

Implicit Followership Theories In Organisational Settings and The Need to Account for Environmental Factors

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Abstract

The introduction of implicit theories into organisational studies have beckoned renewed interest in the field of leadership and followership. Implicit Followership Theories (IFTs) in particular have been linked to follower job satisfaction, performance, leader liking and leader-follower relationships. Though the study of IFTs is relatively new, it seems to be trailing behind as compared to its counterpart, Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs). This paper therefore aims to review and critique the research that has been conducted thus far on IFTs that are relevant to organisational studies, highlighting the gaps in the field that calls for fulfilling in pursuance of IFTs prominence in organisational studies. More specifically, we draw insight from focusing on environmental and contextual factors as a compelling antecedent towards the determination of IFTs. From this research, we have discovered that while this point of view is not unfamiliar, it has remained as a secondary focal point to other factors. Variations between varying environments brought by the cultural difference of nations were observed in literature where independent studies were conducted yet overlooked as a consequence of experimentation. Results obtained therefore prove a demand for explicit and extensive studies to observe the diversity of IFTs from different environmental and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Implicit Followership Theories (IFTs), Followership, Organisational Behaviour, Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs), Leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, leadership studies have gained vast recognition as the answer to organisational success thus having extensive amounts of studies conducted on this research field. On the other hand, followership has been neglected as a determining factor for organisational success as they are commonly associated with submissive behaviour; though followership development has started to gain traction in the field of organisational literature, inspiring various studies that have transformed into notable theories today. It is certain that leadership does affect organisational performance but it is important to note how leaders are nothing without their followers. In fact, Kelley (1992) has famously claimed that follower task completion accounts for a significant contribution of 80% towards organisational performance as compared to their leaders.

Many studies have sought insight from individual traits and factors to stipulate on leadership and followership characteristics, yet implicit theories have beckoned renewed interest in leadership studies as it draws insight from the cognitive perceptions of individuals based on their understanding and experience. ILTs have been heavily researched for more than 40 years since its inception by Eden and Leviatan (1975). Consequently, the inferior counterpart namely, Implicit Followership Theories (IFTs) was only conceived in the last 20 years with scant research and wide gaps to yet be filled howbeit with promising prospects owing to a spike of papers released from 2013 (Guo, 2018). The field of IFTs and ILTs have shown promising results as the universal

applicability of their frameworks that provide specificity in various aspects allows for copious expansive research in multiple directions. Implicit theories are unique in such a way that in the case of IFTs, draws information from the perceptions of individuals in the position of either leader or follower on followership traits (that may not necessarily reflect reality) and their effects on organisational outcomes including work performance, job satisfaction and reliability (Epitropaki et al., 2013). Studies conducted thus far has inferenced on various antecedents of IFTs amounting to large strides in their theoretical development. As cognitive perceptions are a cultivation of various interactions experienced over time, variation arising from different environmental factors take precedent. Most prominently, cultural differences have been proven to differ in IFT composition but such notions have been continuously overlooked as the main factor to be investigated.

As of such, this paper aims to draw focus on IFTs as an avenue to improve both leadership in the form of understanding how leader's view followers and their consequential relationships that stem from it as well as followership through the understanding of how followers view followership and how leadership may affect it. By doing so, this study aims to draw insight on reasons and criticisms as to why the topic of followership in the field of Organization and Management Theory (OMT) (Cristofaro et al., 2020) has been and still continues to be relatively neglected thorough analysis of available literature which has yet to be done. In that event, we put forth the notion to focus on the environmental and contextual factors that come into play in influencing IFTs where previously neglected for the most part.

2. BACKGROUND

The recognition of followership began with McGregor who theorized implicit theories and the effect of the follower's behaviour on the leader's ability to effectively manage his team in theory Y. However, it was only later that followership became an established body of knowledge with Robert Kelley (1992) who insinuated on the ability for followers to cultivate constructive criticisms through independent critical thinking, all the while shunning the blind sheep follower stereotype. In addition to that, exemplary followers were stipulated to possess strong team dynamics as well as effective engagement in making decisions by Kellerman (2008). While the aforementioned authors focused on traits and attributes, an alternate view was proposed by Chaleff (1995) who drew insight from a behavioural point of view, citing two critical dimensions to be considered namely, the degree to which they support their leaders, and the degree of challenge followers inflict on their leaders regarding their behaviour or role.

It has become fundamental in human beings to categorise the stimuli from their surroundings based off perceptions, giving rise to social cognition literature that elaborates on the human tendency to classify others in work environments as leader or followers (Engle & Lord, 1997). Implicit theories therefore refer to the "lay" or "naïve" theories that are present within typical everyday individuals as supposed to formally structured theories by academicians supported by rigorous research and analysis (Rosenberg & Jones, 1972).

Implicit Followership Theories stems from ILTs which was developed by Lord and associates that sprung from the notion that individuals in an organisational setting tend to make assumptions regarding the traits and behaviours that constitute an effective leader through previous experiences and socialisation processes with leaders (Lord, Foti & De Vader, 1984). The cognitive structures and perceptions thus form perceptions that drive follower's expectations and reactions pertaining to management when in a professional work space. In early literature, ILTs were exclusively analysed though in recent years, many have started to shed light on the followers' perspective (IFTs) with respect to how leaders perceive their followers as they are and how they should be, to shed light on the cognitive aspects affecting their leadership through leader-member exchange (LMX).

Thomas Sy (2010) defined IFTs as 'individuals' personal assumptions regarding the traits and behaviours that characterise followers. More specifically, what follower schemas are held by followers and/or by leaders, analysed to inference on how individuals would decide, behave and react to followers (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). While many have focused on leader's IFTs (meaning a leader's assumptions of a follower), it is important to note that the field also includes the follower's assumptions of their own characteristics and behaviours (Sy, 2010). Research has shown that follower schemas or prototypes can also differ between leaders as a study successfully demonstrated the difference between transactional and transformational leaders (Wofford & Goodwin, 1994) displaying vast areas for future research.

The implicit aspect of IFTs reflect the implicit processes at the cognitive level where perceptions are based off associations formed as they continuously identify and internalise stimuli through interactions throughout their lifetime which strengthen and eventually become automatic. Consequently, implicit processes are considered to be outside one's awareness commonly associated with impulsiveness and lack of control and therefore do not involve the observed behaviour of an individual but rather the impressions of leadership and followership (Tram-Quon, 2013). IFTs form within individuals at early stages of life through a series of socialisation processes that would develop and evolve over time as they proceed to experience more interactions with followers (Lord & Maher, 1993). Individual perceptions may therefore not reflect reality as these prototypes are formed through a process adopted to their own social experience, through a compilation of leader-follower interactions amounting to a followership prototype that exists in their personal memory (Guo, 2018).

Categorisation theory stipulates that stimulus absorbed are compared to an individual's schema within to allow for them to obtain a better understanding of the stimulus (Lord and Maher, 1993). The prototyping process thus allows for identification of potential group members commonly described as a pattern-matching process where social target characteristics or behaviours are paired with a pattern (prototype). This amounts to a category definition by the individual resulting in a sub-classification of a particular category as well as a 'pattern-completion process through which unobserved but prototypical traits and behaviours are also associated with the categorised individual' (Shondrick, Dinh, and Lord 2010) termed as recognition-based processing. Taking the followers into context of the categorisation process, the process evolves into "Recognition-Based Follower Categorisation Theory", put forth by Shondrick and Lord (2010). By doing so, IFT prototypes are therefore influential in leader-follower context as leaders would benchmark their followers, judge and respond accordingly.

Various organisational factors that affect employees (followers) including promotion decisions, bonuses, and performance are often influenced by employee ratings. Therefore, IFTs poses as a methodological method to tap into the rater's mind as studies have displayed a 62% in variation in appraisals that are attributed to implicit person theories (Atkins and Wood, 2006) rather than the actual behaviour of the individual in question. Additionally, followers have been demonstrated to strive towards fulfilling the prototype that their leaders have of them (Eden, 1992) thus leadership can be thought to be the process of shaping and transforming their followers to increase overall performance (Lord and Brown, 2004).

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to critically review the available literature on to IFTs pertaining to the body of management studies to highlight the gaps in knowledge. Information shall be gathered via the Queen Mary University of London library using a search string of key words such as "implicit followership theories" in management journals for the majority of paper except where relevant. The analysis would begin with the gathering of existing theoretical models available to frame the information gathered. IFTs would then be analysed with respect to individual prototypes that have been discovered thus far which would be reviewed explicitly from both the leader and

follower perspective and their relationships. Additionally, the methodologies used to examine and categorise IFTs would be investigated with respect to direct and indirect methods.

Through preliminary research the following environmental factors have been identified and shall be critically discussed within the confines of this paper which includes: parental figures, organisational background, age and gender discrimination, and cultural differences. As the IFT techniques provides flexibility in forming various prototypes suitable to the designated environment, this paper seeks to delve into studies performed on varying nations where only the most significant prototypes would be included due to the constraints of length. The interplay between the discussed factors would be touched on as well.

The strengths and pitfalls of IFTs would then be critiqued and discrepancies would be brought forward. Finally, suggestions and recommendations for future research and possibilities shall be made according to the results of outcome.

4. THE CURRENT STUDY

While the introduction of IFTs to the realm of organisational literature has renewed the interest of scholars, as Junker and Van Dick (2014) discovered, there is no study to date that demonstrates effective prototypes that are directly contributory in predicting organisational performance, highlighting the lack of supporting data regarding the true usefulness of utilising IFTs for performance enhancement. Though many have speculated on the benefits of understanding the implicit prototypes that are prevalent in leaders and followers, the field is still too premature to provide any substantial and directly applicable framework or processes to grow and expand as a notable field of organisational theory. Many have put out claims stating the significance of their work and how beneficial the results could be, albeit only if expansive research is conducted on it. Therefore, this paper aims to critically discuss the factors that have hindered the widespread adoption of IFTs.

4.1 Theories

Social categorisation theory has garnered the most attention when discussing implicit theories being the earliest of theoretical models, which states that followers are categorised through a recognition-based process followed by a pattern-completion process which involves individuals making assumptions based off their individual cognitive IFTs (Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010). In kind, individuals are able to effectively respond to situations of limited information through the use of pre-existing schemas thereby reducing the use of information processing resources to a satisfactory level (Epitropaki et al., 2013). According to the categorisation model, cognitive structures are cultivated through socialisation processes overtime, which are then used in the matching process. In the situation of receiving favourable or unfavourable treatment, the recipient responds accordingly thereby solidifying the actor's beliefs (Chen & Bargh, 1997). The evaluation method has therefore received the most attention and recognition, contributing to its extensive use throughout the field, strongly supported by the cultivation and widespread use of prototypes in the study of IFTs as a practical model for processing information.

Prototyping has provided a foundation for the study of IFTs, critical to regulate and organise the field from an early stage; defined as 'abstract composites of the most representative member or the most commonly shared attributes of a particular category' otherwise known as cognitive structures (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004) that can vary between individuals. More specifically, prototypes can be categorised under two dimensions namely, norm and valance of prototypes. The norm of prototype involves two categories that is 'ideal' which involves idealistic traits that would constitute the best possible individual, and 'typical' which represents the more realistic and usual traits observed by followers/leaders. On the other hand, the valance of prototypes entails the positive and negative prototypes which involves the effective or unfavourable traits respectively. It is important to note that 'positive' and 'prototypic' as well as 'negative' and 'anti-

prototypic' may be used interchangeably as several authors have (Sy, 2010). Junker and Van Dick (2014) introduced another category involving neutral attributes to both dimensions which do not add value to the categorisation, all the while claiming that research has fallen short in measuring and analysing the effects of the negative prototypes. According to Sy, the supporting factors of IFTs consist of enthusiasm, industry and good citizenship (prototypical) as well as insubordination, conformity and incompetence (anti-prototypical) (2010) and was tested to be applicable on all hierarchical levels, job scopes, and span of control (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

Recent perspectives have attempted to decipher the complexity of the leader-follower relationship such that they are dynamic in state, according to the connectionist model (Hanges et al., 2000, Lord and Shondrick, 2011). The introduction of said model comes as an extension to the categorisation theory, delving deeper into the influences by focusing on the schema activation process. The process involves the combination of top-down constraints and bottom-up inputs which triggers multiple nodes of the prototype network thus allowing the perspective of viewing IFTs as well as ILTs in a non-static manner as changes could take place from an organisational, relational or individual standpoint (Foti et al., 2017). Connectionist networks can be described as a continuous integration of information through networks of processing units which produces a conclusive response in the form of activation or inhibition through output units (Lord et al., 2001). Perceptions of followership may therefore be context specific and fluid while maintaining a coherent and considerable consistency (Foti, Knee & Backert, 2008, Sy, 2010) rather than to be locked in time and space.

Falling under the connectionist model, attachment theory facilitates a deeper understanding of implicit theories and how they may operate as it provides an empirically based model to investigate the relationship between the nature of interactions of an adolescent with their primary caregiver and their cognitive representation of others in an organisational setting as they mature (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Schema transference acts as a fundamental principle in the attachment theory as the authors propose that existing cognitive representations of individuals in a particular interaction is brought forward to new interactions as well (Andersen and Cole, 1990). However, studies investigating attachment style as an antecedent of IFTs specifically are lacking as compared to that of ILTs. That has changed recently with the exploratory study on leaders' attachment style influence on IFTs (Thompson, Glaso & Matthiesen, 2018). A proposition was therefore brought forward that both avoidant and anxious attachment styles is positively correlated with negative IFTs (more so in avoidant leaders) indicating that leaders that are more securely attached have tendencies to hold more favourable IFTs. The study also supported the influence of early life experiences in forming IFTs.

While not directly referencing IFTs, McGregor's (1960) theory is worth mentioning as one of the earliest theories to highlight followership behaviours and the effects of leadership perceptions on employees. The theory dictates a rather oversimplified outlook on employee behaviour involving Theory X which denotes a highly pessimistic view on employees' perception towards work, prioritising physiological needs and safety needs. On the other hand, Theory Y exhibits a more optimistic perception on employee behaviour that is driven by social, esteem and self-actualization needs. The simplified framework has paved the way for copious studies solidifying its relevance in the realm of followership, still retaining its relevance 60 years after its inception. However, McGregor faced ample criticism stating that the theory was never tested prior to publishing and that while useful for a basic explanation of behavioural traits, in practice would be doomed for failure; especially in today's reality where work-life balance has become a growing priority, certain factors may no longer be suitable to categorise ideal followership traits.

4.2 Dual Perspectives: Leaders' and Followers' IFTs

Through a simple manipulation of leaders' performance expectations has been proven to affect their followers' behaviours in such a way that positive manipulation has led to improvements in follower performance known as the Pygmalion effect (Eden, 1992) and a negative manipulation

has led to decrease in follower performance known as the Golem effect (Leung & Sy, 2018). The Pygmalion effect, a self-prophecy has been well substantiated. However, results obtained were a result of forced manipulation of said leaders' expectations, negating the true phenomena of naturally occurring expectations in organisational settings that routinely occur. Nonetheless, through the emergence of IFTs, studies on expectation effects in organisations have fallen under the category of leaders' IFTs being a key driver of the Pygmalion effect.

Leaders' IFTs refer to the leaders' perception of follower prototypes which can draw insight on their individual management style LMX as well as their attitude towards employees and their performance expectations. Duong's (2011) research has further informed that positive leaders' followership prototypes promote transformational leadership. Various research has articulated that leaders' IFTs are correlated with LMX, followers' leader preference (Sy, 2010), performance fulfilment (Whiteley, Sy and Johnson, 2012), work satisfaction, organisational commitment, work behaviours and organisational citizenship behaviour (Duong, 2011). In theory, leaders who possess more positive IFTs should have followers with generally better outcomes which is in line with the Theory X and Theory Y developed by McGregor (1960). The LMX and their overall relationship can be thought to be influenced by the prototypical match between the leader and follower meaning that a leader who perceives their followers to be enthusiastic and reliable would have a better relationship or higher LMX with followers who demonstrate these traits as compared to those who do not (Kedharnath, 2011).

Followers' IFTs are the followers' perception of follower prototypes which elaborates on their work behaviours and attitudes as a subordinate in an organisational setting (Lord et al., 1984). While leaders' IFTs draws on how they treat their followers, followers' IFTs elaborates on an individual's followership behaviour (Guo, 2018). This is due to the fact that as an organisation evolves over time, followers who also persist over time tend to fabricate the status quo of the follower modality within the organisation. In fact, Carsten et al. (2010) discussed the implicit follower prototypes influence on followers' attitudes and behaviours in an organisational setting. The study revealed the effects of passive and active followership prototypes as individuals who possess the latter are more proactive in their work, responsible, provide positive feedback to motivate leaders and also challenge their leader's decisions. Individuals who possess the passive prototypes on the other hand are lacking in motivation and responsibility as they prefer to be instructed by others. Additionally, the nature of the organisation and the work that is required within influences the prevalence of passive or active followers where more turbulent and dynamic businesses tend to contain more active followers and follower prototypes as compared to a stable and stagnating business.

4.3 Measurement Methods in the field

Direct measurement methods are often utilised within the field due to the simplicity and efficiency that is associated with the method. Particularly when observing implicit theories however, indirect measures may be more representative of the situation as they are designed to avert the conscious levels of information processing in line with the 'implicit' nature of IFTs. Practically speaking, direct measures still greatly outweigh the speculated associated inaccuracies therefore being used to gather preliminary information that would then be tested in-depth and expanded through indirect measures. Contrarily, studies have shown in several situations, neither measure is more dominant in predicting outcomes of behaviours (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

4.3.1 Direct Measurement Method

The Trait List by Thomas Sy (2010) revealed a 6-factor model of IFTs which involved 'conformity', 'insubordination', 'incompetence', 'industry', 'enthusiasm' and 'good citizen' to represent the typical follower image. Sy further developed a method involving a second-order two-factor model taking loading the former 3 factors onto 'anti-prototypic follower' and the latter three onto the 'prototypic follower'. Their corresponding first-order factors reduced into 3 representing variables

according to their synonymic terms that have varying factor loadings (2010). Of which the individual typical followership prototypes are represented by 'industry' - hardworking, productive, and goes above and beyond; 'enthusiasm' - excited, outgoing, and happy; 'good citizen' - loyal, reliable, and team player. The anti-prototypic factors are represented by 'conformity' - easily influenced, follows trends, and soft spoken; 'insubordination' - arrogant, rude, and bad tempered; 'incompetence' - uneducated, slow, and inexperienced. The study revealed the positive correlation of prototypic followership with leader liking, job satisfaction, as well as leader-member exchange (2010) and that IFTs are stable over time from a contextual standpoint.

In another empirical study, Carsten et al. (2010) justified the structure, content and validity of IFTs while revealing that the traits pertaining to followers fall within a continuum of proactive to passive characteristics; of which ranging from obedient, deferent, flexible and low responsibility falling on the side of passive behaviours followed by sense of ownership, outspoken and teamwork completing the continuum with behaviours of proactive followership (Epitropaki et al., 2013). Though as the traits mentioned are highly similar to that of Sy's study.

Sy's method has brought tremendous insight to the field of IFT studies, equipping researchers alike with a tool for generalisation and comparability among the studies conducted thus far. However, Junker et al. (2016) challenged the industry with the Task & Relationship rubric stating the lack of prototypes that go beyond effective followers as well as the explicit measurement of counter-ideal prototypes thus developing an alternative method in response to those claims. Ideal followers are a depiction of individuals who are the most suitable in achieving a specific goal. Therefore, followers may be perceived to be ideal on the measure of effectiveness alone. On the contrary, this paper brought forward the notion of effectiveness simply being a subtype of a broader ideal prototype whilst introducing a second subtype involving characteristics of building good relationships in line with the notion made by Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke and Van Knippenberg (2009) that IFTs are only partially encompassed by effectiveness prototypes ergo unequitable with these broader theories. The conceptualisation of a distinct counter-ideal scale was out of necessity as while the average person may think otherwise, ideals and counter-ideals are not part of the same scale of opposite ends, supported by similar research conducted on ILTs (Junker et al., 2011).

As a result, an item set comprised of 21 attributes was conceived. The two previously mentioned subtypes were characterised as 'task' (abilities, motivation and enthusiasm attributable to task mastery) and 'relationship' (individuals' tendency to prioritise other's needs, teamwork and team communication) orientation. Similar to that of Sy's (2010) method that contains two orders to their scale, the attributes were loaded onto four dimensions namely, 'ideal relationship-orientation', 'ideal task-orientation', 'counter-ideal relationship-orientation' and 'counter-ideal task-orientation'. The higher order scale comprises of the former two dimensions loading onto 'ideal follower' while the latter two loaded onto 'counter-ideal follower'. The 21 attributes were segregated to fit the four-factor scale as follows: 'ideal relationship-orientation' – team-minded, communicative, and creative; 'ideal task-orientation' – educated, thinking ahead, intelligent, determined, assumes responsibility, engaged, interested, cooperative, and conscientious; 'counter-ideal relationship-orientation' – indifferent, irritable, malicious, uncooperative, rude, insubordinate, and aggressive; 'counter-ideal task-orientation' – passive and incompetent.

An alternative adaptation to the Theory X and Theory Y model is a scale by Kopelman et al. (2012) which focuses on 3 main positive attributes namely 'industrious', 'capable' and 'trustworthy', as well as 3 main negative attributes which are 'lazy', 'incapable' and 'untrustworthy'. These attributes are accompanied by 4 sub-attributes which indicate circumstantial perceptions towards work that vary in weightage to the scoring rubric. While this model makes the assumption that a positive follower is more self-driven, active and motivated which are congruent with other measures, the negative sub attributes highlight a more passive

perception towards work rather than malicious behaviour which have been more of the overall theme in other measures.

The discussion of ideal prototypes brings into question a whole other realm of possibilities due to the varying circumstances that arise from taking into account typical or ideal comparisons. It is such that when comparing followers with typical prototypes, deductions pertain to how comparable the follower would be against the average; whereas, when being compared to ideal prototypes, followers would be measured on how well they will perform against the best possible follower.

4.3.2 Indirect Measurement Method

Despite studies stating the lack of indifference between direct and indirect measures, the failure to incorporate indirect measures creates a divide between theory and methods when trying to predict implicit variables through conscious deduction such as self-reporting systems, possibly amounting to biased results. As such, Uhlmann et al., (2012) has developed a 'toolkit' for organisational field involving a functional taxonomy of implicit measures comprising of accessibility, association and interpretation-based measures.

Accessibility-based measures involve the degree of spontaneous activation of a target concept within an individuals' mind (Epitropaki et al., 2013). From the standpoint of IFTs, a priming method has been used to elicit positive IFTs in efforts to observe the influence on corresponding behaviours demonstrating the influence of positive IFTs on improved leader-follower relationship, performance, and liking (Sy, 2011; Whiteley, 2012).

Associated-based measures assess an individual's categorisation reaction to rapid stimuli to demonstrate the relations of multiple concepts to cognitive schemas. Of which Tram-Quon (2013) proposed the Single-target IAT as an indirect measure of IFTs through evaluating a person's associative evaluative association with followers' concepts and attributes along with the timeliness of said response. Though the author stated that the method requires improvements before it can be validly applicable in studies.

Theoretically speaking, indirect measures have promising possibilities for IFTs but to date have rarely prevailed in studies due to the difficulty and subjectivity in interpretation of indirect measures. Therefore, until new or improved methods are developed, the field have little choice but to continually adhere to the direct measures available.

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4.4 Outcomes

The cause and effect of IFTs have been discussed throughout though this section is aimed at discussing from the point of view of the end result, as supposed to the previous sections which analyse the front-end aspects. IFTs have been widely recognised as contributors to job satisfaction, LMX, and performance ratings to name a few.

The notion that leaders in general do not necessarily treat all subordinates equally gave rise to Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory where the interaction falls on a range from low to high (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997); high LMX referring to good relationships built on mutual respect, trust, and support to name a few (Uhl-Bien, Graen, and Scandura, 2000) and low LMX are relationships of lower quality where the leader pays little attention and resources to the individual (Lai, Chow & Loi, 2016). The variation in interaction is

due to time and resource constraints that pushes the leader to form a unique dyadic relationship between them and individual followers.

Few studies have highlighted IFTs influence on LMX including Sy (2010) who displayed the leaders' prototypical IFTs were positively linked to follower liking for leaders, relationship quality, and trust which are also negatively linked to anti-prototypic traits. On the other end, leaders' prototypical IFTs were also positively linked with leader outcomes of liking and relationship quality with their followers, like wise negatively linked to anti-prototypical leaders' IFTs. Junker et al. (2016) also provided similar results for ideal IFTs which related to higher LMX, performance ratings and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Early LMX research has hinged on the belief that relationships are experienced similarly by both parties yet meta-analysis has discovered a variation in ratings by leaders and followers on said relationship (Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson, 2009). Hence the focus grew on LMX agreement (and disagreements) which represents the similarity of follower and leader perceptions on quality of their LMX relationship where Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, and Van Knippenberg (2009) presents a dyadic model which outlines and explains the LMX quality ratings by leaders' and followers' and why LMX disagreement may arise. Of which, the study revealed that the LMX quality is dependent on the perceptions held of the other parties contribution as well as their own contributions, interpreted by the matching of ILTs and IFTs to leaders and followers as their currency of exchange. Such congruency are therefore vital in determining their relationship qualities.

Expanding on that, the congruence of leaders' and followers' perceptions would amount to a higher LMX ergo improved leader-follower relationship as such congruency allows for both parties to base their behaviours on the same scale and to interpret each other's actions accordingly Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, and Van Knippenberg (2009), Sy (2013) and Tram-Quon (2013) later discovered that the relationship quality is also improved when both leaders and followers hold more positive IFTs, solidifying the notion. An interesting point brought forward by Van Quaquebeke and Brodbeck (2008) involves the idiosyncrasy of implicit theories following the assumption that IFTs (and ILTs) are formed through a collective socialisation process and individual experiences; unless both leader and follower have walked similar paths through life, perfect congruence of IFTs and ILTs and therefore perfect LMX agreement is particularly unlikely.

Tsai et al. (2017) initiated an in-depth understanding of relational schemas involving two types of schemas, namely expressive relational schemas (ERS) and instrumental relational schemas (IRS); the former relating to social support and the latter to short-term economical exchanges. According to their study, positive follower-rated LMX was related to ERS congruence while negative LMX was related to both incongruence and congruence of IRS. Results therefore suggest that leaders as well as followers who internalise short-term economical exchanges mostly as their schemas of work relationships would mostly likely abstain from spending time and energy to form high quality interactions in an organisational setting (Foti et al., 2017).

Goswami, In Park and Beehr (2020) more recently solidified the notion of the relevance of congruency of ILTs and IFTs for positive outcomes through a practical investigation. The results showed the strong relevance of congruence for improved LMX in addition to overall improvement in organisational citizenship behaviour and in-role performance. While the study is the first of its kind, the recommendation put forth to conduct trainings for both leaders and followers on how IFTs relate to actual followers and their interchangeable relationship is highly warranted with the backing of predeceasing studies.

Leader's perception on actual followers have always been assumed to align with their IFTs. Congruence in this context refers to the extent the implicit theories are similar between leaders and followers. In the field of ILTs, the congruency between the leader and the leader schema in

question affects their follower judgements and perceptions about a leader. ILTs and IFTs are two sides of the same coin thus the same can be said for followers (Van Quaquebeke, Van Knippenberg, and Brodbeck, 2011; Lord et al., 1984). The core of the mutual influence process involves the degree of interpersonal congruence in leaders' and followers' implicit theories (Coyle and Foti, 2015, Engle and Lord, 1997) straying from the traditional view that leaders' behaviours influences their followers' behaviours in a unidirectional manner. It is such that Lord and Maher (1993) provided a theoretical framework to interpret the effects on IFTs and ILTs on their dyadic relationship albeit from a leader-centric standpoint.

Several studies have already explored the relationship between IFTs and positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance projections, and LMX to name a few (Whiteley et al., 2012). However, the assumption that congruence has already been achieved poses a threat to the degree of validity of their results.

Goswami, In Park and Beehr (2020), as previously mentioned was the first to test the congruence between IFTs, perceived behaviours and actual behavioural outcomes, shedding light on a heavily assumed factor that is pivotal in IFTs. The study established that the congruence of positive perceptions of actual followers as well as IFTs are positively correlated to follower performance. Previously, IFTs only focused on positive traits through the recognition of negative traits have been recently introduced into the field as it advances. However, the recognition of negative antecedents such as intense supervision, counterproductive work behaviours and excessive power exertion, are scarcely investigated (Goswami, In Park and Beehr, 2020) which could be more insightful overall as individuals tend to have stronger actions and effects when negative emotions are involved pertaining to a wide range of issues, generally speaking (Baumeister et al., 2001) as when compared to that of positive emotions. Taking into account the negative traits, the congruency applies to the situation as well as high amounts of negative experiences with employees as well as IFTs are positively correlated with lower performance levels and high counterproductive work behaviours.

Active mentoring has long been a notable theme in ethical stewardship of organisational behaviour (Allen et al., 2017). However, the role of IFTs in bridging the gap between positive leadership and active mentoring have not been discussed as of late despite the gap of knowledge in why some leaders are more proactive in mentoring than others. More recently, active mentoring has been highlighted by Yip and Walker (2021) as a notable outcome of positive leader's IFTs. The study successfully identified and demonstrated 2 pathways of mentoring from leader's social cognition namely, leader integrity and relational engagement by focusing more on the physiological antecedents rather than the consequential outcomes.

5. RELEVANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN IFTS

From the current body of knowledge, the influence of environmental factors in creating divergent IFTs have been highlighted repeatedly. Of which, the most apparent differentiation observed was between the operationalised methods to measure IFTs. It was reported by Junker et al. (2016) that discrepancies in the item set generated to formulate their scales were apparent when compared to that of Sy's (2010) trait list. As these scales were put forth for widespread use within the field of IFTs, this brings into question the validity of each scale for general use. It is such that the concern of leaving out or undermining specific traits that may be relevant to different environments may cause inaccuracies in the results obtained. Therefore, this section is aimed at discussing the various environmental factors that have been substantiated thus far while analysing and identifying the gaps in existing literature.

5.1 Parental Figures and Early Childhood

Cognitive structures form and evolve through the continuous interaction with environments both internal and external as stated above that implicit followership theories form through internalisation of stimuli. Furthermore, the family environment is crucial in forming an individual's implicit cognitive aspects from an early stage, where irritant events could be attributed to a variability in implicit cognitions to others. This is due to the fact that parental figures can be thought of as leaders in their family, posing as their first interaction with a 'leader' as a follower. Parent-child interactions and parental rearing therefore heavily influence what individuals would proceed to view as leadership and followership traits in an organisational setting as Keller (1999) stipulated.

To that end, IFTs can be manipulated to comprise of specific notions from an early age to cultivate an individual with specific beliefs later in life, barring any substantial events. Notably, a study revealed parental rearing patterns that veer on the side of authoritative and bureaucracy tend to result in a negative followership prototype instilled into their offspring whereas a more democratic parenting style have a higher tendency to translated into positive followership prototype due to the sense of empowerment and cooperation involved (Guo, 2018). An argument to be had is that the negative actions of parental figures in early life could affect individuals to both extremes such that, if they adopt the realisation that the parent-child relationship is bad may result in ideal IFTs to veer on a more positive note such as to be more outspoken or interactive, or if they relive that relationship to be representative of reality that their ideal IFTs would veer on a more bureaucratic note as previously mentioned.

Such results does call for the industry to investigate further on the early childhood influence on IFT formulation that could draw focus on improving the lifestyle choices of new parents to take into account the communication skills or perhaps to allow for an enlightened selection process of candidate employees when hiring that treats rearing styles as an antecedent to selecting individuals with positive IFTs to facilitate improved LMX.

5.2 Organisational Background

The generalizability across various settings have always been presumed in the grand scheme of things however accompanied with empirical backings in recent years to validate the assumption. Several have displayed the lack of systemic differentiation between individuals of different backgrounds namely, students and employees (e.g. Junker et al., 2016). However some theorists have proposed that a variation in IFTs may occur according to the organisational climate with Guo (2018) stating that individuals within an organisation that deals with a turbulent marketplace may endorse good citizenship and innovative behaviours, as well as Epitropaki et al. (2016) highlighting the distinguishable IFTs between hierarchical levels of individual, group, and company. Indeed education levels have also served as a determinant in IFT endorsement variation (Sy, 2010) though the effect size was small.

Every result obtained thus far require replication to substantiate the results and are confined to a specific group of individuals. As previously mentioned, the notion that variations may arise under varying organisational climates may be a fruitful avenue for future exploratory research adding to the vast insights on not only varying nations and regions but also industries. Per contra, several studies have utilised samples across different organisational backgrounds to obtain a representable result that covers a wide spectrum. However, the averaging negated the distinct differences that may have potentially arisen from different backgrounds potentially with different traits having different factor loadings. This may in turn provide higher confidence (or lack thereof) of the universal methods that are employed currently as antecedents that may be specifically prevalent in other regions and organisational climates may very well be overlooked if such effects are not to be discussed.

5.3 Gender and Age Discrimination

It is widely known that women have been vastly overlooked and underrepresented when being considered for leadership positions in society and organisational settings alike. Women have been faulted with having a lower power motivation on average than that of men (Hernandez Bark et al., 2016), lacking the characteristics to fit the image of a typical leader (Heilman, 2012), and failure of female leaders to support and transfer success to other women striving towards achieving higher positions (Derks, Van Laar, and Ellemers, 2016) as factors that constitute such biases. It is such that women have been more strongly associated with follower positions as a conclusion of said incongruence with leadership positions though most western countries today have begun to promote gender equality in the workplace.

The truth being that limited research regarding the follower role with respect to women have been conducted thus far. Recently, Braun et al. (2017) filled the gap of knowledge revealing the explicit gender bias in IFTs. While more ideal characteristics in both task and person oriented activities were associated more so with typical female followers than that of male followers, participants within the study also disclosed more positive IFTs when describing typical female followers and less counter-ideal characteristics, independent of participants' gender. Men on the other hand were significantly rated higher in counter-ideal person-orientation though counter-ideal tasks were indifferent. Moreover, a second test utilising indirect measures within the study revealed a stronger implicit association of women with ideal followers and less so with counter-ideal followers than that of men but only in female participants. Accordingly, the results highlighted the effect of women adhering to their congruent social role (Eagly and Karau, 2002) as it demonstrated the push effect of keeping women from leadership positions but also a pull effect towards followership thus confined by not only a 'glass ceiling' but also a 'sticky floor' (Braun et al., 2017).

Several authors have revealed that the follower age are influential towards the IFT fit as the elder employee fits IFTs less than that of younger employees (Gordon and Arvey, 2004; Krings, Sczesny and Kluge, 2011). Despite its illegal nature in various countries, age discrimination in the workplace has prevailed overtime (Gordon and Arvey, 2004). The age bias can be attributed to the negative IFTs associated with elders such as low cooperation, lack of flexibility, lagging in new developments, low creativity, more passive and risk averse (McGregor and Gray, 2002) despite having no objective relationship between productivity and age. Subsidiary information from studies partially supports the age bias claims as individuals describe ideal employees as industrious and enthusiastic contrary to that of older employees who are perceived to have lower physical capabilities and lower motivation (Junker and Van Dick, 2014). However, a contradiction arises that while experience, being the most valued characteristic of working individuals correlate positively with age, older workers are also perceived negatively pass a certain age point. In that sense, there exists only a small window by which an individual would be preferred when both experience and maturity converge.

The bias may be counterproductive to a certain extent as loyalty and reliability which are commonly associated with positive IFTs, are also positively correlated with perceptions of older employees (Kite et al., 2005). Limited as may be, validation through experimentation has yet to be achieved with regards to IFTs specifically as based on the available research, the biases could contribute to lower LMX and job satisfaction consequential of the biased perceptions rather than their actual actions. An important implication on reducing the age bias arises from the aging population that is occurring across the globe forcing individuals from different generations to compete for the same jobs or work together. Additionally, while women have been previously presumed to adhere to the housewife and contribute in terms of household activities, the increasing cost of living in general has prompted women to financially contribute by entering the workforce. Today, women have strayed far from that stereotype proving the equal competencies to men in various fields and improving their national economy. Therefore, while the prototypical

biases that are associated with women causes for missed opportunities and discouragement, it could thus detrimentally affect the organisational performance and the economy.

More studies should be conducted as a result to substantiate negative effects of age and gender biased IFTs which could translate into training initiatives and early education. IFTs may therefore aid in drawing insight on the perceptions that gives rise to age and gender biases which may be utilised to curb the occurrence. As we approach the age of a multigenerational and gender-neutral workforce, trainings and workshops could be developed in accordance to said insights as to reduce the negative effects.

5.4 Cultural Differences

As we have previously stated the influence of early childhood environments and in the construction and development of IFTs, the difference in cultures across the globe cannot be neglected as a varying factor in the study of IFTs. Most studies have only been conducted with regards to the western hemisphere, particularly in the United States of America and Germany. Culturally speaking, the divide of cultural norms and habits between the eastern and the western countries are significant thus, unavoidable in the present discussion. From a general standpoint, ideal followers are thought to display respect for authority, loyalty and devotion in the eastern countries as a reflection of the strong culture of respect for others. However, the respect that is emphasized in eastern countries, alongside obedience are thought to be negative follower traits in western countries, as discovered by Hopton, Christie and Barling (2012). Indeed, an exploratory cross-cultural study by Dunham and Holzinger, (2006) displayed the influence of cultural difference on the construction of an individual's IFTs. Moreover, the generalisation of the typologies in Asian countries are reduced to those that represent the drivers of the eastern economy, namely China, India and Japan whilst ignoring the vast variation in cultures across the rest of the region, particularly in Southeast Asia alone. Especially in Asian countries such as China and in Southeast Asia, leader and follower power imbalance is more significant than that of the western hemisphere as leaders are expected to take more responsibility, decision-making and risk but also that the cultural values emphasize on the social strata in political and business circles to achieve business objectives (Lawrence, 2017).

A notable study in particular involved an exploratory study of follower prototypes in Asia and South America by Holzinger and Dunham (2006) during the early years of implicit and prototypical studies of followership. The exploration revealed that even then, sparse information were available on followership characteristics outside USA and have gathered implied traits in prior texts including loyal, submissive, conforming to hierarchy, conflict avoidant, understanding and focused on collective goals for Asian followers while Latin American followers were implied to be trusting, loyal, deferent, and group orientated. However, results from interviews of several individuals from Asia and Latin America revealed differences. Particularly, Argentinian individuals emphasised the right to supply critical input as a follower while Brazilians preferred less assertive followers with good communication, and Mexican individuals idealise respect and authority, showing vast differences across the Latin American region alone. Interviews conducted on individuals from Malaysia, China and Thailand on the other hand showed high congruency among one another similar to the previously stated values excluding submission and conflict avoidant. Per contra, the results were a reflection of a small sample size collected more than a decade ago. With the turbulent nature of the economies of the countries in focus, results may vary accordingly prompting more prominent studies to be conducted on the claims.

Drawing from the results gathered, cultural differences have been the most promising in displaying differences that may arise. While results gathered may merely be at the tip of the iceberg seeing that the previously mentioned factors could also tie into different cultures; age discrimination could prevail more so in countries that display a more autocratic leader-follower relationship or are in a developing state as compared to more open and developed regions.

Gender gaps in the workforce have been substantially documented to be more prevalent in certain regions reported in Global Gender Gap Index Report (2018) where IFTs could serve as a contributory factor in its emergence. IFTs in different organisational backgrounds have also been substantiated but could potentially differ in varying countries in the same industry. Cultures which align age with hierarchy may very well give rise to varying results in IFTs as well. Various combination of contexts could potentially conjure different IFTs which therefore emphasises the relevance of the field in question and beckons for more studies to be conducted.

Results obtained from the culmination of scales that operationalize IFTs alone have already brought forward discrepancies. Junker et al.'s (2016) scale that involved participants located in Germany showed considerable variation in weightage and composition when measuring typical follower traits in study 2 to test the ability to distinguish between typical and ideal followers, when compared to the predated method by Thomas Sy (2010) which took into account participants from USA to measure typical follower traits. Kopelman (2012), while not directly referring to IFTs, developed a modernized adaptation of Kopelman et al. (2008) to form the 24-factor scale to assess Theory X and Theory Y assumptions of employee behaviour; whether they were industrious or lazy, capable or incapable/useful, and trustworthy or untrustworthy. While Sy's interpretation draws more on behavioural traits (e.g. arrogant, loyal), Kopelman focuses more on task oriented traits (e.g. lazy and do not want to work, trustworthy) presenting some discrepancies on what are deemed as favourable traits.

More recently, Mohamadzadeh, Mortazavi, Lagzian and Rahimnia (2015) conducted an exploratory study on followers' IFTs in Mashhad, Iran illuminating the field on possible variability between countries, measured against the existing results from USA and Germany. The researchers employed a qualitative method in efforts to build themes from participants' views along with a notable sampling method, having a wide spectrum of followers from various public organisations of varying backgrounds and different at different organisational levels to fulfil the broad spectrum of Mashhad's employees. Of which, 5 major prototypes were codified pertaining to 21 positive characteristics and an anti-prototype with 5 characteristics of role deviances; the prototypical categories namely, constructive perception of work, mighty arm of leader, job competencies, moral virtues and initiation.

Variations observed from USA, Germany and Mashhad, Iran calls for individual scales to be developed with respect to the country of study. Though a large overlap of traits can be observed, certain traits may be omitted as a result of a general scale used to that effect or that the prompts utilised based off the existing scales may potentially influence a cognitive bias. Though the variation in traits generated may be attributable to the variation in collection method and sample individuals, the results do provide insight on the different traits that present from different regions. Notably, traits such as 'accepting poor working conditions' have not prevailed as an antecedent relating to task in the other two scales. Accordingly, there are only one factor of 'role deviances' that account for anti-prototypic IFTs which could potentially undermine the negative connotations of followership in Mashhad. Additionally, the 'mighty arm of leader' is not prevalent in the other two scales as well. This could account for the preference towards a more hierarchical structure of leader-follower relationships in Iran as supposed to the Western hemisphere.

Sy's method	USA	Junker et al's method	Germany	Kopelman	USA	mohamadzadeh et al's method	Mashhad, Iran
Industry	hardworking productive goes above and beyond		thinking ahead educated intelligent assumes responsibility	industrial	are industrious work is as natural as play or recreation naturally like to work willing to work more than the minimum required	immediate relation with the work wide working area expert	
enthusiasm	excited outgoing	ideal task	engaged interested determined conscientious	capable	ideas often result in the development of useful suggestions capable of providing ideas that are helpful to the organisations posses imagination and creativity help managers to make better decisions/solve problems can and will exercise self-direction/self control	constructive perception of work creativity	team member
good citizen	happy loyal reliable teamplayer		cooperative communicative team minded creative	trustworthy	prefer to set their own objectives and goals are trustworthy prefer to figure out how best to do their jobs	acceptance of poor working conditions productivity at work punctuality at work	
conformity	easily influenced follow trends softspoken	ideal relationship				job competences	
insubordination	arrogant rude bad tempered uneducated slow inexperienced		aggressive malicious uncooperative insubordinate indifferent rude irritable passive incompetent	not industrious	try to do as little work as possible naturally dislike work (it's basic nature) lazy and do not want to work will slack off if left alone by managers lack creativity and imagination have little to contribute when asked to participate indecisions/solving problems ideas are generally not useful to organisation		consultant human skills and social relationships integrity morality pioneering intellectual independence
incompetence		counter ideal relationship		not capable		initiation pattern	sense of ownership and beneficiary responsibility personal excellence
		counter ideal task		not trustworthy	prefer to be told exactly how to do their jobs cant be trusted will not exercise self-control and self-motivation prefer to have someone set their goals and objectives	destructive behaviour obedience incompetency indifference	

FIGURE 1: Summative table on the traits within the scales formulated to examine IFTs in separate studies based of individuals from USA, Germany, and Mashhad, Iran respectively. The results highlighted in dark grey pertains to the anti-prototypic or counter-ideal traits while the light grey section pertains to the prototypical or ideal traits.

While Chinese followers have been previously hypothesized to have weak co-production beliefs, passive followership behaviours, and low collectivism levels however, a notable study conducted recently revealed the opposite. It is such that the survey presented co-production belief levels that were higher than that of the USA samples in Hofstede's culture scores, consisted across gender, age, and tenure (Lawrence, 2017). Contradictions of such was also revealed in the power distance index where previously hypothesized to be high was actually low in comparison and uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and motive were all high, contrary to previous culture scores. These findings may be attributable to inaccuracies of previous results or simply the evolution of China's population over time as the country develops thus denouncing the previously acclaimed negative connotations of followership in China. Timely information with improved accuracy of such may aid global leaders to seamlessly immerse into different cultures as they expand overseas as well as to provide preliminary insights onto countries of a similar culture.

What may be deemed as a favourable follower in USA may very well not apply to other countries. Such discrepancies may enhance the widening gap in implementation of IFT ideologies in the workplace. Perhaps more consistent and comparable results could be captured should a uniform method of evaluation be conducted with the same level of depth. Results from there could draw insight on the paternalistic nature of certain continents and how they could progress over time potentially. The formulated national scale then be used to measure the variations that arise according to the previously mentioned factors such as industry.

6. DISCUSSION

The field of implicit theories have been instrumental in shedding light on the cognitive realm of organisational studies. IFTs (and ILTs) in particular have contributed to the understanding of the biases that exists between leaders and followers. Knowledge of its existence has always been present but many have atrociously speculated on the cognitive perceptions of individuals with little empirical backing all the while neglecting its influence on organisational performance and importance when prompted by theorists. However, implicit theories have been finally recognised as previous findings have indicated that leaders' IFTs accounts for more than 60% of variances experienced on employee ratings owing to individual perceptions of interactions (Scullen, Mount and Goff, 2000).

Organisational implications have been widely documented with IFTs serving as antecedents of follower's leader liking, job performance, LMX, job satisfaction, active mentorship and performance ratings (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Sy, 2010; Junker et al., 2014). Whiteley et al. (2012) in particular were one of the very few who explicitly displayed leaders' prototypical IFTs influence on performance through manipulation of performance expectations. However, the method utilised to measure follower performance was achieved through a reporting system from their peers which brings into question the cognitive biases that arise from the rater. Where organisational outcomes pertain to employee creativity specifically, an exploratory study in China postulated on the influence of IFTs on employee creativity with LMX, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy as mediators independently (Kong, Xu, Zhou and Yuan, 2019). Indeed, most of the previously mentioned studies have measured outcomes that may contribute to improved organisational outcomes, the field still lacks studies beyond the aforementioned paper that explicitly investigates the organisational outcomes on an empirical level albeit due to the difficulty in manipulating variables while maintaining uniformity across the board. Without such information, it provides little incentive for organisations to incorporate trainings that targets cognitive biases and implicit theories into their employee development risking a low or negative return on investment. Furthermore, the results achieved by previous research may be isolated incidences as the lack of widespread adoption provides little confidence in its reproducibility due to varying environmental factors such as organisations from different countries or multinational organisations which may have differing results if they were to act on such data. On the contrary, insight gathered to date

have been useful no doubt in advancing the field and laying the groundwork for in depth studies to be conducted in the future.

Upon research, discrepancies were vastly observed on the methodologies involved in measuring IFTs. Variations were present from the conceptual standpoint as well as the theoretical underpinnings at bay. Conceptually speaking, the greatest discrepancy observed was pertaining to the prototypical dimensions used as some have collapsed the ideal and typical prototypes into a single construct (Sy, 2010), carelessly interchange the assessment criteria (Epitropaki and martin, 2005) or failed to state the method by which they are utilising (Junker and Van Dick, 2014). Such variation may have potentially contributed to the slow growing pace of IFTs. Though Junker, Stegmann, Braun, and Van Dick (2016) have attempted to clear up the confusion through the introduction of an alternative scale, widespread use has yet to be observed. While there is a consensus on the categorisation theory as a model for interpretation, many have delved into various others to elaborate on the topic all the while investigating the same perspective owing to the overlapping nature of various existing theories especially within the range of social cognition (e.g. Patel and Ruchi, 2017). In addition to the scale, Junker and associates brought up the notion that effectiveness, being the widely used orientation, and the newly introduced person orientation, are merely subtypes of the bigger picture meaning that there are be more subtypes to be explored.

A common criticism to be acknowledged is pertaining to the use of explicit measures such as self-reporting systems and direct assessments to infer on implicit phenomena. Such allegations place the majority of the results collected thus far to be potentially distorted or void in the worst-case scenario. However, several literatures have reflectively pointed out the lack of evidence that support those claims as individuals for the most part have introspective access to their implicit theories (De Houwer et al., 2009, Fazio and Olson, 2003). On the other hand, having awareness of one's implicit theories may potentially differ to the accuracy of the underpinnings that contribute to the conception yet, alternative methods are absent. Perhaps a more practical approach may be considered to determine the significance of IFTs (and ILTs) whereby training programs for the work force that support the congruency of leaders' and followers IFTs may provide insight on its influence on organisational outcomes such as organisational citizenship behaviours and counterproductive work behaviours.

While many have chosen to either focus on IFTs or ILTs, it has come to light that most studies provide more meaningful insights when exploring the factors in combination as two sides to the same coin. By doing so, a more holistic view of followership as well as leadership can be portrayed and their interrelations better depicted. As we commonly put forth that there exists no leader without their followers, combinatory studies may be able to observe the cause and effects consequently with respect to LMX. Nevertheless, all studies are with limitations and resources may hinder the ability to effectively cover both aspects.

While we have lightly discussed anti-prototypic IFTs, its contents and its importance, limited information have been put forth on the associated implications and effects on followers. The study of unethical leadership has been widespread but such leadership cannot exist without the followers who grants and accepts such behaviours (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). More specifically, Knoll, Schyns, and Petersen (2017) examined the role of followers in unethical leadership with respect to IFTs as previous studies revealed that such behaviours are based on intuitive and reflexive processes to a considerable extent (Reynolds, 2006) and that characteristics depicting effectiveness of followers may not necessarily indicate ethicality as conscientious people may contribute to unethical outcomes in certain circumstances (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013). More recently, Goswami, In Park and Bheer (2020) have also made use of the anti-prototypic IFTs in their study through the outcome of abusive supervision as a mediator of negative IFTs from both leader and follower which gives a more well rounded discussion on the implications of negative traits.

Results ascertained disclosed that individuals that strongly maintain the Good Citizen IFT were more likely to comply with a leader's discriminatory action in a personnel selection decision while individuals that strongly maintain the Insubordination IFT were less likely to do so (Knoll, Schyns, and Petersen, 2017). According to Sy's (2010) IFT framework and the critically acclaimed organisational citizenship behaviour (Organ, 1988), good citizenship involves contribution towards the greater good of the community or organisation; validated by the second study conducted which stipulated that the individuals who upheld the Good Citizen IFT had an increased tendency to comply or contribute to unethical behaviours if their leader links the action to the betterment of the organisation (Knoll, Schyns, and Petersen, 2017). The Insubordination IFT while associated with the negative prototypes of followers, may very well hinder the progression of unethical leadership behaviour ironically as their second-order factors (Arrogant, Rude and Bad Tempered) make them unlikely to accept authority nor grant leadership to others (DeRue and Ashford, 2010).

Though particularly nascent, the results offer promising inferences on the influence of IFTs in unravelling unethical acts according to situational demands. Additionally, negative IFTs may vary with environments and cultures as observed in Table 1. Interesting results of such kind beckons more studies to be conducted in exploring more forms of unethical behaviours and implications alike.

7. CONCLUSION

As limitations have persisted in all research conducted to this day, this paper is of no exception to the others. Literature discussed in this paper are within the limits of availability as several journals may be confined to exclusive or paid access therefore not covered in this paper. Furthermore, the limitation of time and length of the paper does provide a hindrance in the depth of the discussions held throughout the study which may be lacking and may affect the overall outcome. Additionally, as the study does cover the global aspect of IFTs, the information gathered are confined to those that have been published in English as nations may contain insightful studies written their native language succumbing to language barriers. The integrity of results from studies conducted in the field to date may be inaccurate as most studies have utilised a self-reporting method of interviews or surveys. This may affect the results collected in the studies as the implicit aspect of IFTs does suggest that some perceptions may be outside one's awareness. Lastly, the criticisms adopted throughout the paper are opinions held by the author that were achieved through individual analysis therefore may reflect incorrect in reality or the future thus leaving room to be disproven. However, the study has been carried out to the best ability of the author who stand by the work that has been put forth.

Implicit theories today have brought vast insight into the field of Organization and Management Theory (OMT) (Cristofaro et al., 2020), expanding our knowledge on how cognitive effects can influence individuals in organisational settings. IFTs being fairly new still has much potential to elevate organisational studies in such a way that the material formulated may change the way organisations approach followership development and LMX improvements. Information on negative effects that leaders bring to the table in influencing followership behaviours could prompt management to hinder from such behaviours and minimise the effects when detected. Indeed, cultural phenomena has proven to affect the typical IFTs retained in certain regions showing how malleable IFTs may be in varying environments. The differences observed draws insight on how cultures who are more autocratic in nature may have a more submissive IFT composite thus studies on similar cultural backgrounds may illuminate some congruencies among them along with changing the narrative on outdated assumptions of some nations. While notable differences were observed between Iran, USA and Germany, future studies may produce interesting results on Asian countries, with Southeast Asia in particular as they have been widely ignored overall albeit rapidly developing and improving in multiple dimensions of infrastructure, economy, and lifestyle to name a few. Through such studies only can the scales be truly universally adaptable instead of treating the results from the Western Hemisphere as the norm. In the day in age of

cultural awareness and worldwide economic turbulence, it is ignorant to adapt said treatment of data. With the current results, attempts could potentially be made to develop new training methods targeted towards leaders' behaviours, increase awareness within management bodies of IFTs and their associated effects and/or to improve followership through training programs, in efforts to LMX. In light of that, preliminary studies on the effects of such trainings may be insightful through thorough control and manipulation of variables for empirical backings and development.

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