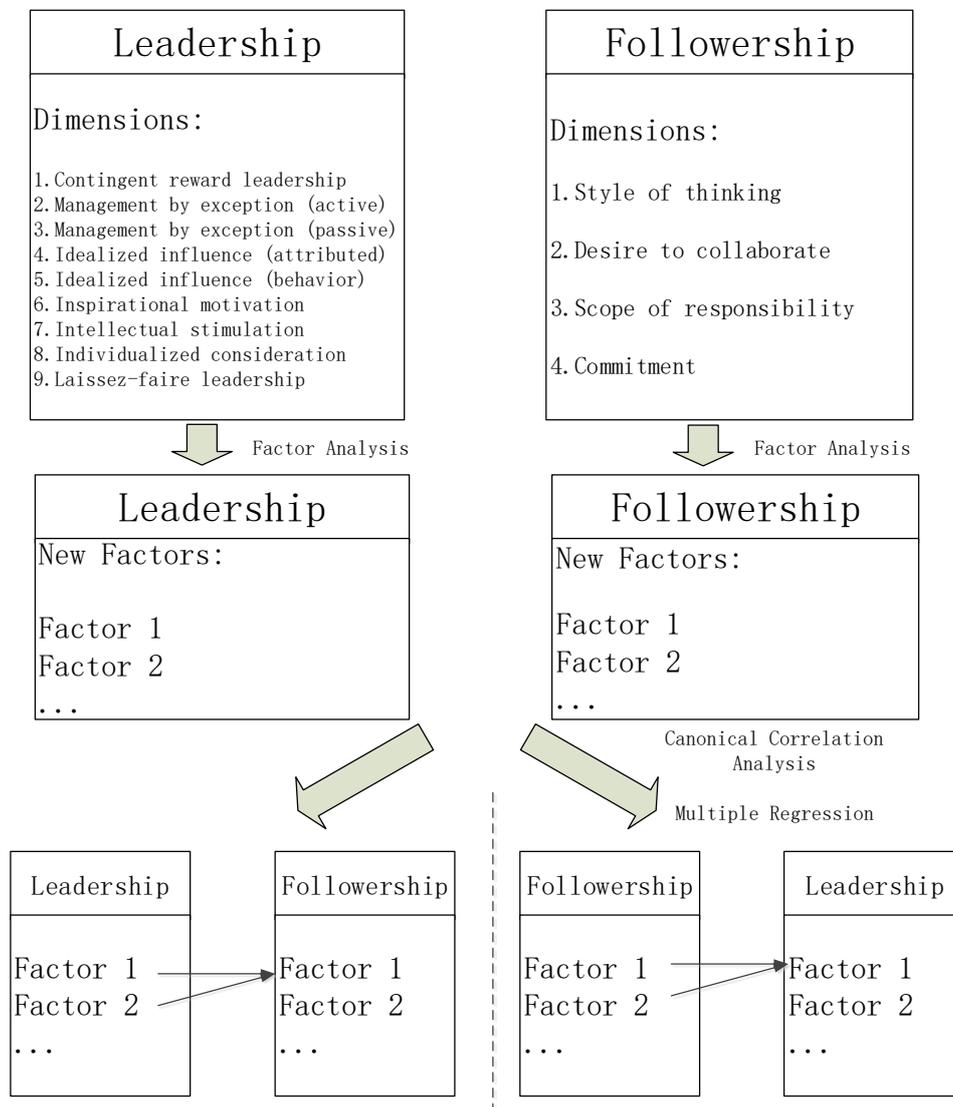


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the structure for leadership and followership, since it can search for unknown underlying structures in the data (Grimm and Yarnold, 2005). Factor analysis is designed to reduce the data set to a manageable size while retaining as much of the original information as possible

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(Cooper and Schindle, 2008). It will construct a new set of variables based on the relationship in the correlation matrix.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between followership and leadership dimensions. Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) is an appropriate technique for this, because “CCA is a multivariate statistical model with sets of multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables” (Hair et al., 1998, p3).

Multiple regression is also used in this study, which predicts a single dependent variable from a set of multiple independent variables. It can also develop a self-weighting estimating equation by which to predict values for a criterion variable from the values for several predictor variables (Cooper and Schindle, 2008). The new factors of leadership and followership independent variables dependent variables, and vice versa.

Two reversed questions were used in each model, the scores for the reversed items were inversed before analysis. The level of statistical significance in hypothesis testing was set to the usual 0.05.

Descriptive statistics shows that sample skewness ranged from -1.292 to 0.935, and the sample kurtosis ranged from -1.027 to 1.451. Hence, normality of the data was assumed (Hair et al., 2003). It suggests eligibility of the data for the techniques used.

3.3.2 Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the underlying structure of the leadership and followership data. Factors were extracted using the principal components analysis with Varimax rotation for both MLQ leadership and followership instruments (Harris, 1975). This is supported by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values being above the minimum threshold of 0.6 (Table 2).

The threshold for factor loadings was set to be 0.5, based on Stevens' (2002)

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suggestion that this cut-off point was appropriate for interpretative purposes at the given sample size.

Final factor name	Transformation	Passive management	Accomplishment	Deliberation	Consideration	Standard	Active exception
Eigenvalue	4.406	4.284	2.244	2.083	1.927	1.73	1.707
% Variance explained	12.239	11.901	6.235	5.785	5.353	4.842	4.842
Cumulative %	12.239	24.14	30.374	36.160	41.513	46.356	51.097
Scale reliability	0.762	0.814	0.622	0.613	0.609	0.624	0.608
Individualized consideration ⁴	.754						
Intellectual stimulation ³	.739						
Individualized consideration ³	.667						
Idealized influence(behavior) ⁴	.627						
Inspirational motivation ⁴	.571						
Idealized influence(attributed) ³	.552						
Laissez faire ¹		.742					
Management by exception(passive) ²		.706					
Management by exception(passive) ³		.688					
Laissez faire ⁴		.667					
Management by exception(active) ²		.619					
Management by exception(passive) ¹		.612					
Laissez faire ²		.588					
Management by exception(passive) ⁴		.527					
Inspirational motivation ²			.760				
Intellectual stimulation ⁴			.662				
Individualized consideration ¹							
Idealized influence(attributed) ⁴							
Idealized influence(behavior) ³				.728			
Intellectual stimulation ¹				.677			
Intellectual stimulation ²							
Individualized consideration ²					.778		
Contingent reward ³					.720		
Contingent reward ¹							
Management by exception(active) ⁴						.805	
Management by exception(active) ³						.709	
Management by exception(active) ¹							.766
Idealized influence(behavior) ¹							.632

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Table 2: Final leadership factor models and reliability measures

MLQ 5X short self-rating version contained 36 items. KMO of 0.805 ($p < 0.001$) indicated the data's adequacy for conducting factor analysis (Field, 2005). As a result, nine factors were identified, accounting for 51% of the total variance for leadership. The reliability of the nine factors was examined using Cronbach Alpha (Cronbach 1951). Seven factors are greater than an alpha of 0.6, which Nunnally (1967) stated is sufficient for exploratory research, which is reported in Table 3. Both item to item correlations and item to total correlations met the thresholds of 0.3 and 0.5 respectively. By looking into the items of each factor, all seven extracted factors were named based on the items they contained.

Factor *Transformation* measures the leader's transformational behavior including how to consider and inspire others, and their self-intellectual stimulation. Factor *Passive management* measures the level of passiveness of leadership. Leaders scoring top in this factor are extremely negative. They avoid making any decision and taking any action. Factor *Accomplishment* measures the desire of the leaders to accomplish assignments. Factor *Deliberation* measures leaders' inclination to deliberate every decision they make and the circumstance they are facing. Factor *Consideration* measures the level of the consideration of the leader to the followers. A considerable leader treats followers as individuals and shows them the clear expectation of their career. Factor *Standard* measures focus of a leader on standards and beliefs. A standard leader pays attention to irregularities, mistakes, exceptions and deviations from standards, they also focus on their own value and belief. The leader who scores high in factor *Active exception* looks for mistakes made by the followers and then corrects them.

Factor name	More responsibility	Collaboration	Responsibility fulfillment	Necessary communication
Eigenvalue	2.550	2.380	2.112	1.535
% Variance explained	14.998	13.998	12.421	9.032

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Cumulative %	14.998	28.996	41.418	50.450
Reliability	0.748	0.694	0.668	0.614
Scope of responsibility 2	.810			
Scope of responsibility 1	.697			
Scope of responsibility 5	.637			
Commitment 4	.578			
Commitment 5	.529			
Style of thinking 1		.744		
Desire to collaborate 5		.743		
Desire to collaborate 2		.660		
Desire to collaborate 3		.558		
Style of thinking 5			.747	
Scope of responsibility 4			.742	
Scope of responsibility 3			.723	
Commitment 3				.820
Desire to collaborate 4				.749

Table 3: Final followership factor models and reliability measures

The followership questionnaire contained 20 questions. KMO was 0.770 ($p < 0.001$) which indicated that the followership data is adequate for conducting factor analysis (Field, 2005). Four factors were identified, accounting for 51% of the total variance for followership. The reliability of the six factors was examined by Cronbach Alpha, four factors are greater than 0.6 (Table 3). Both item to item correlations and item to total correlations met the thresholds of 0.3 and 0.5 respectively. The reliable factors were named in accordance with the items they contain.

Factor *More responsibility* measures the willingness of taking on extra responsibility. Followers who score top in this factor always off-load work from the leader, and help leaders to see risks, playing the devil's advocate if needed. Factor *Collaboration* measures the collaboration with other followers. Collaborative followers are enthusiastic helping out other co-workers; they often form a network of colleagues. Factor *Responsibility fulfillment* measures the in-role responsibility accomplishment. Followers who score high in this factor are adaptive in stable

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responsibility, and only do their own share. Factor *Necessary communication* measures the inclination of follower to communicate with leader when necessary.

The analysis described above provided the new structure of the underlying dimensions of the leadership and followership construct. The future discussion will be based on these new leadership and followership factors. Figure 3 showed the refined research model with new dimensions.

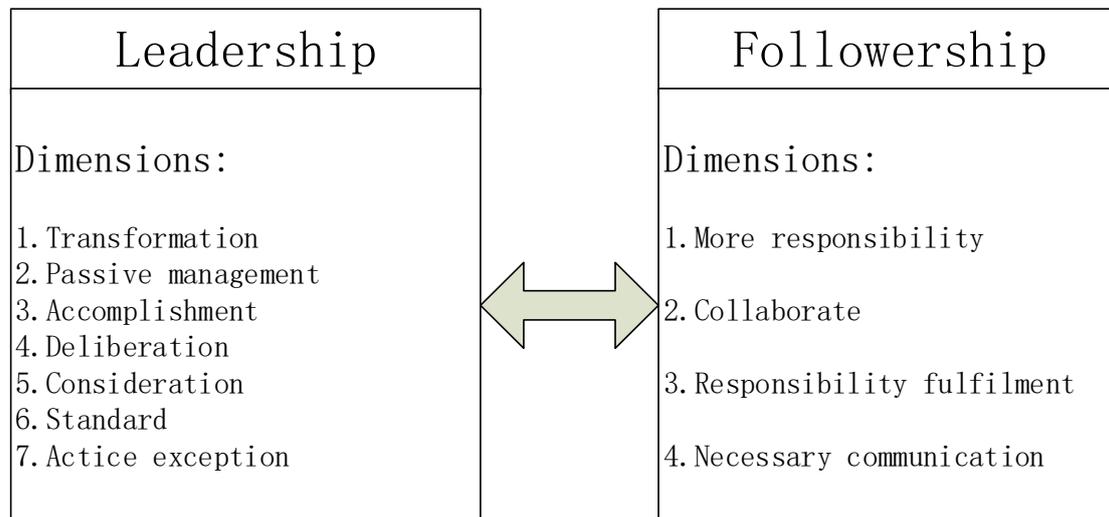


Figure 3: Refined research model

3.4 Validity and Reliability

MLQ's validity and reliability is ensured by using constructs from existing research literature. Kirnan and Snyder (1995) demonstrated that the MLQ was "designed to be used at all levels of leadership" (p651). Bessai (1995) tested MLQ and identified that "MLQ appears to be an adequate test with good construct validity, adequate reliability, and a strong research base" (p651). Pittenger (2001) found that "the available research does provide evidence that MLQ consistently measures constructs in keeping with Bass' theory" (p808). Stanley (2004) concluded that "the MLQ has been used extensively in various research studies by corporations and individuals". MLQ's reliability was achieved by testing for acceptable Cronbach's

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alpha values per measurement concept (Cronbach, 1951).

Followership questionnaire's validity is determined by how well the concept is defined by the measures (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, concept validity has been achieved by basing the model on existing literature (e.g., Defee, 2009). Construct validity has been achieved by using the existing theories (e.g., Kelley, 1992; Chaleff, 2003) and interview results for the definition of measurement dimensions and the development of questionnaire items, pilot testing of the questionnaire, and achievement of sufficient item-to-item and item-to-total measures. External validity was ensured through testing for the project managers from various industries, locations and hierarchies in order to generalize the study of Chinese project manager community. The followership questionnaire's reliability is determined by the consistency of the measures (Hair et al., 1998). Reliability was achieved by using five questions, three forward questions and two reversed questions, per measurement dimension and testing for acceptable Cronbach's alpha values per measurement concept (Cronbach, 1951).

4 Results

In this section CCA and Multiple regression analysis will be used to test the hypotheses we made in the previous section

H1: Leadership behavior is positively (or negatively) associated with followership behavior within an individual project manager.

H1a: Leadership behavior positively (or negatively) impacts followership behavior within an individual project manager.

H1b: Followership behavior positively (or negatively) impacts leadership behavior within an individual project manager.

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The correlation Table 4 shows Followership dimension *More responsibility* is positively correlated with Leadership variables *Accomplishment* and *Active exception*. Followership dimension *Collaboration* is positively correlated with Leadership dimensions *Transformation*, *Accomplishment*, and *Deliberation*. Followership dimension *Responsibility fulfillment* is negative correlated with leadership dimension *Passive management* and positive correlated with leadership dimension *Consideration*. Followership dimension *Necessary communication* is negatively correlated with leadership dimension *Passive management*. Table 4 demonstrates the adequacy of the correlation for correlation analyses. Further discussion in this paper will be based on this structure.

Factors	Transform-ation	Passive management	Accomplish-ment	Deliber-ation	Considera-tion	Standard	Active exception
More responsibility	0.157*	0.087	0.204**	0.02	0.126	0.093	0.269**
Collaboration	0.491**	-0.083	0.256**	0.217**	0.064	0.017	0.084
Responsibility fulfillment	-0.028	-0.199**	0.161*	0.069	0.190**	-0.103	0.095
Necessary communication	-0.013	-0.320**	0.053	0.014	0.017	0.065	0.006

Table 4: Person correlation table between leadership and followership factors

4.1 Canonical Correlation Analysis

CCA is a multivariate technique that facilitates the study of interrelationships among sets of multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables (Hair et al., 1998). “Whereas multiple regression predicts a single dependent variable from a set of multiple independent variables, Canonical Correlation simultaneously predicts multiple dependent variables from multiple independent variables”(page 3, Hair et al., 1998). Thus the Canonical Correlation function calculates the best correlation function between the two sets of variables (Hair et al., 1998).

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In this study, we looked for relationship between leadership and followership. The objectives of the analysis are as follows: 1. to examine the magnitude of the relationship between the Leadership variate and followership variate, or, conversely, if the two sets of variates are independent. 2. to determine the relations between contribution of each variable in the relations between leadership and followership.

The degree of correlation is expressed through the Canonical Correlation coefficients and redundancy index. Canonical cross-loadings are commonly used to overcome the deficiencies of canonical loadings and canonical weights (Dillon and Goldstein, 1984). They provide a more direct measure of the dependent–independent variable relationships. As with the researches using other statistical techniques, 0.3 (Lambert and Durand, 1975) was used as threshold for canonical cross-loadings.

Hair et al. (1998) suggests three criteria should be used in conjunction with one another to decide which canonical functions should be interpreted. The three criteria are (a) level of statistical significance of the function, (b) magnitude of the Canonical Correlation, and (c) redundancy measure for the percentage of variance accounted for in the two data sets. A redundancy index of the dependent variate represents the amount of variance in the dependent variables explained by the independent canonical variate. When squared, the Canonical Correlation represents the amount of variance in one canonical variate accounted for by the other canonical variate.

Three functions were calculated by canonical analysis, showed in Table 5. There are two significant canonical functions at $p < 0.05$. Function four is insignificant at $p = 0.241$, and excluded from further analyses. Function two's small Canonical R^2 of 0.185, coupled with a low redundancy value (0.061), and small cross-loading magnitudes, indicates low practical significance. Sherry and Henson (2005) suggests excluding functions with practical significance under 10%. Therefore, Function two and three are not taken into consideration for the results interpretation. Only Function one is used for further analysis and interpretation.

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Variables		Total Sample (n = 185)												Half Sample (n = 92)		
		Function one			Function two			Function three			Function four			Function one		
		Canonical Loadings	Cross-Loadings	Redundancy index	Canonical Loadings	Cross-Loadings	Redundancy index	Canonical Loadings	Cross-Loadings	Redundancy index	Canonical Loadings	Cross-Loadings	Redundancy index	Canonical Loadings	Cross-Loadings	Redundancy index
Leader-ship	Transformation	-0.679	-0.475	0.070	-0.366	-0.149	0.024	-0.459	-0.139	0.013	0.048	0.008	0.004	-0.521	-0.354	0.069
	Passive management	0.179	0.125		-0.891	-0.363		0.290	0.088		-0.239	-0.042		0.256	0.174	
	Accomplishment	-0.512	-0.358		0.104	0.043		0.254	0.077		-0.064	-0.011		-0.678	-0.461	
	Deliberation	-0.303	-0.212		0.031	-0.012		-0.225	-0.068		-0.304	-0.053		-0.151	-0.102	
	Consideration	-0.236	-0.165		0.214	0.087		0.445	0.135		-0.338	-0.059		-0.389	-0.264	
	Standard	-0.053	-0.037		-0.113	-0.046		0.016	-0.005		0.812	0.142		-0.117	-0.079	
	Active exception	-0.314	-0.220		-0.054	-0.022		0.625	0.193		0.282	0.049		-0.241	-0.164	
Follow-ership	More responsibility	-0.455	-0.318	0.122	-0.268	-0.109	0.041	0.735	0.223	0.023	0.425	0.074	0.008	-0.571	-0.356	0.123
	Collaboration	-0.838	-0.586		-0.166	-0.068		-0.500	-0.152		-0.139	-0.024		-0.654	-0.444	
	Responsibility fulfillment	-0.268	-0.187		0.625	0.255		0.412	0.125		-0.606	-0.106		-0.395	-0.268	
	Necessary communication	-0.127	-0.089		0.714	0.291		-0.200	-0.061		0.659	0.115		-0.175	-0.119	
Canonical Correlation R		0.669			0.407			0.304			0.175			0.679		
R ²		0.448			0.166			0.092			0.031			0.461		
χ^2		172.510			54.434			22.511			5.490			80.161		
Df		28			18			10			4			28		
p(χ^2)		.000			.000			.013			.241			.000		
Wilks' lambda		.375			.734			.880			.969			.394		

Table 5: CCA result

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As with any other multivariate technique, canonical analysis should be subject to validation methods to ensure that the results are not specific only to the sample data and can be generalized to a wider population (Hair et al., 1998). The validation method used in the study was to split the sample into two subsamples with an almost equal number of responses, and compare the results for similarity from CCA on the half sample and the total sample, respectively (Schul et al., 1983). With the sample to variable ratio 8.5:1 (half sample).

Half sample Function one results showed a function pattern similar to the full sample Function one. The canonical loadings and the canonical cross-loadings in both the leadership and followership showed a similar pattern in the two canonical functions. Moreover, the strength of association of both canonical functions and redundancy indexes also showed similar patterns. It supported the stability of Function one. Thus, the results can be interpreted with Function one of the total sample.

A redundancy index is calculated for the independent and dependent variate of the Function one in Table 5. The redundancy index for the followership variate is substantial (0.12). Therefore, 12% of the shared variance in followership can be accounted for by leadership. This indicates a correlation between leadership and followership dimensions. The leadership variate, however, has a markedly lower redundancy index (0.071). It indicates that the variance in leadership accounted by followership is 7%, which was much smaller than variance in followership accounted by leadership. So the explanatory power from leadership to followership is much greater than the explanatory power from followership to leadership. The variance in leadership accounted for followership is less than 10%, which can be neglected, as suggested by Sherry and Henson (2005).

Based on the CCA results we can confirm H1a and reject H1b, therefore H1 is confirmed.

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

To further examine the relationship between leadership and followership dimensions, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted. Since the CCA gave the result that only leadership significantly contributes to followership, leadership dimensions were treated as independent variables and followership dimensions as dependent variables., as showed in Figure 4.

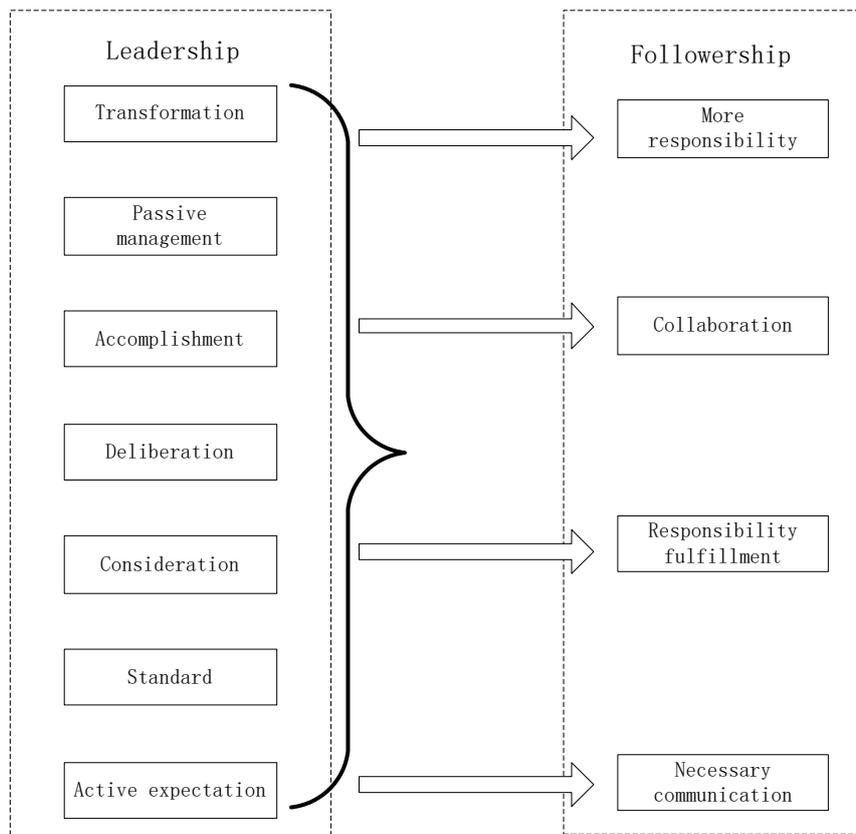


Figure 4: Research model examined by multiple regression analysis

Table 6 shows the linear regression analyses for followership dimension *More Responsibility*. The experience as a project manager is set as control variable. In the step one, control variable has significance 0.044 which is barely reached the threshold. And in the step two, only *Active exception* ($\beta=0.245$), *Accomplishment* ($\beta=0.187$), and *Transformation* ($\beta=0.172$) are significant, control variable PM experience is not significant. 13.9% of the variance of *More responsibility* was accounted for leadership dimensions.

Variables	Step 1: enter control variable			Step 2: enter independent variables		
	b	Std. error	Beta	b	Std. error	Beta
PM experience years	-.158	.078	-.149	-.102	.077	-.096
Transformation				.172*	.070	.172*
Passive management				.090**	.070	.089**
Accomplishment				.187	.070	.187
Deliberation				.023	.069	.023
Consideration				.126	.069	.126
Standard				.090	.069	.090
Active expectation				.245**	.071	.242**
R ²	.022			.177		
Adjusted R ²	.017			.139		
F change	4.121*			4.674***		

* p<0.05

** p<0.01

*** p<0.001

Table 6: Multiple linear regression results for *More responsibility*

Table 7 shows the linear regression analyses for followership dimension *Collaboration*. In the step one, control variable PM experience is not significant. And in the step two, 34.4% of the variance of *Collaboration* was accounted for leadership dimensions *Transformation* ($\beta=0.486$), *Accomplishment* ($\beta=0.261$) and *Deliberation* ($\beta=0.216$).

Variables	Step 1: enter control variables			Step 2: enter independent variables		
	b	Std. error	Beta	b	Std. error	Beta
PM experience years	-.048	.079	.045	.034	.067	.031
Transformation				.486***	.061	.486***
Passive management				-.082	.061	-.081
Accomplishment				.261***	.061	.261***
Deliberation				.216***	.060	.216***
Consideration				.064	.060	.064
Standard				.018	.060	.018
Active expectation				.089	.062	.088

R ²	.002			.373		
Adjusted R ²	-.003			.344		
F change	.364			12.916***		

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 7: Multiple linear regression results for *Collaboration*

Table 8 shows the linear regression analyses for followership dimension *Responsibility fulfillment*. In the step one, control variable PM experience is not significant. And in the step two, 8.8% of the variance of *Responsibility fulfillment* was accounted for leadership dimensions *Passive management* ($\beta=-0.201$), *Consideration* ($\beta=0.189$), and *Accomplishment* ($\beta=0.151$).

Variables	Step 1: enter control variables			Step 2: enter independent variables		
	b	Std. error	Beta	b	Std. error	Beta
PM experience years	-.096	.079	-.091	-.044	.079	-.041
Transformation				-.023	.072	-.023
Passive management				-.201**	.072	-.199**
Accomplishment				.151*	.072	.151*
Deliberation				.070	.071	.070
Consideration				.189**	.071	.189**
Standard				-.107	.071	-.107
Active expectation				.092	.073	.091
R ²	.008			.128		
Adjusted R ²	.003			.088		
F change	1.506			3.207**		

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 8: Multiple linear regression results for *Responsibility fulfillment*

Table 9 shows the linear regression analyses for followership dimension *Necessary communication*. In the step one, control variable PM experience is not significant. And in the step two, 7.0% of the variance of *Necessary communication* was accounted for leadership dimension *Passive management* ($\beta=-0.324$).

Variables	Step 1: enter control variables			Step 2: enter independent variables		
	b	Std. error	Beta	b	Std. error	Beta

PM experience years	.006	.079	.005	.043	.080	.041
Transformation				-.020	.072	-.020
Passive management				-.324***	.072	-.321**
Accomplishment				.057	.072	.057
Deliberation				.013	.071	.013
Consideration				.015	.071	.015
Standard				.061	.072	.061
Active expectation				.021	.074	.021
R ²	.000			.111		
Adjusted R ²	-.005			.070		
F change	.005			2.715**		

* p<0.05

** p<0.01

*** p<0.001

Table 9: Multiple linear regression results for *Necessary communication*

Multiple regression analysis identified four linear correlations for followership dimensions. The control variable PM experience is not significant to explain any of the variance.

Using the analysis results and supported hypotheses (H1 and H1a), the theoretical implications will be discussed in the next chapter.

5 Discussion

In this study, a new set of followership factors was developed by Exploratory factor analysis. *More responsibility* describes willingness of taking on extra responsibility. Chaleff (1995) divided followers into four categories by the supporting level of a follower, which is *Implementers, Partners, Individualists, and Resources*. Chaleff's supporting level is accordance with dimension *More responsibility*, since they both focus on supporting and off-loading the superior. A similar theory has been brought by Carsten et al. (2007). Three types of follower- *Passive* follower, *Active* follower, and *Proactive* follower- have been identified by the engagement level to the leader.

Collaboration focuses on helping and forming relationship with equal level

colleagues. Potter, et al. (2001) and Kellerman (2007) have all brought similar concept into their dimension, but they all focus on both equal level colleagues and superior. Thus, the independent dimension focusing on the action and relationship with colleague has been first identified in this study.

Dimension *Responsibility fulfillment* and *Necessary communication* focus on one’s own performance and behavior, rather than supporting the leader or collaborating their colleague. Zelenik (1965) and Kelley (1992) separately defines followership dimension *Action* in the same perspective. Potter, et al. (2001) also identify dimension *Performance* concern focusing in-role performance.

Table 10 shows that major followership theories mapping into followership perspectives. It contains the Superior perspective, Colleague perspective, and Own perspective. These three perspectives formed a new way of categorizing and understanding followership.

Dimension perspective	This study	Zaleznik	Kelley	Chaleff	Potter, et al.	Carsten et al.	Kellerman
		1965	1992	1995	2001	2007	2007
Superior perspective	More responsibility		·Thinking	·Supporting level	·Performance concern	·Engagement levels	·Engagement levels
Colleague perspective	Collaboration				·Relationship concern		·Engagement levels
Own perspective	Responsibility fulfillment Necessary communication	·Control ·Action	·Thinking ·Action				

Table 10: Mapping followership theories into three perspectives

The result of CCA suggests project manager’s leadership impacts followership not the other way around. Project managers are subordination facing top managers, their followership is not decided by themselves, but by the leadership of the top managers. However, when they are facing project team members, their leadership can represent themselves, therefore the leadership can explain some of the followership.

Results of four multiple linear regression analyses suggest the four linear

correlations between leadership and followership indicated in Figure 5. Based on their meanings, leadership and followership dimensions are categorized into transformational and transactional styles.

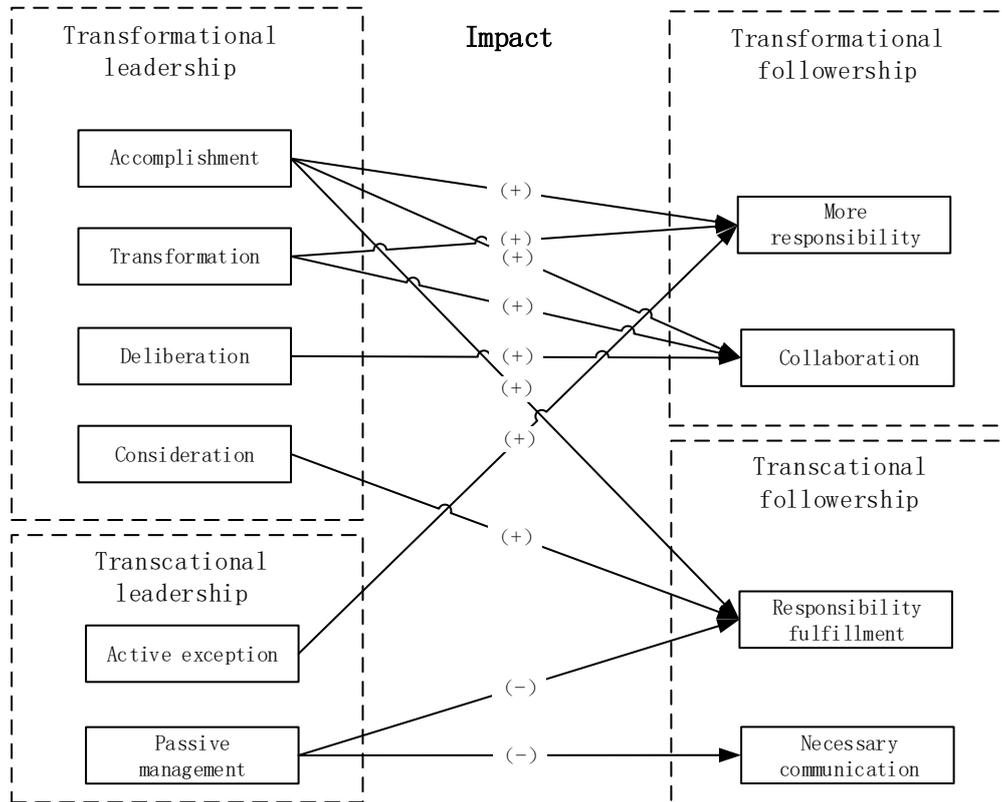


Figure 5: Multiple regression analysis results

The first correlation suggests that the transformational leadership dimensions *Accomplishment*, *Transformation* and the transactional leadership dimension *Active exception* are positively correlated with the transformational followership dimension *More responsibility*. This indicates that leaders who are transformational, enthusiastic to accomplish an assignment and active to find mistakes, incline to take on more responsibility when working as subordinate.

The second correlation suggests that the transformational leadership dimensions *Accomplishment*, *Transformation* and *Deliberation* are positively correlated with transformational followership dimension *Collaboration*. This indicates that leaders who are transformational, deliberate and enthusiastic to accomplish an assignment are likely to be collaborative with their colleagues. Geist (2001) examined 127 NCAA Division II athletic directors' followership and leadership correlations using MLQ 5x

short-form (Bass et al., 1995), and Kelley's (1992) survey, found similar findings with the first two correlations. Geist discovered that transformational leadership is significantly correlated with followership. Three transformational dimensions, idealized influence, active engagement, and inspirational motivation had significant relationship with followership.

The third correlation shows that the transformational leadership dimensions *Accomplishment* and *Consideration* are positively correlated with the transactional followership dimension *Responsibility fulfillment* and transactional leadership *Passive management* is negatively correlated with *Responsibility fulfillment*. This indicates that leaders, who are enthusiastic to accomplish an assignment and inclined to take consideration for their subordinate, are more likely to fulfill their own responsibilities; while leaders, who are using passive management, are less likely to fulfill their own job.

The fourth correlation shows that the transactional leadership dimension *Passive management* is negatively correlated with the transactional leadership *Necessary communication*. This indicates that passive leaders are less likely to communicate with their leader even when it is necessary.

6 Implications for Research, Practice and Society

The results in previous sections suggest that there is a correlation between project manager's leadership and followership. A project manager would utilize their leadership keeping in mind the situation and task at hand (Burke, 2009). For instance, transformational leadership may help inspiring, coaching and supporting subordinates; meanwhile, it is also supportive when the leader is faced with more responsibilities, which will motivate them to inspire and help colleagues. Transactional leadership may focus only on the results and standards or even avoid making any decision and taking any action, thus the leader in this type would be less willing to take care of every single task personally to fulfill their own responsibility and communicate with

his or her superior.

Based on the transactional and transformational lens on viewing the relations, it can be summarized that: (a) transactional leadership are positively correlated with both transformational and transformational followership; Tanoff and Barlow (2002) and Burke (2009) have found similar conclusion. Tanoff and Barlow (2002) examined 130 students in military college for their followership and leadership by Kelley's (1992) survey. The Active engagement and independent thinking of transactional followership dimensions and leadership dimensions were found to be correlated. Burke (2009) examines the correlations of followership and leadership styles of medical science liaisons within the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industry. Followership dimensions active engagement and critical thinking of followership are found to correlated with leadership. Transformational project managers are inspiring, empowering and involving (Potter, 2018), they are more likely to be transformational and fulfilling their responsibility. (b) transactional leadership is negatively correlated with transactional followership, and positively correlated with transformational followership. Project managers who are passive in management are less likely to be involved in the required responsibility and necessary communication. In conclusion, transformational leadership and transformational followership do show some consistencies, transactional leadership and transactional followership show negative correlations.

Moreover, the fact that the leadership has more impact on followership the followership on leadership suggests that the way to lead may reflect more on one's personality, whereas the personality affects the way to follow. In contrast, the way to follow reflects less on personality, because it is restrained by his or her superior, therefore one's followership has less impact on one's leadership.

There are no universal accepted followership theory and assessment tool. In this study, a new model of followership with three dimensions (More Responsibility, Collaboration, Responsibility Fulfillment and Necessary Communication) has been discovered under the transactional and transformational lens. Also the questionnaire can be used for future applications.

Several relations were proposed in this study, which suggests a new perspective to understand leadership and followership. The traditional distinction between leadership and followership is no longer evident as boundaries have become increasingly blurred (Burke, 2009). As Townsend et al., (2003) suggest that followership and leadership may sit on the same continuum.

As the results show leadership can affect the followership, training modules can be developed to help project managers to develop their followership by develop the certain way to lead. And for superior seeking a specific follower, candidates can be chosen by their leadership style.

From the result that followership has little effect on leadership, we can conclude that the traditional way of promoting people based on their followership style and competence may be invalid. When one is promoted to high position in hierarchy, his or her leadership is less likely been predicted by followership.

7 Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between project managers' leadership and their followership in China. A survey yielded 185 valid responses, which were analyzed using Canonical Correlation and regression Analyses.

The hypothesis H1 and H1a are supported and H1b is rejected.

The research question asked for *what is the relationship between leadership behavior and followership behavior of an individual project manager under the transactional and transformational lens?* The results show that leadership has more influence on followership than followership on leadership. Four relationships between leadership and followership are identified. And transformational leadership and transformational followership do show some consistencies, transactional leadership and transactional followership show negative correlations.

One of the strengths is the long established and tested research process in this study. The quantitative measurement constructs were carefully selected for their

validity and reliability from the existing literature. A limitation of the study is the small canonical correlation between leadership and followership, maybe because of the self-reporting nature of the research instruments and the sample being not large enough. Thus, the findings of this study must be evaluated in light of its limitation.

There are there theoretical implications of this study. At first, the study's results suggest a new perspective to understand project managers' leadership and followership. The traditional distinction between leadership and followership is no longer evident in the factors extracted in a Chinese sample. Secondly, in this study, a new model of followership with four dimensions has been developed. The questionnaire can be applied in future studies. Thirdly, new leadership structures for project managers were identified, which differ from the Full Range Leadership Model. These results support other study's findings from outside USA, for example UK, Canada, Finland, Netherlands, which also reported differences in factor structures (Edwards et al., 2012; Kanste et al., 2007; Den Hartog et al., 1997). A lack of consideration of cultural influences may account for this diversity (Antonakis, 2001).

There are two practical implications of this study. Firstly, Leadership can affect the followership, hence training modules can help project managers to enhance their followership by developing the appropriate leadership style. Reason being that if a superior wants to seek a specific follower, the follower's leadership style is used as a filter for identification of possible candidates. Secondly, followership has little effect on leadership. Thus, the traditional way of promoting people based on their followership style and competence may be invalid. When one is promoted to a higher position in the organizational hierarchy, his or her leadership style is less likely been predicted by followership.

Although this study has provided some valuable exploration for this topic, there is still a gap between project managers' leadership and followership. The demographics of the project managers could be taken into consideration. Personality, as another important attribute, it may also be worthwhile to investigate this in future studies. These investigations will describe a more meticulous relationship model.

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