

LEADING WITH MEANING: BENEFICIARY CONTACT, PROSOCIAL IMPACT, AND THE PERFORMANCE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ADAM M. GRANT
University of Pennsylvania

Although transformational leadership is thought to increase followers' performance by motivating them to transcend self-interest, rhetoric alone may not be sufficient. I propose that transformational leadership is most effective in motivating followers when they interact with the beneficiaries of their work, which highlights how the vision has meaningful consequences for other people. In a quasi-experimental study, beneficiary contact strengthened the effects of transformational leadership on call center employees' sales and revenue. A survey study with government employees extended these results, supporting a moderated mediation model with perceived prosocial impact. Relational job design can enhance the motivational effects of transformational leadership.

A fundamental task for leaders is to motivate followers to accomplish great things (Vroom & Jago, 2007). According to theories of transformational and charismatic leadership, leaders achieve this task by engaging in inspirational behaviors such as articulating a compelling vision, emphasizing collective identities, expressing confidence and optimism, and referencing core values and ideals (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; House, 1977; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Evidence suggests that when leaders engage in these visionary behaviors, followers set more value-congruent goals (Bono & Judge, 2003) and experience their work as more meaningful (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova, Bono, & Dziewieczynski, 2006). As a result, research has shown that on average, transformational leadership correlates positively with followers' motivation and job performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

However, evidence suggests that transformational leadership does not always motivate higher performance among followers. Inconsistent effects of transformational leadership on followers' performance have emerged in field experiments in Cana-

dian banks (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996) and the Israeli military (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002), as well as in laboratory experiments using business simulation tasks (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). One explanation for this inconsistent evidence is that when transformational leaders articulate meaningful visions, they face challenges in making these visions a tangible reality. Indeed, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996: 37) suggested that leaders need to take steps "to ensure that the vision is not simply rhetoric."

In particular, a central purpose of transformational leadership is to articulate a vision that focuses employees' attention on their contributions to others. At its core, transformational leadership involves "motivating followers to transcend their own self-interests for the sake of the team, the organization or the larger polity" (Shamir et al., 1993: 579). To do so, transformational leaders often strive to highlight the prosocial impact of the vision—how it has meaningful consequences for other people (Grant, 2007; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). However, the broad rhetoric that makes a vision inspiring and connects it to core values may render the prosocial impact of the vision less tangible. As Shamir and colleagues (1993: 583) noted, transformational leadership "tends to emphasize vague and distal goals," yet prosocial impact is most tangible when employees have vivid, proximal exposure to the human beings affected by their contributions (Grant, Campbell, Chen, Cottone, Lapedis, & Lee, 2007; Turner, Hadas-Halperin, & Raveh, 2008). Thus, to establish the prosocial impact of a vision, transformational leaders may need more than words (see Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996).

For meaningful feedback and suggestions, I thank Jason Colquitt, three anonymous reviewers, Drew Carton, Christina Fong, Dave Hofmann, Sim Sitkin, and the faculty members and doctoral students at Cornell University, especially Lisa Dragoni. For assistance with data collection, I am grateful to Stan Campbell, Jenny Deveau, Chad Friedlein, Howard Heevner, Ted Henifin, and Jonathan Tugman.

Editor's note: The manuscript for this article was accepted for publication during the term of *AMJ's* previous editor-in-chief, R. Duane Ireland.

Although transformational leadership research has focused on the inspirational, visionary messages that leaders deliver to followers, scholars have recognized that leaders can also influence performance by altering the structural features of followers' jobs (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010). Accordingly, I expect that job design is likely to play an important role in moderating the performance effects of transformational leadership. Rather than focusing on the traditional task characteristics of jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980), I focus on the social characteristics of jobs—the interpersonal interactions and relationships in which work is embedded (Grant & Parker, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Recently, scholars studying relational job design have proposed that leaders can enhance perceptions of prosocial impact not only by engaging in transformational behaviors, but also by modifying the connections between employees and the beneficiaries of their work (Grant, 2007; Grant et al., 2007). Most organizations have prime beneficiaries—clients, customers, patients, and other recipients or end users of their core products and services (Blau & Scott, 1962; Katz & Kahn, 1966). Evidence from field and laboratory studies demonstrates that even when employees are responsible for a meaningful job or task, they gain a stronger awareness of its prosocial impact when they have contact with the beneficiary; this beneficiary contact enables them to see the tangible, meaningful consequences of their actions for a living, breathing person (Grant et al., 2007). Nevertheless, research has yet to examine whether and how beneficiary contact, as a key relational element of job design, influences followers' responses to transformational leadership.

I propose that beneficiary contact strengthens the impact of transformational leadership on follower performance. Transformational leadership focuses on linking a vision to core values (Shamir et al., 1993), and research has shown that protecting and promoting the well-being of other people is the most important value to the majority of people in the majority of the world's cultures (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). When transformational leaders articulate an inspiring vision, providing beneficiary contact can enhance the salience and vividness of the vision's prosocial impact (Grant, 2007). In this way, beneficiary contact creates a credible link between leaders' words and deeds (Simons, 2002), enabling employees to see how their organization's mission comes to life in benefiting others, which can motivate employees to work harder and more effectively (Grant et al., 2007). I test these hypotheses in two field studies—a quasi-experiment and a survey study. Conducting two studies makes it pos-

sible to replicate effects across both objective measures and supervisor ratings of job performance, as well as both temporary, experimentally induced, and enduring, naturally occurring, differences in transformational leadership and beneficiary contact.

This research offers three central contributions to theory and research on leadership and job design. First, I introduce beneficiary contact as a novel contingency for the effects of transformational leadership on follower performance, suggesting that relational job design can enhance—rather than substitute for—the effects of transformational leadership on follower performance. Second, I offer a conceptual and empirical integration of research on leadership and job design by identifying synergies between inspiring through words (articulating a compelling vision) and actions (designing a meaningful job). Third, I identify a new mechanism for explaining transformational leadership effects. I show how followers' perceptions of prosocial impact, rather than of psychological empowerment, play a key role in accounting for the interactive effects of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact. Together, these advances extend classic and contemporary discussions of how leaders' behaviors and structural design choices operate as joint determinants of motivation and performance (e.g., Howell, Dorfman, & Kerr, 1986; Yukl, 2008).

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND BENEFICIARY CONTACT

My focus is on the effects of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact on followers' job performance. Performance is the effectiveness of followers' behaviors in advancing organizational goals (Campbell, 1990). Transformational leadership is typically conceptualized as a collection of four dimensions of leader behavior: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Inspirational motivation involves articulating a compelling vision of the future. Idealized influence involves engaging in charismatic actions that earn respect and cultivate pride, such as discussing important values and beliefs, communicating a sense of purpose, and encouraging a focus on collective interests. Intellectual stimulation involves challenging followers to question their assumptions and think differently. Individualized consideration involves personalizing interactions with followers by providing relevant mentoring, coaching, and understanding. By engaging in these transformational behaviors, lead-

ers seek to motivate employees to look beyond their immediate self-interest to contribute to a broader vision (e.g., Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

To understand the factors that may strengthen the capability of transformational leaders to accentuate prosocial impact, I draw on theories of meaning making and job design. Scholars have long maintained that leaders play a critical role in managing the meaning that followers make of their work (Podolny, Khurana, & Hill-Popper, 2005; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Shamir et al., 1993; Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). Transformational leadership, in particular, enables followers to view their work as more meaningful (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova et al., 2006; Sparks & Schenk, 2001). Inspirational motivation highlights an important vision; idealized influence connects this vision to important shared values; and individualized consideration personalizes this connection. As Shamir and colleagues (1993: 578) explained, "Such leadership is seen as giving meaningfulness to work by infusing work and organizations with moral purpose."

Generally speaking, scholars have recognized that leaders can influence followers' perceptions of meaningfulness through two broad sets of strategies: providing messages that *frame and reframe* the meaning of the followers' work and restructuring responsibilities to *change and alter* the meaning of the work (Griffin, 1983; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). Leadership researchers have focused primarily on the former set of strategies, but job design research has accentuated the substantial impact of the latter. I seek to integrate the leadership and job design literatures by examining how designing jobs to provide beneficiary contact can amplify the effects of transformational leadership on followers' performance.

In recent years, job design research has witnessed a resurgence of attention to the social characteristics of work (Grant & Parker, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Instead of viewing jobs merely as collections of tasks, researchers have increasingly recognized that interpersonal interactions are critical building blocks of the work that employees do (Oldham & Hackman, 2010; for reviews and discussions, see Fried, Levi, and Laurence, 2008; Grant and Parker, 2009; Kanfer, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008). Although a number of social characteristics of jobs have been identified, the key social characteristic that affects meaningfulness is beneficiary contact—the degree to which employees have the opportunity to interact with clients, customers, or others affected by their work (Grant, 2007). Beneficiary contact is a structural character-

istic of jobs that shapes the quality and quantity of interactions that employees have with recipients of their products and services (Grant & Parker, 2009; see also Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).¹ As Kanfer (2009: 122) summarized, "The products of work motivation and job performance have a relational component . . . what employees do at work has import and meaning for others who use the products produced or benefit in some way from the employee's efforts." For example, beneficiary contact can involve manufacturing teams interacting with external customers (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999), suppliers interacting with internal customers (Parker & Axtell, 2001), radiologists having exposure to patients (Turner et al., 2008), or product developers meeting clients (Sethi & Nicholson, 2001).

The Moderating Role of Beneficiary Contact

Research shows that when employees have beneficiary contact, they perceive greater prosocial impact, as they can see and understand the tangible, meaningful consequences of their contributions for other people (Grant, 2007). In turn, perceived prosocial impact is associated with higher effort, persistence, and job performance (Grant, 2008a; Grant et al., 2007), as focusing on meaningful consequences for others can encourage employees to continue working even when they find it unpleasant (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). However, research has yet to examine the interplay of beneficiary contact and leadership.

I propose that beneficiary contact strengthens the effects of transformational leadership on followers' performance by enhancing followers' perceptions of prosocial impact. More specifically,

¹ Beneficiary contact is conceptually related to, but distinct from, the two characteristics in the job characteristics model that focus on the outcomes of work: task identity and task significance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). Task identity involves the extent to which employees see their results; it does not capture the extent to which employees interact and communicate with the people who are affected by these results. Research indicates that task identity is distinct from opportunities to interact with customers, clients, and other recipients (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Task significance focuses on the consequences of employees' work for other people; beneficiary contact focuses on the extent to which employees have the opportunity to interact with these people (Grant, 2007). Studies have shown that beneficiary contact and task significance are empirically distinct (Grant, 2008b) and operate independently and interactively to influence perceptions and behaviors (Grant et al., 2007).

when transformational leaders engage in inspirational motivation and lead by example, employees are able to identify with an important vision (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Shamir et al., 1993), and beneficiary contact highlights the impact of this vision on other people. Beneficiary contact enables employees to see that their contributions to the vision have meaningful consequences for other people—that if they work harder and perform more effectively, living, breathing human beings will be affected positively (Grant, 2007; Grant et al., 2007). Two complementary theoretical perspectives illuminate the moderating effects of beneficiary contact: the availability heuristic and credibility.

According to the theoretical principles set forth in formulations of the availability heuristic (Schwarz, 1998; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), people tend to use vividness and ease of recall as cues for probability and value. Beneficiary contact makes the customers or clients who are affected by a vision more cognitively accessible and emotionally vivid, which will enhance employees' beliefs that a transformational leader's vision is likely to have a meaningful prosocial impact (see Heath, Larrick, & Klayman, 1998). This understanding of prosocial impact is likely to appeal to followers' core values, as research has shown that benefiting others and making a social contribution is an important value across cultures, both at work (Colby, Sippola, & Phelps, 2001; Ruiz-Quintanilla & England, 1996) and in life (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Beneficiary contact can thereby provide employees with a meaningful face and story to attach to a transformational leader's vision, creating vivid imagery that makes the vision more tangible (Emrich, Bower, Feldman, & Garland, 2001).

In the absence of beneficiary contact, employees may question the credibility of a transformational leader's vision, wondering whether it is merely rhetoric. As Simons (2002: 23) suggested, "Leaders' exhortations of a new mission or a new focus are processed by employees as simply a new dogma or corporate presentation, and are not translated into action." To overcome this gap, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996: 37) observed, "A leader must go beyond simply communicating a vision in order for it to affect followers." To achieve influence, it is critical for leaders to establish credibility (Lam & Schaubroeck). Employees are most likely to perceive a transformational leader's vision as credible when it conveys behavioral integrity—a connection between words and deeds (Simons, 1999, 2002). Such integrity can be established by beneficiary contact, which has the potential to forge a vivid, credible link between the rhetoric of prosocial impact and the reality of meaningful consequences for

clients, customers, or patients. Beneficiaries can strengthen the credibility of the leader's vision by providing firsthand testimonials from a relatively neutral, knowledgeable third-party source (Grant & Hofmann, 2011). Because they are the recipients of an organization's products and services, beneficiaries are in a unique position to articulate the prosocial impact of the organization's vision (Grant & Hofmann, 2011).

Thus, I predict that beneficiary contact enhances the effect of transformational leadership on followers' performance by fostering a stronger perception of prosocial impact. In the language of social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), transformational leadership involves providing social cues about the importance of a vision, and beneficiary contact reinforces these cues by allowing employees to see the potential prosocial impact of this vision on clients, customers, or patients. Beneficiary contact aligns the design of employees' jobs with the social cues that they are receiving from leaders, and such alignment may reduce uncertainty and ambiguity about the prosocial impact of their work (e.g., Griffin, 1983). When transformational leaders articulate a vision, beneficiary contact brings this vision to life, enabling followers to perceive integrity in the vision and recognize the potential for their contributions to have a meaningful prosocial impact. The resulting perceptions of prosocial impact, in turn, lead followers to work harder and longer, as they perceive effort as more worthwhile and are able to justify it even when it is unpleasant (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009; Grant et al., 2007; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). Beneficiary contact can thus create what Weick (1984) described as small wins, providing followers with emotionally resonant glimpses of how small increases in their performance can realize a leader's vision and have a meaningful impact on others. In summary, I propose a moderated mediation model in which beneficiary contact strengthens the effect of transformational leadership on followers' perceptions of prosocial impact, which in turn contribute directly to higher performance.

Hypothesis 1. Beneficiary contact strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance.

Hypothesis 2. Followers' perceptions of prosocial impact mediate the moderating effect of beneficiary contact on the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance.

Psychological Empowerment as an Alternative Explanation

An alternative explanation for the moderating effects of beneficiary contact lies in theories of psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment is thought to involve four psychological states: meaning (purpose), self-determination (choice), competence (self-efficacy), and (strategic) impact (influence on strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes) (Spreitzer 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Psychological empowerment provides a parsimonious framework for capturing the central themes of the psychological states that are viewed as mediators of the effects of transformational leadership on follower performance. Transformational leadership is thought to increase follower performance by (1) fostering meaning (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova et al., 2006; Shamir et al., 1993); (2) building competence or self-efficacy (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Liao & Chuang, 2007; Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008); (3) encouraging the pursuit of self-concordant, value-congruent goals, which are by definition self-determined and autonomously chosen (Bono & Judge, 2003); and (4) strengthening social identification with a group, department, or organization, which leads employees to “perceive themselves as important, influential, effective, and worthwhile in their organizational units” (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003: 248; see also Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Although these dimensions of empowerment may mediate any direct relationship that occurs between transformational leadership and follower performance, I do not expect that they will be critical to explaining the moderating effects of beneficiary contact on this relationship. First, meaning can arise directly through the efforts of transformational leaders to connect work to personal values (Bono & Judge, 2003; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova et al., 2006), independent of any beneficiary contact that occurs (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). As Grant (2008a: 119) explains, “The experience of meaningfulness is a judgment of the general value and purpose of the job, with no reference to the people who it affects.” Thus, beneficiary contact may be particularly relevant to strengthening the effect of transformational leadership on employees’ specific perceptions of prosocial impact, whereas their more general, abstract perceptions of meaning may be enhanced by transformational leadership directly.

Second, with respect to competence, beneficiary contact provides information about the impact of followers’ work, not the extent to which they have

completed it effectively (Grant & Gino, 2010). Third, leaders’ efforts to delegate opportunities and provide choices influence self-determination (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Spreitzer, 1996); since beneficiary contact is independent of autonomy (Grandey & Diamond, 2010), it has little relevance to influencing or reinforcing the opportunities for choice that transformational leaders provide. Fourth, although beneficiary contact provides employees with information about outcomes, this information focuses on outcomes for the well-being of clients, customers, and other recipients, and is thus unlikely to affect the degree to which transformational leadership enhances perceptions of impact on strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes. In summary, although psychological empowerment may directly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance, it is less relevant as a mechanism for explaining the moderating effect of beneficiary contact on this relationship, which is likely to be unique to perceived prosocial impact.

Overview of the Present Research

I tested these hypotheses in two studies. Study 1, a field quasi-experiment with call center employees, examined whether establishing beneficiary contact enhanced the effects of a transformational leadership intervention on performance. Study 2, a field study in a governmental organization, examined beneficiary contact as a moderator of the relationship between employee ratings of transformational leadership and supervisor ratings of their job performance. Study 2 also compared perceived prosocial impact and psychological empowerment as explanatory mechanisms. In tandem, these studies facilitate the investigation of the core hypotheses with respect to both temporary, experimentally induced variations and more enduring, naturally occurring variations in transformational leadership and beneficiary contact.

STUDY 1: METHODS

Participants and Design

I conducted this study with new employees at a privately held company headquartered in the U.S. Midwest. All 71 new hires participated (response rate = 100%), and 76.1 percent of them were female. The company focused on selling educational and marketing software to university and nonprofit customers, and the employees worked at an outbound call center. The revenue that employees generated funded job creation and salaries in another department, but they

had no contact with the beneficiaries of these jobs and salaries. The experiment used a 2 (transformational leadership: yes, no) $\times$ 2 (beneficiary contact: yes, no) between-subjects factorial design. The employees were thus arbitrarily divided among four conditions: control, transformational leadership, beneficiary contact, and combined.

Procedures

To start their jobs, all employees were required to attend a training session and were given the opportunity to sign up for one of four dates. I learned that the manager in charge of training was planning to invite the senior director of the organization to speak about the company's mission during one training session, and he was planning to invite an "internal customer"—a beneficiary from another department supported by the employees' work—to speak about the importance of their efforts at a different training session. Otherwise, the employees had no interaction with the senior director or the other department. I saw this as an opportunity for a quasi-experiment and asked the manager if he could invite both the director and the beneficiary to the third session. The manager agreed. Employees in the fourth session, to which no speaker was invited, served as the control group. Other than the visits from the director and the beneficiary, the training sessions were identical. Employees were not able to self-select into conditions, as they were not informed in advance that the training sessions would have different speakers.

For the control group ($n = 26$), the manager led training without a visit from the director or the beneficiary. For the transformational leadership group ($n = 15$), the director visited the training session and spoke for 15 minutes. Exemplifying transformational behaviors (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Locke & Kirkpatrick, 1996; Shamir et al., 1993), he articulated the company's vision, explained why it was meaningful, and communicated enthusiasm and confidence about employees' capabilities to achieve it. For the beneficiary contact group ($n = 12$), the beneficiary from a different department visited the training session for 10 minutes. He described how the revenue generated by the employees had made it possible to create jobs and fund salaries, including his own. Finally, for the combined group ($n = 18$), both the director and the beneficiary visited at different points in the training session and delivered their messages. Both visitors were blind to the hypotheses.

Measures

Because researcher intervention can compromise the internal and external validity of experiments (Argyris, 1975; Cook & Campbell, 1979; Rosenthal, 1994), I did not have contact with the participants during the study. The manager was already tracking data on the employees' performance, and I was able to obtain these data for the seven-week period following the intervention during training. Performance was measured on two metrics: number of sales made and total revenue generated. The employees were not paid on commission, but they were eligible for semiannual salary raises based on their performance on these two metrics. Across the seven weekly measurement intervals, the measures of both sales ($\alpha = .82$) and revenue ($\alpha = .72$) were reliable. I also obtained the number of shifts worked by each employee as a control variable.

After the seven-week performance measurement period was complete, I gained approval to collect manipulation check data via an online survey using a scale anchored at 1, "disagree strongly," and 7, "agree strongly." Of the 71 employees, 38 participated, for a response rate of 53.5 percent. To assess the impact of the director's visit, the survey featured four items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). Employees evaluated the director on four transformational leadership items selected to capture the extent to which inspirational motivation and idealized influence were reflected in his speech: "articulates a compelling vision of the future," "talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished," "instills pride in me for being associated with them," and "acts in ways that builds my respect" ($\alpha = .79$). To assess the impact of the beneficiary's visit, the survey featured two items adapted from Grant's (2008) beneficiary contact scale: "My job gives me the opportunity to meet the people who benefit from my work" and "My job provides me with contact with the people who benefit from my work" ($\alpha = .75$).

STUDY 1: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the validity of the interventions, I conducted 2×2 analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on the manipulation checks. Employees who heard the director's speech during training rated him as significantly more transformational (mean = 5.01, s.d. = 0.95) than those who did not hear his speech (mean = 4.17, s.d. = 1.38), $F(1, 37) = 5.25$, $p < .05$; no other effects were significant. In addition, employees who attended the beneficiary's visit perceived greater beneficiary contact (mean = 3.82,

s.d. = 1.39) than those who did not (mean = 2.94, s.d. = 1.22, $F[1, 36] = 3.99$, $p = .05$); no other effects were significant. These results indicate support for the validity of the interventions.

Table 1 displays means and standard deviations for the key variables by condition. To examine the effects of the interventions on performance, I began by conducting 2×2 ANOVAs on sales and revenue, with shifts as a covariate. The results showed a significant interaction of the transformational leadership and beneficiary contact interventions on sales ($F[1, 66] = 7.73$, $p < .01$). There were no significant main effects of transformational leadership ($F[1, 66] = .01$, $p > .93$) or beneficiary contact ($F[1, 66] = .26$, $p > .69$). The results also showed a significant interaction of the transformational leadership and beneficiary contact interventions on revenue ($F[1, 66] = 4.67$, $p = .03$). There were no significant main effects of transformational leadership ($F[1, 66] = .00$, $p > .99$) or beneficiary contact ($F[1, 66] = .13$, $p > .77$).

To interpret the significant interactions, which are graphed in Figures 1 and 2, I conducted simple effects tests within each level of beneficiary contact. When beneficiary contact was present, the transformational leadership intervention had a significant, positive effect on sales ($F[1, 67] = 4.25$, $p = .04$ [$p_{\text{one-tailed}} < .02$]) and a marginal effect on revenue ($F[1, 67] = 2.91$, $p = .09$ [$p_{\text{one-tailed}} < .05$]). When beneficiary contact was absent, on the other hand, the transformational leadership intervention had no effect on sales ($F[1, 67] = .01$, $p > .90$) or revenue ($F[1, 67] = .43$, $p > .51$). These results provide initial evidence in support of the hypothesis that beneficiary contact strengthens the effects of transformational leadership on followers' performance.

At the same time, these findings are subject to several important limitations. First, the fact that the data were collected within a single job raises questions about the generalizability of the findings to

other jobs and occupations. Second, the transformational leadership and beneficiary contact interventions consisted of short, one-time visits and speeches. However, among working employees, a single speech alone may be insufficient to increase performance. In practice, transformational leadership is often an everyday, repeated behavioral act (e.g., Purvanova & Bono, 2009), and beneficiary contact is often a relatively enduring aspect of a job design (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Stone & Gueutal, 1985). This may help to explain why there were no main effects of transformational leadership or beneficiary contact.

Third, the quasi-experimental design is vulnerable to validity and implementation threats (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Although the arbitrary assignment procedure prevented participants from self-selecting into conditions, it is not possible to rule out history threats to validity: other events may have occurred along with the experimental treatment and driven the results. Furthermore, multiple treatment interference is a possibility: it may be the case that simply hearing about the importance of the work from two different sources, rather than the specific transformational behavior by the leader and the interaction with the beneficiary, enhanced the credibility of the message. In terms of implementation threats, it is possible that employees shared information about their experiences during training, and those who did not receive both the leader and beneficiary speeches experienced resentful demoralization. Fourth, I was not able to obtain survey data on mediating mechanisms from participating employees. This made it difficult to understand the underlying processes responsible for the findings.

STUDY 2: METHODS

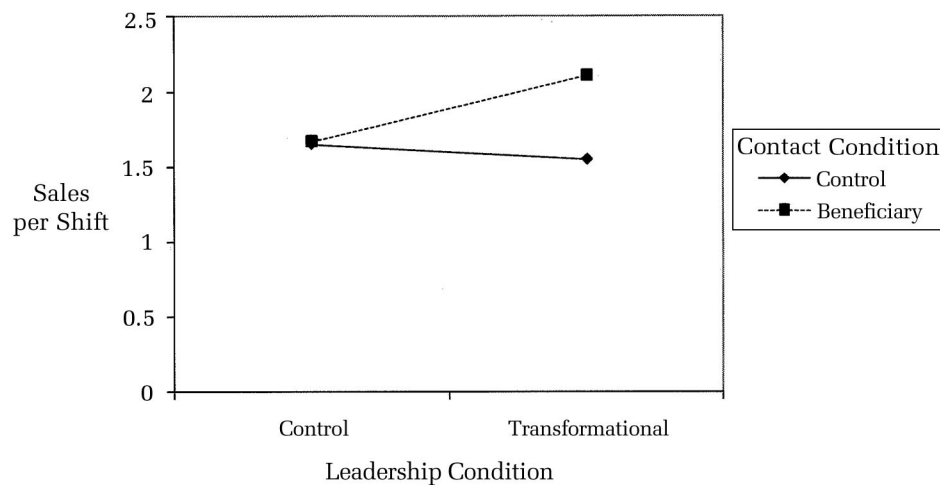
This study was designed to constructively replicate and extend the findings of Study 1 by address-

TABLE 1
Study 1: Means and Standard Deviations by Condition^a

Condition	Number of Sales	Total Revenue	Sales per Shift	Revenue per Shift
Control ($n = 26$)	46.23 (39.30)	\$3,738.73 (3,407.49)	1.65 (0.84)	\$138.61 (75.71)
Transformational leadership ($n = 15$)	151.80 (102.34)	\$12,129.04 (10,284.34)	1.55 (0.56)	\$119.49 (58.86)
Beneficiary contact ($n = 12$)	77.67 (50.68)	\$5,952.83 (4,081.64)	1.67 (0.74)	\$131.94 (77.67)
Combined transformational leadership and beneficiary contact ($n = 18$)	271.22 (92.15)	\$21,376.58 (6,806.03)	2.11 (0.44)	\$166.97 (35.73)

^a Standard deviations are in parentheses.

FIGURE 1
Study 1 Results for Sales per Shift



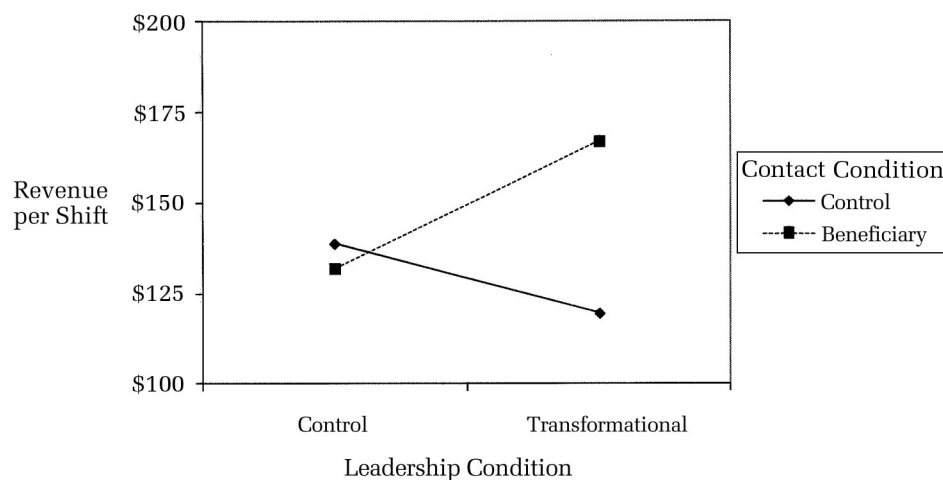
ing the aforementioned limitations. First, to increase generalizability, I collected data from employees in a wide range of jobs working for different leaders. Second, to directly examine more enduring leadership and job experiences, I collected data on naturally occurring differences between employees in perceptions of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact. Third, to overcome the vulnerability of quasi-experimental designs to the aforementioned validity and implementation threats, I collected multisource survey data. Fourth, to examine mediating mechanisms, I collected data from employees on perceived prosocial impact and psychological empowerment.

Participants and Procedures

I collected data from 329 employees and their direct supervisors in a large U.S. government or-

ganization. The human resources director identified 1,197 employees who had unique supervisors, and I sent them invitations to participate in a study of work attitudes. I received completed online surveys from 418 employees, for a response rate of 34.9 percent. I sent requests to their direct supervisors to complete a short online performance evaluation and received completed surveys from 344 supervisors, for a response rate of 82.3 percent. I was able to match 329 of the employee and supervisor surveys; these matched surveys constituted the final sample. Female employees comprised 63.5% of the sample; average job tenure was 6.3 years (s.d. = 7.4), and average age was 37.2 years (s.d. = 13.0). These respondents worked in more than 20 different jobs, including engineering and manufacturing, customer service, financial analysis, information technology, quality assur-

FIGURE 2
Study 1 Results for Revenue per Shift



ance, and legal and contracting services. Their supervisors were 60.8 percent female, with an average job tenure of 9.0 years (*s.d.* = 8.3) and an average age of 45.3 years (*s.d.* = 9.7).

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all items used a scale anchored at 1, "disagree strongly," and 7, "agree strongly." Supervisors provided ratings of employees' job performance, and employees provided ratings of transformational leadership, as well as self-reports of perceived prosocial impact, psychological empowerment, and several control variables.

Performance. To rate employees' job performance, the supervisors completed the five-item scale developed by Ashford and Black (1996). They were asked to evaluate employees' performance on a nine-point scale in percentiles, ranging from the bottom 10 percent to the top 10 percent. The items included "overall performance," "achievement of work goals," and "quality of performance" ($\alpha = .96$).

Transformational leadership. Employees completed the 20-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio et al., 1999) with reference to their direct supervisor ($\alpha = .82$). Sample items include "articulates a compelling vision of the future" (inspirational motivation), "specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose" (idealized influence), "seeks differing perspectives when solving problems" (intellectual stimulation), and "spends time teaching and coaching" (individualized consideration).

Beneficiary contact. Since the intervention in Study 1 consisted of a very specific interaction with a single beneficiary, it was important to replicate the results by using a measure of more enduring and naturalistic beneficiary contact. Employees completed four items adapted from measures developed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006): "My job involves a great deal of interaction with the people who benefit from my work," "On the job, I frequently communicate with the people affected by my work," "The job requires spending a great deal of time with the people who benefit from my work," and "The job involves interaction with the people affected by my work" ($\alpha = .92$). These items were based on Morgeson and Humphrey's (2006) measure of interaction outside a respondent's organization, but the referent was beneficiaries—as specified by Grant (2008b)—rather than any people outside the organization. In pilot data, the most commonly listed beneficiaries were customers, citizens, and the community.

Perceived prosocial impact. Employees completed the three-item scale developed by Grant (2008a), which includes items such as "I feel that my work makes a positive difference in other people's lives" ($\alpha = .81$).

Psychological empowerment. Employees completed Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item scale ($\alpha = .90$), which includes 3 items each for meaning (e.g., "The work I do is meaningful to me"; $\alpha = .81$), competence (e.g., "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job"; $\alpha = .89$), self-determination (e.g., "I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job"; $\alpha = .86$), and (strategic) impact (e.g., "My impact on what happens in my department is large"; $\alpha = .93$).

Control variables. Since the quality of the relationship between employees and supervisors affects the ratings that supervisors give (e.g., Judge & Ferris, 1993), I controlled for relationship quality to minimize reporting biases. Employees evaluated their relationships with their supervisors on three items adapted from Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, and Dutton's (1998) relationship quality scale, including "trusting" and "close" ($\alpha = .86$). In addition, to establish the incremental validity of the moderating role of beneficiary contact, I controlled for several related job characteristics, using Morgeson and Humphrey's (2006) scales to measure task identity (e.g., "The job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to end"; $\alpha = .84$), task significance (e.g., "The results of my work are likely to significantly affect the lives of other people"; $\alpha = .87$), interpersonal feedback (e.g., "I receive feedback on my performance from other people in my organization"; $\alpha = .91$), and friendship opportunities (e.g., "I have the opportunity to develop close friendships in my job"; $\alpha = .89$). I selected task identity and task significance because these two characteristics relate to the outcomes of an individual's job, as discussed earlier, and interpersonal feedback and friendship opportunities because these are two other social job characteristics that capture key aspects of employees' work-related interactions (Grant & Parker, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

STUDY 2: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for the focal variables appear in Table 2. To assess the factor structures of the performance, leadership, job design, and perceptual variables, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using EQS software version 6.1 with maximum-likelihood estimation procedures (e.g., Bentler & Dudgeon, 1996; Kline, 1998). In keeping with past research (e.g., Piccolo &

TABLE 2
Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations^a

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Supervisor performance ratings	7.64	1.55	(.96)													
2. Transformational leadership	4.54	1.28	.18	(.82)												
3. Beneficiary contact	4.56	1.57	.04	.23	(.92)											
4. Perceived prosocial impact	5.18	1.27	.22	.53	.30	(.81)										
5. Psychological empowerment	5.54	0.91	.26	.54	.22	.62	(.90)									
6. Empowerment: Meaning	5.44	1.23	.14	.44	.18	.61	.78	(.81)								
7. Empowerment: Competence	6.04	0.88	.28	.20	.11	.37	.64	.34	(.89)							
8. Empowerment: Self-determination	5.38	1.14	.18	.26	.21	.27	.71	.33	.39	(.82)						
9. Empowerment: Strategic impact	5.23	1.46	.20	.64	.18	.56	.84	.56	.38	.45	(.95)					
10. Relationship quality	5.38	1.23	.10	.51	.22	.42	.48	.43	.21	.35	.45	(.86)				
11. Task identity	5.26	1.31	.09	.35	.22	.36	.48	.37	.32	.47	.40	.47	(.84)			
12. Task significance	4.74	1.25	.07	.36	.36	.62	.44	.45	.22	.32	.33	.32	.32	(.87)		
13. Interpersonal feedback	4.55	1.47	.11	.33	.30	.29	.36	.32	.14	.30	.28	.44	.36	.35	(.91)	
14. Friendship opportunities	5.61	1.07	.16	.29	.30	.26	.36	.22	.29	.40	.28	.50	.33	.29	.38	(.89)

^a Coefficient alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses. All $r > .10$ are significant at $p < .05$; all $r > .14$, $p < .01$; all $r > .18$, $p < .001$.

Colquitt, 2006), I constructed one parcel for each of the four dimensions of transformational leadership. I specified a 13-factor solution, with distinct, freely correlated factors for supervisor performance ratings, transformational leadership, beneficiary contact, relationship quality, task identity, task significance, interpersonal feedback, friendship opportunities, perceived prosocial impact, and the meaning, competence, self-determination, and strategic impact dimensions of psychological empowerment. This 13-factor solution achieved good fit with the data ($\chi^2[824] = 1,679.75$, CFI = .94, SRMR = .05). All factor loadings were statistically significant and ranged from .73 to .97 for supervisor performance ratings, .91 to .96 for transformational leadership, .77 to .93 for beneficiary contact, .77 to .86 for relationship quality, .66 to .91 for task identity, .80 to .83 for task significance, .81 to .91 for interpersonal feedback, .76 to .95 for friendship opportunities, .62 to .88 for perceived prosocial impact, .88 to .97 for meaning, .80 to .94 for competence, .72 to .86 for self-determination, and .88 to .97 for strategic impact. Chi-square difference tests showed that all alternative nested models achieved significantly poorer fit, and constraining correlations between each pair of factors to 1.0 also reduced model fit significantly. These analyses supported the expected factor structure of the variables.

I began testing the hypotheses using hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses, following the moderated regression procedures recommended by Aiken and West (1991). I standardized the focal variables, multiplied them to create interaction terms, and predicted supervisor performance ratings. I entered the control variables, transformational leadership, and beneficiary contact in step 1, the interactions of transformational

leadership with the control variables in step 2, and the interaction of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact in step 3. The results, which are displayed in Table 3, indicated a statistically significant interaction between transformational leadership and beneficiary contact in predicting supervisor performance ratings.

To interpret the form of this interaction, I plotted the simple slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean of beneficiary contact (Aiken & West, 1991). As displayed in Figure 3, transformational leadership appeared to be positively related to supervisor performance ratings when beneficiary contact was high but not when it was low. To test this interpretation statistically, I compared each of the simple slopes to zero. When beneficiary contact was high, the relationship between transformational leadership and performance was positive and statistically significant ($b = .48$, s.e. = .12, $\beta = .31$, $p < .001$). In contrast, when beneficiary contact was low, the relationship between transformational leadership and performance did not differ significantly from zero ($b = .10$, s.e. = .12, $\beta = .06$, $p = .40$). These results show that beneficiary contact strengthened the relationship between transformational leadership and performance. In supplementary analyses, none of the other job characteristics interacted significantly with transformational leadership, supporting the uniqueness of the moderating role of beneficiary contact.

To examine the role of perceived prosocial impact, I followed the moderated mediation procedures specified by Edwards and Lambert (2007). The hypotheses focused on first-stage moderation: beneficiary contact strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and perceived prosocial impact, and perceived prosocial impact

TABLE 3
Study 2: Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Supervisor Performance Ratings^a

Variables	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	<i>b</i>	s.e.	β	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	s.e.	β	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	s.e.	β	<i>t</i>
Transformational leadership	.27	.10	.18	2.67**	.28	.10	.18	2.66**	.28	.10	.18	2.74**
Beneficiary contact	-.07	.09	-.04	-0.71	-.07	.10	-.05	-0.74	-.02	.10	-.01	-0.20
Relationship quality	-.12	.12	-.08	-1.08	-.07	.13	-.04	-0.50	-.08	.13	-.05	-0.64
Task identity	.02	.10	.01	0.19	.00	.11	.00	-0.03	.04	.11	.02	0.33
Task significance	-.02	.10	-.01	-1.17	-.02	.10	-.01	-0.15	-.02	.10	-.01	-0.19
Interpersonal feedback	.06	.10	.04	0.59	.04	.10	.03	0.39	.02	.10	.01	0.19
Friendship opportunities	.23	.10	.15	2.30*	.25	.11	.16	2.14*	.23	.11	.15	2.01*
Transformational leadership $\times$ relationship quality					.16	.11	.12	1.45	.16	.11	.12	1.46
Transformational leadership $\times$ task identity					-.06	.10	-.04	-0.59	-.09	.10	-.06	-0.85
Transformational leadership $\times$ task significance					.03	.09	.02	0.33	-.02	.09	-.01	-0.17
Transformational leadership $\times$ interpersonal feedback					-.13	.11	-.09	-1.22	-.17	.11	-.12	-1.61
Transformational leadership $\times$ friendship opportunities					-.01	.10	-.01	-0.09	-.07	.10	-.05	-0.65
Transformational leadership $\times$ beneficiary contact									.27	.09	.19	3.07**
R^2	.05*				.06				.09**			
$F(df)$	2.51 (7, 321)				0.61 (5, 316)				9.40 (1, 315)			
ΔR^2					.02				.03**			

^a Theoretically, beneficiary contact should be most likely to moderate the effects of inspirational motivation and the leading by example aspects of idealized influence. However, the results were consistent across each facet of transformational leadership, likely because of their high correlations ($r_{\text{mean}} = .86$, $r_{\text{minimum}} = .83$, $r_{\text{maximum}} = .89$).

^b Values shown in bold reflect hypothesized results.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

then contributes directly to performance. I began by conducting moderated regression analyses predicting perceived prosocial impact (see Table 4, left column). There was a statistically significant interaction between transformational leadership and beneficiary contact in predicting perceived prosocial impact. The simple slopes (Figure 4) suggest that the relationship between transformational leadership and perceived prosocial impact was

more strongly positive under high than low beneficiary contact. Comparing the slopes to zero supported this interpretation: the relationship between transformational leadership and performance was positive and statistically significant when beneficiary contact was high ($b = .72$, s.e. = .08, $\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) and less positive but still statistically significant when beneficiary contact was low ($b = .52$, s.e. = .08, $\beta = .41$, $p < .001$).

FIGURE 3
Study 2 Simple Slopes for Supervisor Performance Ratings

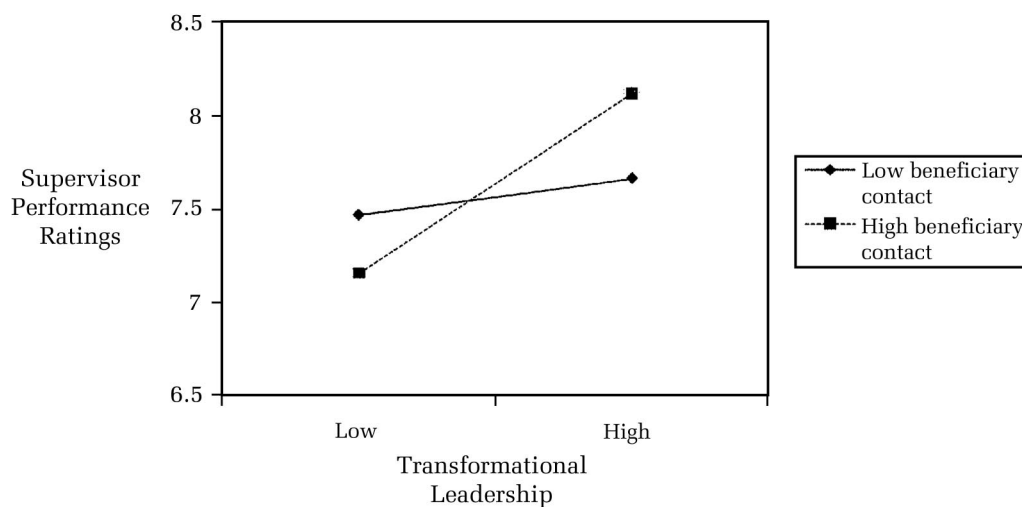


TABLE 4
Study 2: Moderated Mediation Analyses^a

Variables	DV: Perceived Prosocial Impact					DV: Psychological Empowerment					DV: Supervisor Performance Ratings				
	Step 1					Step 1					Step 1				
	<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	β	<i>t</i>		<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	β	<i>t</i>		<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	β	<i>t</i>	
Transformational leadership	.38	.06	.30	6.34***		.28	.05	.31	6.13***		.26	.10	.17	2.57*	
Beneficiary contact	.07	.06	.06	1.27		-.03	.04	-.03	-0.59		-.01	.10	-.01	-0.13	
Relationship quality	.14	.07	.11	2.05*		.09	.05	.10	1.72		-.10	.12	-.06	-0.83	
Task identity	.11	.06	.09	1.85		.21	.04	.23	4.77***		.06	.10	.04	0.61	
Task significance	.58	.06	.46	1.06		.17	.04	.19	3.97***		-.02	.10	-.02	-0.25	
Interpersonal feedback	-.07	.06	-.06	-1.20		.04	.05	.04	0.81		.02	.10	.01	0.22	
Friendship opportunities	-.06	.06	-.04	-0.90		.08	.05	.09	1.70		.26	.10	.16	2.52*	
Transformational leadership $\times$ beneficiary contact						.06	.04	.08	1.83		.19	.08	.13	2.39*	
Psychological empowerment											.30	.13	.18	2.25*	
Perceived prosocial impact											.20	.10	.17	2.00	
R^2	.51***					.44***					.07***			.11***	
$F(df)$	47.66 (7, 320)					37.07 (7, 321)					3.15 (8, 319)			7.02 (1, 319)	
ΔR^2											.01			.04**	

^a The results did not change substantively with inclusion of the interactions between transformational leadership and the control variables. In addition, in analysis of the dimensions of psychological empowerment separately rather than as a composite, the moderated mediation model was supported for perceived prosocial impact, but not for any of the dimensions of psychological empowerment. This is not surprising in light of evidence that the dimensions tend to be highly correlated and share similar antecedents and outcomes (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011).

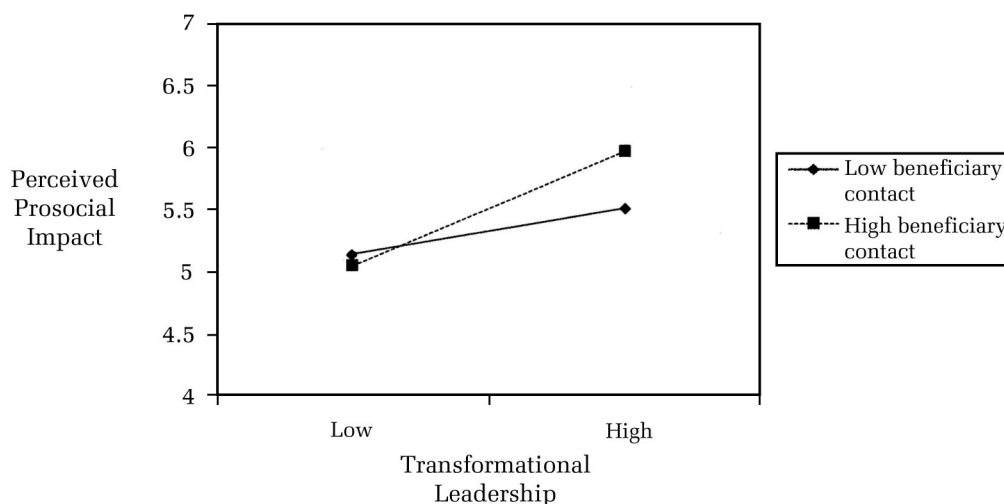
^b Values shown in bold reflect hypothesized results.

* $p < .05$,

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

FIGURE 4
Study 2 Simple Slopes for Perceived Prosocial Impact



Next, I tested whether perceived prosocial impact predicted supervisor performance ratings when transformational leadership, beneficiary contact, and their interaction were controlled. I conducted these analyses while controlling for psychological empowerment (Table 4, right column). In both analyses, perceived prosocial impact was a significant predictor even after I had controlled for these variables, and the coefficient on the interaction term decreased below statistical significance. To examine whether this was a significant decrease, I used bootstrap procedures to construct 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals around the indirect effects at both levels of beneficiary contact (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). The confidence interval for the indirect effect of transformational leadership on supervisor performance ratings through perceived prosocial impact excluded zero for both high beneficiary contact (.05, .29) and low beneficiary contact (.01, .15), indicating that perceived prosocial impact mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance at both levels of beneficiary contact.² In addition, the confidence interval for the difference between these two indirect effects excluded zero (.02, .22), indicating that the indirect effect was significantly stronger under high rather than low beneficiary contact. These results support the moderated mediation model, showing that per-

ceived prosocial impact is an explanatory mechanism even after one controls for psychological empowerment.

Psychological empowerment independently predicted supervisor performance ratings (Table 4, right column), but beneficiary contact did not moderate the relationship of transformational leadership with psychological empowerment (Table 4, middle column). These findings support the prediction that perceived prosocial impact, rather than psychological empowerment, is a key mechanism through which beneficiary contact strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

These studies provide convergent evidence that the relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance is stronger under beneficiary contact. In the first study, a transformational leadership intervention enhanced sales and revenue, but only when employees had contact with a beneficiary. In the second study, the positive association between transformational leadership and supervisor ratings of follower performance was stronger under beneficiary contact, and followers' perceptions of prosocial impact mediated this interactive relationship.

Theoretical Contributions

This research advances knowledge about leadership, job design, and meaning. The primary contribution lies in introducing beneficiary contact as an important moderator of the impact of transforma-

² Under high beneficiary contact, the confidence intervals excluded zero for both the direct effects (.03, .58) and the total effects (.20, .73). Under low beneficiary contact, on the other hand, the confidence intervals included zero for both the direct effects (–.26, .37) and the total effects (–.21, .42).

tional leadership on follower performance. Although evidence has accumulated that both transformational leadership and beneficiary contact can motivate employees to perform more effectively, little theory and research have examined the interplay between these two approaches to imbuing work with meaning. In identifying beneficiary contact as an enhancer of the effects of transformational leadership, my theoretical perspective and empirical findings represent a departure from traditional approaches to understanding the interactions of leadership and job design. In classic research, the assumption has been that job design is a substitute for leadership: well-designed tasks compensate for the absence of leadership behaviors by providing employees with the intrinsic motivation and direction necessary to complete their work effectively regardless of vision and inspiration from leaders (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). Some studies have supported this perspective (Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & James, 2002; Keller, 2006; cf. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996), but this research has focused on task characteristics, giving little theoretical and empirical attention to the social characteristics of jobs. From a leadership substitutes perspective, one might expect beneficiary contact to serve a compensatory function, fostering perceptions of prosocial impact when transformational leadership is lacking. However, my research supports the opposite functional form of the interaction. These studies thereby open up a new direction for leadership research, suggesting that although task characteristics may be substitutes for leadership, social characteristics of jobs may be more likely to operate as enhancers.

The studies also highlight the potential for rethinking and broadening existing knowledge about the behaviors of transformational leaders. As it is traditionally studied, the inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership focuses on the use of language and rhetoric to instill enthusiasm, optimism, confidence, and purpose in followers (e.g., Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1985; Emrich et al., 2001; Shamir et al., 1993, 1998). My research suggests that transformational leadership may also involve modifying the structural designs of followers' jobs. This evidence points to a novel interpretation of recent studies linking transformational leadership to perceptions of job enrichment and meaningfulness (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova et al., 2006). Whereas these researchers have assumed that transformational leaders influence employees' job perceptions and performance through the rhetoric that they use, my research indicates that transformational leaders can also achieve such influence through objectively altering

the design of employees' jobs to create greater interaction with beneficiaries. My studies suggest that rhetoric and design in combination, rather than one or the other alone, may maximize the extent to which followers perceive their work as having a prosocial impact and perform effectively as a result. As such, my research takes a step toward answering recent calls to better understand the interplay of job design and leadership (Piccolo et al., 2010) and draws attention to relational job design as a moderator of transformational leadership effects, complementing previously studied contingencies such as environmental uncertainty, cultural values, social and physical distance, and follower characteristics (for reviews, see Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Accordingly, my findings invite scholars to consider the possibility that transformational leaders can inspire employees not only through the words that they articulate to link work to an important purpose, but also through the actions that they undertake to redesign this work to strengthen connections to this purpose. Recent research shows that it is difficult for leaders to create perceptions of prosocial impact through their own words; messages highlighting prosocial impact are more compelling when delivered directly by beneficiaries (Grant & Hofmann, 2011). Should connecting employees with beneficiaries outside their work groups be viewed as a transformational leadership behavior? If so, it may be fruitful to conceive of transformational leadership as a form of boundary management in which leaders close the gap between employees and beneficiaries, serving as linking pins (Katz & Kahn, 1966) to bridge "structural holes" between employees and beneficiaries (Burt, 1997; Obstfeld, 2005).

My research also identifies perceived prosocial impact as a new mechanism for explaining transformational leadership effects. As discussed previously, existing research has focused on how transformational leadership operates through meaning, self-concordance, competence or self-efficacy, and social identification. These mechanisms focus on employees' perceptions of their work, their own capabilities, and their relationships with leaders and work group members. Perceived prosocial impact differs from these mechanisms in that it primarily emphasizes employees' perceptions of their relationships with beneficiaries outside their work groups. My research thus introduces a fresh understanding of how transformational leadership can shape performance by influencing how employees judge their relationships with the recipients of their products and services, not only their relationships with leaders and employees inside their work

groups. This theoretical perspective and empirical evidence widen the relational scope of transformational leadership effects.

Finally, my research extends current knowledge about the psychological and performance effects of relational job design, which scholars have identified as a productive direction for future research (Grant & Parker, 2009; Kanfer, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Previous studies have shown how beneficiary contact, independently and in conjunction with supporting task characteristics, can enhance attitudes and performance (Grant, 2007; Humphrey et al., 2007). Little research, however, has addressed how factors other than job design interact with beneficiary contact to affect employees' psychological and behavioral reactions. My studies provide what may be the first evidence that beneficiary contact interacts with leadership to influence perceptions of prosocial impact and performance. These findings suggest that to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of relational job design on employees, it is important to examine leadership behaviors in tandem with job characteristics.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Practical Implications

These studies are subject to a number of limitations that point toward avenues for future research. One inconsistency between the two studies concerned the effect of transformational leadership on performance under low beneficiary contact; this effect was insignificant in both studies but showed a negative trend (Study 1) versus a positive trend (Study 2). Future research is necessary to compare a number of possible explanations for this divergence, including differences in the focus on employees in for-profit versus governmental organizations, objective versus supervisor ratings of performance, and temporary versus enduring leadership behaviors and job characteristics. It may be the case that small doses of transformational leadership depend heavily on beneficiary contact to make the consequences of a leader's vision for other people tangible, whereas when transformational leadership is a salient component of everyday work life, beneficiary contact has incremental value but is not strictly necessary. Alternatively, the employees in the Study 2 sample who reported low beneficiary contact may still have had sufficient interaction with customers and clients that they were able to vividly understand and envision the impact of their organization's work. As an anonymous reviewer for this article noted, these two studies do not rule out the possibility that job

design and organizational culture can be a substitute for transformational leadership. For some jobs, organizations, and occupations, the work may be so deeply imbued with ideological significance that its prosocial impact is vivid and chronically salient to employees. In these situations, it may not be necessary or beneficial for leaders to provide additional inspiration or to redesign jobs.

On a related note, in both studies, beneficiary contact was not independently associated with higher performance. This raises important questions about whether the effects of beneficiary contact vary as a function of its structure and content (Grandey & Diamond, 2010; Grant & Parker, 2009). For example, a beneficiary's need, similarity, emotional expressions, responsibility, charisma, authenticity, and attractiveness may be important contingencies that affect employees' reactions (e.g., Batson & Shaw, 1991; Grant et al., 2007; Small & Verrochi, 2009), and I did not measure or manipulate these potential contingencies in the present studies. The match or fit between a beneficiary and a leader's vision is also likely to be important. More generally, beneficiary contact is only one of multiple social characteristics of work, and it will be valuable to gain a deeper understanding of the potential moderating effects of other social characteristics, such as task interdependence, social support and undermining, requirements for harm doing, and accountability (Grant & Parker, 2009; Humphrey et al., 2007).

In Study 1, the results may have been partially influenced by the fact that two different speakers reinforced the message. Although Study 2 offset this limitation by using employees' ratings of ongoing levels of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact, future experimental studies should independently vary the number of messages and their source. Another limitation is that the studies provide little insight into the duration of the interactive performance effects of transformational leadership and beneficiary contact. The first study was limited to seven weeks of performance measurement, and the second study included only cross-sectional data. Since the effects of motivational interventions often fade over time (e.g., McNatt & Judge, 2004), it will be critical to build, test, and refine theory about how beneficiary contact influences the sustainability of performance changes over time, as well as to test the underlying availability and credibility mechanisms implied in the theory development.

I was unable to track differences among the dimensions of transformational leadership (cf. Shamir et al., 1998) and in the types of social cues provided (Zalesny & Ford, 1990). These shortcom-

ings raise unanswered questions about the specific behaviors of transformational leaders that are enhanced by beneficiary contact. In addition, future research should manipulate and measure other leadership constructs—such as leader-member exchange, empowering leadership, and authentic leadership (for a review, see Avolio et al. [2009])—to address the extent to which the moderating role of beneficiary contact is unique to transformational leadership. Evaluating Study 2 in isolation, it is difficult to ascertain whether the effects are driven by the leader's behavior, the follower's perception of the leader, or a combination of the two. This limitation is partially offset by Study 1, which shows that objective leadership behaviors interact with beneficiary contact to influence performance, but future research should include multiple followers per leader to demonstrate consensus in follower ratings. This may yield greater discriminant validity between facets of transformational leadership and inform whether the moderating effects of beneficiary contact apply primarily to inspirational motivation and idealized influence.

These limitations notwithstanding, the present research shows how beneficiary contact can enhance the performance effects of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders may bring prosocial visions to life by establishing contact between employees and beneficiaries (see Grant, 2011). As Medtronic's former CEO Bill George (in a 2010 personal communication) reflected:

Medtronic's mission is not fulfilled until the person is restored to full life and health, even with chronic and intractable diseases. They need to remember that when they get frustrated, they're here to restore people to full life and health. If I'm making semiconductors, how do I get to see the impact on patients? If I'm doing software development, if there was a glitch in a defibrillator, people could be harmed or killed. . . . Medtronic covers two out of every three surgeries with someone in the room—salespeople, technicians, clinical specialists. . . . It's very important that they get out there and see procedures. . . . You get to see the patients firsthand . . . it's a way of communicating what we're all about.

REFERENCES

- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. 1991. *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Argyris, C. 1975. Dangers in applying results from experimental social psychology. *American Psychologist*, 30: 469–485.
- Ashford, S. J., & Black, J. S. 1996. Proactivity during organizational entry: Antecedents, tactics, and outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81: 199–214.
- Ashford, S. J., Rothbard, N. P., Piderit, S. K., & Dutton, J. E. 1998. Out on a limb: The role of context and impression management in spelling gender equity issues. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43: 23–57.
- Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., & Jung, D. I. 1999. Re-examining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 72: 441–462.
- Avolio, B. J., Walumbwa, F. O., & Weber, T. J. 2009. Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions. In *Annual review of psychology*, vol. 60: 421–449. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. 1996. Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81: 827–832.
- Bass, B. M. 1985. *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. 2006. *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Batson, C. D., & Shaw, L. L. 1991. Evidence for altruism: Toward a pluralism of prosocial motives. *Psychological Inquiry*, 2: 107–122.
- Bentler, P. M., & Dudgeon, P. 1996. Covariance structure analysis: Statistical practice, theory, and directions. In J. T. Spence, J. M. Darley, & D. J. Foss (Eds.), *Annual review of psychology*, vol. 47: 563–592.
- Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. 1962. *Formal organizations*. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. 2003. Self-concordance at work: Toward understanding the motivational effects of transformational leaders. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46: 554–571.
- Burns, J. M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burt, R. S. 1997. The contingent value of social capital. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42: 339–365.
- Campbell, J. P. 1990. Modeling the performance prediction problem in industrial and organizational psychology. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (2nd ed.): 687–732. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Colby, A., Sippola, L., & Phelps, E. 2001. Social responsibility and paid work in contemporary American life. In A. Rossi (Ed.), *Caring and doing for others: Social responsibility in the domains of family, work, and community*: 463–501. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. 1979. *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- De Dreu, C. K. W., & Nauta, A. 2009. Self-interest and other-orientation in organizational behavior: Implications for job performance, prosocial behavior, and personal initiative. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94: 913–926.
- Dionne, S. D., Yammarino, F. J., Atwater, L. E., & James, L. R. 2002. Neutralizing substitutes for leadership theory: Leadership effects and common-source bias. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 454–464.
- Dvir, T., Eden, D., Avolio, B. J., & Shamir, B. 2002. Impact of transformational leadership on follower development and performance: A field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45: 735–744.
- Edwards, J. R., & Lambert, L. S. 2007. Methods for integrating moderation and mediation: A general analytical framework using moderated path analysis. *Psychological Methods*, 12: 1–22.
- Emrich, C. G., Brower, H. H., Feldman, J. M., & Garland, H. 2001. Images in words: Presidential rhetoric, charisma, and greatness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56: 527–557.
- Fried, Y., Levi, A. S., & Laurence, G. 2008. Motivation and job design in the new world of work. In S. Cartwright & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of personnel psychology*, 24: 586–611. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Gong, Y., Huang, J.-C., & Farh, J.-L. 2009. Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of employee creative self-efficacy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52: 765–778.
- Grandey, A. A., & Diamond, J. A. 2010. Interactions with the public: Bridging job design and emotional labor perspectives. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31: 338–350.
- Grant, A. M. 2007. Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference. *Academy of Management Review*, 32: 393–417.
- Grant, A. M. 2008a. The significance of task significance: Job performance effects, relational mechanisms, and boundary conditions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93: 108–124.
- Grant, A. M. 2008b. Designing jobs to do good: Dimensions and psychological consequences of prosocial job characteristics. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3: 19–39.
- Grant, A. M. 2011. How customers can rally your troops: End users can energize your workforce far better than your managers can. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(6): 97–103.
- Grant, A. M., Campbell, E. M., Chen, G., Cottone, K., Lapedis, D., & Lee, K. 2007. Impact and the art of motivation maintenance: The effects of contact with beneficiaries on persistence behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103: 53–67.
- Grant, A. M., & Gino, F. 2010. A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98: 946–955.
- Grant, A. M., & Hofmann, D. A. 2011. Outsourcing inspiration: The performance effects of ideological messages from leaders and beneficiaries. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 116: 173–187.
- Grant, A. M., & Parker, S. K. 2009. Redesigning work design theories: The rise of relational and proactive perspectives. In J. P. Walsh & A. P. Brief (Eds.), *Academy of Management annals*, vol. 3: 317–375. Essex, U.K.: Routledge.
- Griffin, R. W. 1983. Objective and social sources of information in task redesign: A field experiment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28: 184–200.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. 1976. Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16: 250–279.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. 1980. *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Heath, C., Larrick, R. P., & Klayman, J. 1998. Cognitive repairs: How organizations compensate for the shortcoming of individual learners. In B. Staw & R. Sutton (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, vol. 20: 1–37. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- House, R. J. 1977. A 1976 theory of charismatic leadership. In J. G. Hunt & L. L. Larsen, (Eds.), *Leadership: The cutting edge*: 189–207. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Howell, J. P., Dorfman, P. W., & Kerr, S. 1986. Moderator variables in leadership research. *Academy of Management Review*, 11: 88–102.
- Humphrey, S. E., Nahrgang, J. D., & Morgeson, F. P. 2007. Integrating motivational, social, and contextual work design features: A meta-analytic summary and theoretical extension of the work design literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92: 1332–1356.
- Judge, T. A., & Ferris, G. R. 1993. Social context of performance evaluation decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36: 80–105.
- Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. 2004. Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89: 755–768.
- Kanfer, R. 2009. Work motivation: Advancing theory and

- impact. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 2: 118–127.
- Kark, R., Shamir, B., & Chen, G. 2003. The two faces of transformational leadership: Empowerment and dependency. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88: 246–255.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. 1966. *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Keller, R. T. 2006. Transformational leadership, initiating structure, and substitutes for leadership: A longitudinal study of research and development project team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91: 202–210.
- Kerr, S., & Jermier, J. 1978. Substitutes for leadership: Their meaning and measurement. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 22: 375–403.
- Kirkman, B. L., & Rosen, B. 1999. Beyond self-management: Antecedents and consequences of team empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42: 58–74.
- Kirkpatrick, S. A., & Locke, E. A. 1996. Direct and indirect effects of three core charismatic leadership components on performance and attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81: 36–51.
- Kline, R. B. 1998. *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: Guilford.
- Lam, S. S. K., & Schaubroeck, J. 2000. A field experiment testing frontline opinion leaders as change agents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85: 987–995.
- Liao, H., & Chuang, A. 2007. Transforming service employees and climate: A multilevel, multisource examination of transformational leadership in building long-term service relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92: 1006–1019.
- McNatt, D. B., & Judge, T. A. 2004. Boundary conditions of the Galatea effect: A field experiment and constructive replication. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47: 550–565.
- Meglino, B. M., & Korsgaard, M. A. 2004. Considering rational self-interest as a disposition: Organizational implications of other orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89: 946–959.
- Molinsky, A., & Margolis, J. 2005. Necessary evils and interpersonal sensitivity in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 30: 245–268.
- Morgeson, F. P., & Humphrey, S. E. 2006. The Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ): Developing and validating a comprehensive measure for assessing job design and the nature of work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91: 1321–1339.
- Morgeson, F. P., & Humphrey, S. E. 2008. Job and team design: Toward a more integrative conceptualization of work design. In J. Martocchio (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resources management*, vol. 27: 39–92. Bingley, U.K.: Emerald Group.
- Obstfeld, D. 2005. Social networks, the tertius iungens orientation, and involvement in innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50: 100–130.
- Oldham, G. R., & Hackman, J. R. 2010. Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31: 463–479.
- Parker, S. K., & Axtell, C. M. 2001. Seeing another viewpoint: Antecedents and outcomes of employee perspective taking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44: 1085–1100.
- Piccolo, R. F., & Colquitt, J. A. 2006. Transformational leadership and job behaviors: The mediating role of core job characteristics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49: 327–340.
- Piccolo, R., Greenbaum, R., Den Hartog, D., & Folger, R. 2010. The relationship between ethical leadership and core job characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31: 259–278.
- Podolny, J. M., Khurana, R., & Hill-Popper, M. 2005. Revisiting the meaning of leadership. In B. Staw & R. M. Kramer (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, vol. 26: 1–36. New York: Elsevier Science.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Bommer, W. H. 1996. Meta-analysis of the relationships between Kerr and Jermier's substitutes for leadership and employee job attitudes, role perceptions, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81: 380–399.
- Pratt, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. 2003. Fostering meaningfulness in working and at work. In K. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*: 308–327. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Purvanova, R. K., & Bono, J. E. 2009. Transformational leadership in context: Face-to-face and virtual teams. *Leadership Quarterly*, 20: 343–357.
- Purvanova, R. K., Bono, J. E., & Dziewieczynski, J. 2006. Transformational leadership, job characteristics, and organizational citizenship performance. *Human Performance*, 19: 1–22.
- Rosenthal, R. 1994. Interpersonal expectancy effects: A 30-year perspective. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 3: 176–179.
- Rosso, B., Dekas, K., & Wrzesniewski, A. 2010. On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. In *Research in organizational behavior*, vol. 30: 91–127. .
- Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A., & England, G. W. 1996. How working is defined: Structure and stability. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17: 515–540.

- Salancik, G. R., & Pfeffer, J. 1978. A social information processing approach to job attitudes and task design. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23: 224–253.
- Schwartz, S. H., & Bardi, A. 2001. Value hierarchies across cultures: Taking a similarities perspective. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32: 268–290.
- Schwarz, N. 1998. Accessible content and accessibility experiences: The interplay of declarative and experiential information in judgment. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2: 87–99.
- Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. 2011. Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96: 981–1003.
- Sethi, R., & Nicholson, C. Y. 2001. Structural and contextual correlates of charged behavior in product development teams. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 18(3): 154–168.
- Shamir, B., House, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. 1993. The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization Science*, 4: 577–594.
- Shamir, B., Zakay, E., Breinin, E., & Popper, M. 1998. Correlates of charismatic leader behavior in military units: Subordinates' attitudes, unit characteristics, and superiors' appraisals of leader performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41: 387–409.
- Simons, T. L. 1999. Behavioral integrity as a critical ingredient for transformational leadership. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 12: 89–104.
- Simons, T. 2002. Behavioral integrity: The perceived alignment between managers' words and deeds as a research focus. *Organization Science*, 13: 18–35.
- Small, D. A., & Verrochi, N. M. 2009. The face of need: Facial emotion expression on charity advertisements. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 46: 777–787.
- Smircich, L., & Morgan, G. 1982. Leadership: The management of meaning. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 18: 257–273.
- Sparks, J. R., & Schenk, J. A. 2001. Explaining the effects of transformational leadership: An investigation of the effects of higher-order motives in multilevel marketing organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22: 849–869.
- Spreitzer, G. M. 1995. Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38: 1442–1465.
- Spreitzer, G. M. 1996. Social structural characteristics of psychological empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39: 483–504.
- Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. 1990. Cognitive elements of empowerment: An "interpretive" model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15: 666–681.
- Thompson, J. A., & Bunderson, J. S. 2003. Violations of principle: Ideological currency in the psychological contract. *Academy of Management Review*, 28: 571–586.
- Turner, Y. N., Hadas-Halperin, I., & Raveh, D. 2008. *Patient photos spur radiologist empathy and eye for detail*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America, Chicago.
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. 1973. Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. *Cognitive Psychology*, 5: 207–232.
- Vroom, V. H., & Jago, A. G. 2007. The role of the situation in leadership. *American Psychologist*, 62: 17–24.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., & Zhu, W. 2008. How transformational leadership weaves its influence on individual job performance: The role of identification and efficacy beliefs. *Personnel Psychology*, 61: 793–825.
- Weick, K. E. 1984. Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. *American Psychologist*, 39: 40–49.
- Yukl, G. 2008. How leaders influence organizational effectiveness. *Leadership Quarterly*, 19: 708–722.
- Zalesny, M. D., & Ford, J. K. 1990. Extending the social information processing perspective: New links to attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 47: 205–246.



Adam M. Grant (grantad@wharton.upenn.edu) is an associate professor of management at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his Ph.D. in organizational psychology from the University of Michigan. His research focuses on work motivation, job design, prosocial helping and giving behaviors, and proactive behaviors.

