

An exploratory study on ideal leadership behaviour: the opinions of American police managers

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceived ideal leadership behaviour in police organisations. It is based on a survey of 126 police managers from 23 US States who attended the Administrative Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute during the academic year 2007–2008. The questionnaire used in this investigation includes the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire Form XII (Stodgill, 1963). The main objectives of this exploratory analysis are to rank the importance of leadership characteristics based on police officers' perceptions, to create a typology of

leadership styles preferred, and to identify the demographic factors that are most likely to influence variations in opinions regarding the behaviour of an ideal police leader. This research shows that individual characteristics can influence not only managerial styles, but also leadership preferences. In particular, results imply that gender and race play an important role in structuring leadership preferences. Female police officers do not appear to differ from men in their preferences for a predominantly task-centred and structured leadership. However, women seem to favour more than men do: (1) a type of leader who can be considered 'transformational'; or (2) a more democratic, worker-oriented leader, who would allow subordinates freedom of action and would respond well to the followers' concerns. Compared with Whites and other racial minorities, African American police officers tend to favour more a structured task-centred leadership orientation or a leadership style described as transformational.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial concept in the development of effective organisations. Just what it consists of and how it should be exercised is the subject of serious study across several disciplines. Effective leaders motivate their

followers to do what is best for the organisation. They have the ability to get followers to do work that is well beyond the minimum required of them. Leaders are expected to generate a sense of purpose that both motivates and directs followers so that they voluntarily make meaningful contributions to the organisation. The leader is a source of both guidance and inspiration.

The elements of police leadership are a vital concern to practitioners in the field. Police executives have been exhorted to recognise that leadership can be exercised at any level of the department. Haberfeld (2006, p. 3) defines police leadership as 'the ability to make a split-second decision and take control of a potentially high-voltage situation that evolves on the street'. She also asserts that line officers are 'the true leaders on the streets, using their leadership skills in daily encounters with the community, and police executives and policy makers need to realize it' (Haberfeld, 2006, p. 3).

Baker (2006, p. 41) contends that effective leadership is exercised by police managers in different ways, depending upon their rank in the department. Senior leadership should spend its time developing and sharing the vision for the organisation, charting the journey by establishing strategic objectives and practising collaboration and delegation of tasks. Police middle managers coordinate and plan, mentor and coach, build teams and empower and reward their subordinates. First-line supervisors provide leadership by example, supervising and training teams while evaluating performance.

These features stress the need to include and consider all members of the organisation as vital to a successful police leadership. Coaching and mentoring of the people doing the day-to-day work of the agency insures that the vision of the leader will be implemented and that the organisation will prosper. In addition, leadership could be more effective if managers would become

aware of the subordinates' needs and expectations.

While it is true that, in recent years, police leadership research significantly increased in volume and quality, a large number of these studies paid particular attention to the managers' characteristics, performance styles, and the challenges which leaders had/have to face when in managerial positions.

The present study proposes a shift in focus. The main objective of this exploratory analysis is to determine, through the use of the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire, what leadership behaviours are considered significant by police managers. The central question is: according to a sample of police managers, what are the behaviours of an ideal police leader?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on police managers and leadership attributes: findings from the US

The research findings from this literature are based upon surveys of officers in police training programmes. As a result, samples are non-random. In their survey of 155 police managers, Kuykendall and Unsinger (1982) found that the most common leadership style was that of a salesman. These managers reported that they worked as team managers who avoided 'risky' styles, particularly those involving delegating high-level tasks to their subordinates. Support for a more inclusive leadership style was reported by Bruns and Shuman (1988). The authors surveyed 365 law enforcement officers in 10 managerial training programmes in Arizona from 1978 to 1982 and determined that their respondents clearly supported a highly participative leadership style for police leaders. Together, these research results indicate police leadership styles appear to be influenced by the level of trust in subordinates. Leaders are unlikely to

adopt a democratic or participatory style with subordinates who they feel are untrustworthy or incompetent.

Similarly, police subordinates have also appeared to be more likely to place their faith in police leaders who have established reputations. The perceived competency of police executives influenced their leadership reputation. Krimmel and Lindemuth (2001) surveyed 205 municipal managers in Pennsylvania to determine their assessment of the performance of police chiefs under their supervision. The analysis revealed that these managers ranked the performance of police chiefs who managed a union shop, had some college credits, who were graduates of the FBI National Academy, and who were promoted from within, consistently higher than those who did not possess these attributes. Thus, what the police leaders had done in the past affected their followers' perception of their effectiveness in the future.

Research on police managers and leadership: findings from other countries

Police leadership studies from other countries reached similar conclusions regarding the preferred attributes of leaders. For example, Densten (2003) surveyed 480 Australian senior police officials concerning the effectiveness of leadership behaviours. The success of a leader's performance was a function of: leader reputation; followers' satisfaction with job performance of their leaders; impression management and image building by leaders; how dependent the followers were for direction and resources; and how dependent leaders were upon the followers' completion of activities to achieve success (Densten, p. 412). The study notes the symbiotic relationship between a leader and his or her followers as well as the perceptions of the leader that the followers hold. Perception of leadership competency was also a factor in a study of British police

by Rowe (2006). The author determined that officers respected those superiors who had direct experience of, and maintained their ties with, the street where 'real police work' was done. These credentials were the basis of the credibility of police leaders. Supervisors who moved up the ranks without such experience were viewed with suspicion and were less likely to be accepted.

There is also some evidence that police officers prefer their leaders to utilise a more humanistic style. Murphy and Drodge (2004) interviewed 28 Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on their views of police leadership. They felt that leaders must be genuinely concerned with the needs of followers. Similarly, interviews with 150 British officers revealed that they wanted leaders to make them feel proud of their work and their contributions. They also felt that effective leadership involved offering high quality service, maintaining high personal and professional standards, empowering staff, and the possession of relevant knowledge and skills. Thus, the way officers feel about how they are treated by the leader and the organisation affects both the quality of their performance and the service they provide to the community (Dobby, Anscombe, & Tuffin, 2004).

Research on police chiefs and leadership

Several police leadership studies have focused upon the attitudes of police chiefs. As the chief executive officers of their agencies, the opinions of these leaders have particular relevance. Girodo (1998) surveyed police chiefs from departments around the world and acknowledged that most leaders stated that they followed the 'Machiavellian model' that stressed the manipulation of subordinates to achieve management ends. The other leadership styles identified by the police chiefs were transformational, bureaucratic, and social contract.

Stamper (1992) surveyed 52 police chiefs and 92 of their immediate assistants from departments that served populations of at least 200,000, in 28 States. These chiefs placed a premium on sharing their vision of the future, practising openness and honesty, fostering teamwork by helping their employees get the work done and recognising excellence in performance. Externally, the chiefs promoted questioning of agency policies while working closely with the members of their community. They professed the adoption of an intuitive and creative approach to their work while taking a stand against discriminatory practices. They also felt that these leadership functions were most deserving of their time and attention on the job. However, their immediate assistants did not perceive that the behaviour of the chiefs was consistent with their expressed beliefs about leadership. They felt that the chiefs tended to be much more involved in the technical and procedural aspects of management than their leadership functions. These findings led Stamper to conclude that leadership had been 'structured out' of police administration. Devoting too much attention to management concerns had caused police chiefs to lose credibility as leaders of their organisations.

The findings of the Stamper (1992) study echo the opinions of other police management scholars. Mayo (1985, p. 411) asserts that police chiefs spend too much of their time directing the daily operations of their departments because they have little faith in the talents and loyalties of their subordinates. Archambeault and Weirman (1983) contend that the bureaucratic model of police departments results in a work environment that discourages productivity, initiative and commitment among its work-force members. It also fosters the pursuit of individual self-interest and adversarial relationships between police managers and

their employees and an impersonal work climate.

Two major studies of the opinions of police chiefs regarding leadership styles have recently been published. Fischer's (2009) interviews with 25 American police chiefs stress that police leaders must: be both honest and transparent in their dealings with their subordinates; set a good example of performance and integrity; be a change agent who moves the agency forward; support and honour the performance of their charges. They should be consensus builders and they should follow a democratic approach when leading their departments (Fischer, p. 10). Isenberg's (2010) survey of 26 American police chiefs mirrors these opinions. These chiefs also stressed the need for leaders to be optimistic role models who breed confidence in their agency and the community that it serves. They should be unafraid to set goals that involve risk (Isenberg, p. 42). They recommended the use of a leadership style that is inclusive and seeks the support of all members of the organisation (Isenberg, p. 44).

Overall, the literature on police leadership attitudes stresses the relationship between the chief and his or her followers. Both sides are influenced by the level of trust that they have in each other and their experience and talents. The bureaucratic structure of police departments was also cited as an influence on the leadership styles of police chiefs. As a group, recent studies on police chiefs clearly noted their belief in the efficacy of an inclusive and humanistic style of police leadership.

The Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire

The Ohio State leadership studies were designed to identify and describe categories of leadership behaviour. The Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was designed by the Personnel Research Board of Ohio State University (OSU). The

instrument directs respondents to describe the behaviours of leaders in any type of organisation. OSU researchers compiled 1,800 examples of leadership behaviour and then selected 150 items that appeared to be the best indicators.¹ Statistical analysis of the LBDQ with a sample of military and civilian personnel then revealed two leadership orientations (Fleishman, 1953; Halpin & Winer, 1957; Hemphill & Coons, 1957). The distinction, first presented in leadership research by Bales (1950), refers to:

1. **Worker-centred leadership** (labelled *consideration* in the OSU studies) a socio-emotional orientation, suggesting concern for morale and relationships among members. The leader expresses consideration for followers' feelings, opinions and ideas, and tries to maintain an amiable working environment. The leader tends to nurture genial relationships between workers. The aim is to foster the growth of trust between the leader and the followers.
2. **Task-centred leadership** (labelled *initiation of structure* in the OSU studies) included behaviour such as having subordinates following rules and procedures, created structure in any task-related behaviours involved in the initiation of action, the organisation and assignment of duties, and the determination of clear-cut standards of performance. Here, the leader's behaviour is focused on organising work relationships and clearly defining the leader's and subordinates' roles. The emphasis is upon establishing good communication and effective ways of completing tasks (Northouse, 2010, pp. 70–71; Yukl, 2006, pp. 51–53).

In general, research on the LBDQ has determined that both initiation of structure and consideration were important aspects of effective leadership (Eagly & Johnson,

1990, p. 236). For example, the members of 52 B-29 crews used the LBDQ to rate the performance of their leaders and their fellow crew members. They determined that the desirable attitudes among the crew members were a function of their leadership, especially regarding initiation of structure (Christner & Hemphill, 1955). Perceived consideration was also found to sponsor mutual confidence and willingness to go into combat among crew members (Christner & Hemphill). Both aspects were substantial elements in the behaviours that military subordinates preferred and deemed effective in their leaders.

Additional research examined the effect of the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics on leadership behaviour preferences. Using a sample of 1,009 respondents from three mid-western organisations, Boatwright and Forrest (2000) found that, after controlling for organisational variables, older, better educated and more experienced workers were more likely to prefer a task-centred leadership orientation, while younger, less educated, and less experienced workers tended to prefer a worker-centred leadership orientation. The authors noted that, after age and education were controlled for, female employees appeared to prefer a worker-centred leadership orientation significantly more often than male employees. Post hoc analyses revealed no significant gender differences in preferences for task-centred leadership behaviours.

METHODOLOGY

Our analysis is based on a survey of 126 police managers from 23 US States, who attended the Administrative Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute (AOC/SPI) during the academic year 2007–2008 ($N = 126$). Although respondents had managerial positions when they enrolled on the

course, they have been asked to place themselves in the position of a subordinate and select the characteristics of the leader they would like to have. The survey was conducted in the beginning of a course on leadership at the AOC/SPI.² Like the previously mentioned analyses on this subject, this study used a non-random sample. However, due to the fact that respondents typically enrolled in this course to enhance their leadership styles, the sample could also be considered a purposive or judgment sample (see Nardi, 2006, p. 119).

The LBDQ Form XII (Stogdill, 1963) was utilised in this study because it is accessible, can be easily interpreted and has been proven to be a valid and reliable measure of leadership behaviour, even when applied to modest samples. It has 100 items scored as: 1 (Never), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Occasionally), 4 (Often) and 5 (Always).³ It also has 12 subscale components that describe leadership behaviour attributes (Stodgill, pp. 4–5).

1. **Demand reconciliation:** the leader should reconcile conflicting demands and reduce disorder to the system.
2. **Role assumption:** the leader should actively exercise the leadership role rather than surrendering leadership to others.
3. **Persuasiveness:** the leader should use persuasion and argument effectively, and should exhibit strong convictions.
4. **Initiation of structure:** leaders should clearly define their role and their expectations of followers.
5. **Consideration:** the leader should be concerned with the comfort, well-being, status, and contributions of followers.
6. **Integration:** the leader should maintain a closely knit organisation and should resolve inter-member conflicts.

7. **Predictive accuracy:** the leader should exhibit foresight and ability to accurately predict future outcomes.
8. **Superior orientation:** the leader should maintain cordial and influential relations with superiors and should strive for higher status.
9. **Representation:** the leader should speak and act as the representative of the group.
10. **Tolerance of uncertainty:** the leader should be able to tolerate uncertainty and postponement without getting anxious or upset.
11. **Tolerance and freedom:** the leader should allow followers scope for initiative, decision, and action.
12. **Production emphasis:** the leader should apply pressure for productive output.

The research sample of police managers offered their assessment of these leadership behaviours.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Demographics

Table 1 presents the demographic categories for our research sample. On this basis, we conclude that our typical police manager respondent was: a white male, age 35–44, college educated, who worked in a very large, municipal police agency, above the rank of sergeant, who worked in a patrol function and was most likely to serve in law enforcement agency in one of the States (ie, AL, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA) belonging to the American South, as defined by the US Census Bureau.⁴

Survey analysis

The perceived ideal leadership behaviours of police managers

In Table 2, the following leadership behaviours were given a mean value ranking above

Table 1: Demographic characteristics (N = 126)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Age</i>		<i>Agency size/type</i>	
25–34	7.1	Very large municipal police dept	31.7
35–44	62.7	Large municipal police dept	11.9
45–54	28.6	Medium-sized municipal police dept	13.5
55–64	1.6	Small municipal police dept	15.9
<i>Gender</i>		State police	7.1
Male	88.1	Sheriff's office	17.5
Female	11.9	Other	2.4
<i>Race</i>		<i>Current assignment</i>	
White	86.5	Patrol	59.5
African American	7.9	Detective/investigative	11.9
Hispanic	3.2	Special operations	12.7
Asian	0.8	Communications	0.8
Other	1.6	Other	15.1
<i>Education</i>		<i>Current rank</i>	
High school graduate	2.4	Sergeant	46.0
Some college	27.8	Lieutenant	35.7
College graduate	34.1	Captain	13.5
Some professional/graduate school	21.4	Major	2.4
Professional/graduate school degree	14.3	Deputy sheriff	0.8
<i>Region</i>		Other	1.6
West Mountain	2.4		
West Pacific	3.2		
Midwest–West North Central	7.1		
Midwest–East North Central	14.3		
North East–Middle Atlantic	1.6		
South–West Central	3.2		
South–East Central	20.6		
South Atlantic	47.6		

four by the police manager respondents. *Demand reconciliation* registered the highest mean value ($M = 4.39$). The police manager respondents felt that ideal leaders should be able to reconcile conflicting demands and reduce disorder in the system. In addition, ideal leaders should exercise *role assumption* ($M = 4.16$) and take on the leadership role rather than leave it for others to assume. They should be *persuasive* ($M = 4.12$) and convincing in their arguments. They should clearly define their role and expectations for followers (*initiation of structure* ($M = 4.11$)). They ought to demonstrate *consideration*

($M = 4.10$) for the comfort, wellbeing, and status of followers while recognising their contributions. They should facilitate the group members' *integration* ($M = 4.08$) to the organisation. Finally, they should generate foresight and be able to predict future outcomes accurately (*predictive accuracy* ($M = 4.06$)).

Additional leadership characteristics were perceived as relatively important (mean score of about 3.5 or more). Leaders should maintain cordial and influential status with their superiors and strive for higher status (*superior orientation* ($M = 3.81$)). Leaders

Table 2: Perceived ideal leadership characteristics under the LBDQ — reliability coefficients and descriptive statistics for ILB subscales (N = 126)

Rank order	Subscale	Std. Alpha	Mean	Std. deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1	Demand reconciliation	0.7291	4.39	0.4745	2.60	5.00
2	Role assumption	0.7576	4.16	0.4855	2.40	5.00
3	Persuasiveness	0.8189	4.12	0.4612	2.60	5.00
4	Initiation of structure	0.7410	4.11	0.4071	3.10	4.90
5	Consideration	0.7481	4.10	0.4109	2.20	5.00
6	Integration	0.6737	4.08	0.5166	2.40	5.00
7	Predictive accuracy	0.6296	4.06	0.4360	3.00	5.00
8	Superior orientation	0.7046	3.81	0.3853	2.80	4.80
9	Representation	0.6592	3.75	0.4593	2.80	5.00
10	Tolerance of uncertainty	0.6451	3.74	0.4123	2.10	5.00
11	Tolerance and freedom	0.8083	3.61	0.3439	2.20	4.50
12	Production emphasis	0.6711	3.49	0.3767	2.70	4.50

should speak and act as representatives of the group (*representation* ($M = 3.75$)). Leaders should exercise a *tolerance for uncertainty* ($M = 3.74$) and postponement without getting anxious or upset. Leaders should allow followers to exercise initiative and make decisions (*tolerance and freedom* ($M = 3.74$)). The leadership behaviour that was ranked as least important was *production emphasis* ($M = 3.49$), ie, applying pressure on followers for output.

Ideal police leader characteristics by gender, race, education, and current rank

Table 3 presents the mean rankings for gender, race, education and rank. These variables did not appear significantly to influence opinions regarding the importance of these leadership characteristics. The Spearman rank correlation coefficients for each subsample were high — ranging from 0.93 for gender to 0.64 for officer rank. However, some patterns still emerge. For ten out of twelve Ideal Leader Behaviour (ILB) subscales, female police officers tend to have higher average scores than their male counterparts. Women seem to find

most of the listed leadership requirements slightly more important than males.

Police managers of colour, more than any other subgroup, consider the leader's 'emphasis on production' as the least important leadership feature ($M = 3.36$). Sergeants listed *role assumption* as the second most important leadership characteristic ($M = 4.20$) while higher-ranking police managers ($M = 3.59$) found nine other leadership traits more important. Sergeants emphasise the 'role assumption' of leaders more than officers in higher ranks. The supervisory style of sergeants has been termed 'traditional' (Engle, 2001). Sergeants may be more likely to stress this attribute because it is something that they had to do themselves when they took over as a front line supervisor, ie, assert their role as a leader.

Preferred leadership styles

Additional statistical analyses based on respondents' scores at the construct's subscales identified three leadership styles (ie, when factor analysis has been performed, three factors with Eigenvalues higher than

Table 3: Mean LBDQ subscale scores by gender, race, education and rank (N = 126)

<i>Subscale item</i>	<i>Total sample</i>	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Race</i>		<i>Education</i>		<i>Rank</i>	
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Non-white</i>	<i>College or less</i>	<i>More than college</i>	<i>Sergeant</i>	<i>Higher rank</i>
Demand reconciliation	4.39	4.36	4.60	4.37	4.48	4.35	4.46	4.35	4.42
Role assumption	4.16	4.14	4.28	4.17	4.10	4.23	4.03	4.20	3.59
Persuasiveness	4.12	4.08	4.35	4.12	4.10	4.11	4.12	4.13	4.11
Initiation of structure	4.11	4.08	4.32	4.11	4.08	4.12	4.08	4.15	4.08
Consideration	4.10	4.08	4.30	4.13	3.96	4.13	4.08	4.15	4.07
Integration	4.08	4.06	4.24	4.07	4.16	4.10	4.04	4.16	4.02
Predictive accuracy	4.06	4.05	4.11	4.04	4.12	4.06	4.04	4.04	4.07
Superior orientation	3.81	3.79	3.93	3.81	3.84	3.81	3.81	3.76	3.86
Representation	3.75	3.76	3.70	3.74	3.82	3.75	3.75	3.76	3.75
Tolerance of uncertainty	3.74	3.71	3.96	3.75	3.73	3.72	3.80	3.74	3.75
Tolerance and freedom	3.61	3.59	3.73	3.61	3.59	3.60	3.62	3.64	3.56
Production emphasis	3.49	3.50	3.41	3.51	3.36	3.51	3.45	3.47	3.51

one have been obtained). As a data reduction method we used Principal Components Analysis (PCA). The PCA results,

factor loadings for each component and reliability information for each dimension of leadership are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Leadership typology (N = 126)

	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Variance explained (%)</i>	<i>Std. Alpha</i>
<i>Transformational leadership</i>		3.135	62.71	0.813
Demand reconciliation	0.816			
Persuasion	0.828			
Role assumption	0.763			
Predictive accuracy	0.753			
Integration	0.797			
<i>Transactional leadership</i>		2.290	57.24	0.736
Representation	0.729			
Initiation of structure	0.848			
Superior orientation	0.770			
Production emphasis	0.669			
<i>Laissez-faire leadership</i>		2.034	67.78	0.759
Tolerance of freedom	0.814			
Tolerance of uncertainty	0.811			
Consideration	0.845			

PCA RESULTS: POLICE MANAGER SUPPORT FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In Table 4, the items from the LBDQ representing *demand reconciliation*, *persuasion*, *role assumption*, *predictive accuracy*, and *integration* formed the factor termed *transformational leadership* (Eigenvalue = 3.135 with 62.71 per cent of the variance explained). Here, the police manager respondents identified leadership behaviours that correspond with the elements of *transformational leadership*: ready assumption of a leadership role, creatively responding to conflicting demands with persuasive arguments to motivate followers while predicting future outcomes with accuracy and facilitating the followers' integration in the organisation.

The elements of the factor we labelled *transactional leadership* (Eigenvalue = 2.290 with 57.24 per cent of the variance explained) corresponded with the LBDQ items of *representation*, *initiation of structure*, *superior orientation* and *production emphasis*. Police manager respondents recognised the behaviour of leaders who would speak and act as a representative of the group, clearly define both their role and followers' expectations, basically looked out for their own interests and cultivated relationships with superiors and would apply pressure to secure production from their subordinates.

The final factor was labelled *laissez-faire leadership* (Eigenvalue = 2.034 with 67.78 per cent of the variance explained) corresponded with the LBDQ items *tolerance of freedom*, *tolerance of uncertainty* and *consideration*. These behaviours were listed by the police manager respondents as leaders who: would be likely to allow followers to use their own initiative, eg, determining courses of action and making decisions; were able to endure uncertainty; would care for the followers' comfort and well-being.

All three of these factors representing certain leadership styles were significantly

and positively related with the highest correlation between the transformational and the transactional leadership behaviours (Pearson's $r = 0.666$; $p < 0.001$). The lowest correlation was found between the transactional and the laissez-faire leadership behaviours (Pearson's $r = 0.322$; $p < 0.001$). The Pearson's r correlation coefficient corresponding to the bivariate relation transformational and laissez-faire leadership behaviours was 0.556 ($p < 0.001$). These moderate, but significant positive correlations suggest that preference for a particular leadership style does not exclude an orientation toward any of the other two leadership styles.

Following research models on leadership styles, we labelled the ideal attributes identified by these police managers as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (see Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993). The concepts of transformational and transactional leadership were first introduced by Burns (1978). The transformational leader creates significant change in the lives of people and organisations. This type of leader motivates followers and changes their expectations and aspirations. Unlike transactional leadership, transformational leadership is not based on a 'give and take' relationship, but on the leader's ability to change the effectiveness of the organisation. To Bass (1985, p. 20), the transformational leader: raises the consciousness of followers concerning the value of organisational goals; inspires them to put their self-interest aside for the good of the organisation, mobilising their effort to implement the changes envisioned by the leader (see also Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leader also sets a moral example and builds upon the ethical motives of the followers (Bass, 1998). This type of leader transforms the organisation through the 'Four I's' (Bass & Avolio, 1990; see also Murphy & Drodge, 2004).

1. *Idealised influence*: setting a personal example by becoming a role model (see also 'modelling the way' (Kouzes & Posner, 2007)).
2. *Inspirational motivation*: provided by setting a strategic vision for the organisation that provides a sense of purpose and direction, a context for decision-making and standards of performance to move it forward.
3. *Intellectual stimulation*: encouraging creative thinking and innovation at all levels of the organisation.
4. *Individual consideration*: coaching followers to achieve both personal as well as organisational goals.

The transformational leader uses several tools to accomplish these tasks, including selection and promotional, managerial communication, and accountability (reward and discipline) systems within the organisation.

Transformational leadership provides a contrast to two other styles. First, the transactional leader uses both contingent reward (clarification of the work that must be done and the rewards for task accomplishment) and management by exception (corrective criticism, negative feedback and negative reinforcement) to motivate followers. Second, the laissez-faire leader gives followers the freedom to act without constraints, easily tolerates unexpected outcomes and always looks out for the personal welfare of the group members. Unfortunately, this type of leader also has a tendency to delay important decisions and simply lets things go — providing no effective leadership for the organisation (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Overall, the factor analysis suggests that the attributes associated with transformational leadership comprise a preferred leadership style for these police managers (see also Murphy & Drodge, 2004). Three out of the five scales that comprise this

leadership style (demand reconciliation, persuasion, and role assumption) have the highest average scores in the overall sample suggesting that, at least partially, respondents tend to prefer this leadership style more than one of the other two.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

Multivariate analyses (Table 5) indicate that gender, race and the officer's current assignment explain approximately 14 per cent of the variance in preferences for the 'transformational' leadership style. Compared with the reference categories, women, African American officers, and those who have certain assignments (detective or special operations) are more likely to prefer a transformational leader, than, respectively, male officers, non-Black officers, and officers who are not detectives/special operations. The lower the number of years an officer has spent in the current department, the higher the likelihood that he will prefer a more structured work environment and a task-oriented leader. When controlling for the other variables in the model, race is significantly related to preferences for a transactional leadership style. Compared with the reference category that included Whites and racial minorities such as Hispanics, Asians, and others, African American officers appear to prefer the transactional and/or the transformational leadership style. From the variables used in the third regression model, gender is the only variable that accounts for a significant part (approximately 6 per cent) of the variance in preferences for the laissez-faire leadership style. When controlling for the other variables in the equation, female officers appear to prefer this leadership style significantly more often than male officers do.

Age, education, the officer's current rank, the type of agency and the regional

location of the agency do not appear to influence significantly variations in preferences for the identified ideal leadership styles. To reiterate, with respect to the typical police manager respondent, we could say that compared with women, men are less inclined to prefer a laissez-faire leadership style and have lower average scores for the leadership dimension, labelled 'transformational leadership'. When controlling for other variables in the regression models, compared with African American police officers, non-African American respondents have significantly lower average scores at both 'transformational' and 'transactional' dimensions of the leadership scale used in this study. Based on the values of the standardised regression coefficients (Table 5), compared with the other independent variables in the model, the officer's current assignment has the highest relative predictive power and influences the most (Beta = 0.326; $t = 3.521$) an orientation toward the 'transformational' leadership

style. Compared with police officers who are detectives or engage in special operations, those whose current assignment was different (eg, patrol, communications, etc) are significantly less likely to favour a transformational leadership style (ie, the average value for the transformational leadership factor is approximately one-third of a standard deviation higher for detectives/special operations officers). However, the current assignment of the officer does not influence significant inter-group differences in average scores obtained for the other two dimensions of the leadership scale (ie, transactional and laissez-faire). Although the length of tenure in the department does not influence significantly an orientation toward the transformational or the laissez-faire leadership style, when there is a one standard deviation increase in the number of years in the department, the average score for the transactional leadership style will decrease by approximately one-quarter of a standard deviation (Beta = -0.230;

Table 5: OLS standardised regression estimates for leadership style preferences (N = 126)

	<i>Transformational</i>		<i>Transactional</i>		<i>Laissez-faire</i>	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>
Age	0.010	0.093	-0.069	-0.669	0.076	0.716
Gender (female)	0.173	1.979*	0.080	0.904	0.189	2.058*
Race (African American)	0.246	2.725**	0.236	2.580**	-0.008	-0.089
Education	-0.047	-0.539	0.042	0.472	0.025	0.269
Current rank (sergeant)	-0.067	-0.694	-0.168	-1.730	0.002	0.022
Years in present department	-0.040	-0.372	-0.230	-2.100*	-0.135	-1.191
Current assignment (detective/special operations)	0.326	3.521***	0.144	1.543	0.063	0.655
Agency type (very large/large)	-0.102	-1.107	-0.156	-1.678	-0.012	-0.124
Region (South)	-0.034	-0.371	0.030	0.331	0.073	0.766
Constant		1.048		1.034		0.463
R^2	0.145		0.127		0.064	

Note:

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (2-tail test).

$t = -2.100$). With an increase in the respondent's age, there is an increase in the average scores for the transformational and the laissez-faire leadership styles and a decrease in the average scores for the transactional leadership style. The age effects, however, are not strong enough to be significant. Similarly, an increase in the respondent's education does not influence significant variations in average scores for any of the identified leadership styles. Although respondents who work in agencies located in southern US States tend to prefer more a transactional or a laissez-faire leadership style and less a transformational leadership style, when all the other variables in the regression models are held constant, they do not differ significantly in their preferences for the selected leadership styles when compared with respondents from northern, mid-western, or western US States. Non-significant inter-group differences in average scores for all three leadership factors were also obtained when sergeants (the modal category in the sample) were compared with higher-rank officers and when respondents from larger agencies were compared with respondents from smaller agencies.

Taking into account the limitations of the data set used in current analyses, the sample characteristics, and the sample size, results should, however, be cautiously interpreted.

The sample used in this analysis is not a probability sample and cannot be considered representative for the entire population of US police officers. In addition, due to the fact that this is only an exploratory analysis the sample we used was relatively small. Due to the small sample size, only a limited number of independent variables could be used in multivariate analyses affecting the explanatory power of the statistical models presented. Similarly, the sample size possibly influenced some effects that might have been significant (eg, age,

education, region, or agency type). More importantly, we cannot be sure that the magnitude of the race/gender associations with particular leadership styles was not overestimated as a result of particularly small subsamples obtained from the current data set. Future research could overcome these limitations and larger confirmatory studies could provide more reliable evidence, especially regarding the social minorities' orientations toward different leadership styles.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The police managers who participated in current research felt that ideal leaders should primarily be able to reconcile conflicting demands and reduce disorder in the system. Leaders should be persuasive, convincing, and able to set the vision for the organisation. In addition, leaders should clearly define their role and the subordinates' responsibilities, set an example and respond to the followers' expectations. They should take care of their people — integrate them into the organisation and promote their wellbeing. The selection of these characteristics is consistent with those preferred in a study of the positive attributes of effective leadership. The GLOBE study of over 17,000 respondents in 62 countries revealed that the respondents valued leaders who were problem solvers, administratively skilled, had foresight and built the confidence of their followers (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

Least important to the interviewed police managers is a 'production emphasis'. According to study respondents, leaders should only occasionally apply pressure to achieve numerical goals. The GLOBE study also determined that dictatorial and non-explicit methods were considered undesirable leadership attributes (House et al., 2004).

It may seem that the survey participants want the best of both worlds from their

ideal leaders. They want leaders to be effective and efficient. They want them to take charge but also take care of their followers. They do not wish to be pushed for production. The last attribute could be seen as an attempt to avoid working harder. It may also be true that an emphasis on production was viewed as unnecessary and irrelevant. For example, Moskos (2008) discusses an emphasis upon arrest that was a feature of management while he served in the Baltimore police department. Moskos listed several reasons why officers may have a low arrest record. They may be lazy or burned-out, or using their discretion not to arrest because they believe detaining people is a waste of time and effort. Others are afraid — their fear forming a shell around the idea that the less confrontation they have with the public, the greater their chance of a safe return home each night. They may also be fearful of complaints from the citizenry:

If you don't do nothing, you can't get into trouble. I used to go out there and bust my balls. But after you get a complaint or two, bullshit ones, you say fuck it. If this department won't defend me, assumes I'm guilty, I'm not going to do shit (Moskos, p. 146).

It is possible that such an emphasis upon making arrests is counterproductive to maintaining peace in the community. It may be that, if police leaders are looking out for the best interests of their followers, improved performance may result.

The police manager respondents identified three dimensions of preferred leadership behaviour. In our opinion, these dimensions correspond to the theoretical categories of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. The results also suggest that the survey participants favour the elements of transformational leadership as a model to follow.

Current results also suggest that gender and race could play an important role in structuring leadership preferences. However, these results must be tempered by the small subsample sizes for gender and race. Consistent with prior research (see Boatwright & Forrest, 2000), female officers do not appear to differ from men in their preferences for a predominantly task-centred and structured leadership. However, women seem to favour more than men do: (1) a type of leader that can be considered 'transformational', or (2) a more democratic, worker-oriented leader, who would allow subordinates freedom of action and would respond well to the followers' concerns. These leadership preferences appear to accord with the leadership styles mostly used by female managers in different organisations (see Eagly & Johnson, 1990). In particular, female leaders have been determined to favour an interactive leadership style (see Rosener, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1994). A meta-analysis of the differences between the leadership styles of men and women revealed that women were more likely to exercise transformational leadership and use contingent reward behaviours than men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

Compared with Whites and other racial minorities, African American police officers tend to favour more a structured task-centred leadership orientation or a leadership style described as transformational. One notable African American police chief, Burtell Jefferson of Washington DC, was known for an inclusive style and his mentoring talents (see Williams & Kellough, 2006).

Despite its limitations, this research tried to show that individual characteristics can influence not only managerial styles, but also leadership preferences. This fact might be relevant to police managers who could take into account the effect of individual factors on subordinates' perceptions and

behaviour when trying to meet the workers' leadership expectations. What this study is trying to suggest is that successful and effective leadership is hardly possible without considering the followers' perspective on leadership as well.

In particular, this analysis attempted to identify leadership preferences expressed by female and African American police officers, two social minority groups that relatively recently entered the police profession at the managerial level. Although this is only an exploratory research study, we hope it may stimulate interest in future research on police leadership issues, which would consider the effects of workers' individual characteristics on leadership preferences. Future research conducted on larger probability samples could not only test the validity of our findings, but could also provide information that police managers may find useful when trying effectively to lead subordinates who have certain socio-demographic and personality traits.

NOTES

- 1 The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire is available on line at: <https://fisher.osu.edu/offices/fiscal/lbdq/>
- 2 This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. The responses were anonymous and confidential. The questionnaire used in this investigation includes all 100 measures listed in the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire Form XII (LBDQ - Stogdill, 1963).
- 3 The 12 subscales and their average range, mean values, and standard deviations as ranked by this sample of police managers are presented in Table 2. Table 2 also includes reliability measures for each subscale forming the multidimensional index. The standardised reliability coefficient Alpha for the Ideal Leader Behaviour (ILB) scale is 0.8856 ($N = 126$).

- 4 Although this was a non-random availability sample, some of the demographic percentages for police officers are similar to those reported in a national, random sample of US police departments. The year 2000 report on Law Enforcement Management Statistics (LEMAS) found that most officers were male (89%), White (71%) and were assigned to Patrol (59%). Although the LEMAS refers to all officers in an agency and not just police managers, the percentages from both samples on these demographic variables are similar enough to assume that our availability sample is roughly representative of the background of US law enforcement agencies (Reaves & Hickman, 2004).

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