Gratitude Journal Exercise Increases Leaders' Individual Consideration Through Change in Objectification and Perceived Closeness: A Randomized Experiment

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the
ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Effective leadership is critical for achieving positive outcomes in the workplace, including increased profits, job satisfaction, and performance. However, little is known about what enhances positive leadership behaviors. Drawing on the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012), we examined whether gratitude journaling alters leaders' conception of followers (i.e., objectify less, humanize more), resulting in higher desire for closeness and greater intention to engage in individualized consideration. The experiment involved 156 leaders, which found that the gratitude intervention increased individualized consideration intention through decrease in objectification and increase in perceived closeness. Integrating propositions from the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012), we further considered whether the benefits of gratitude are limited for those with a higher desire for power. Contrary to predictions, the study found that leaders' desire for power does not hinder the indirect effects of gratitude on individualized consideration intention. Further results and implications are discussed as well.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Leaders matter a great deal in the workplace. Research has established that the quality of leadership experienced at work can affect companies' profit, employees' well-being, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and job performance (Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Inceoglu et al., 2018; Montano et al., 2017; Quigley & Hambrick, 2015). However, most research has focused on the consequences of leadership behaviors for followers, while comparatively little research has considered predictors of positive leadership behaviors (Barling, 2014). We suggest that how leaders conceptualize their followers may be key to understanding leader behaviors directed towards them and draw on the find-remind-bind theory (Algoe, 2012) to understand this process.

We argue that leaders may broadly conceive of their followers based on their utility (i.e., "what function do they serve to me?"; Magee & Smith, 2012) or humanity (i.e., "they are human beings with cognitions, needs, and emotions"; Rai et al., 2017). The view adopted might then influence how they orient towards their followers (i.e., strive to develop close personal relationships or not; Popovic et al., 2003), which in turn can influence their leadership intentions (e.g., invest in their followers' personal and professional development; i.e., individualized consideration; Podsakoff et al., 1990).

Many stable (e.g., personality) or variable (e.g., mood) factors may predict whether leaders conceptualize their followers based on utility or humanity. However, given the importance of leadership behaviors at work, and follower treatment in general, we suggest that organizations ought to intervene in order to enable more relational development between leaders and their followers. As such, we develop an intervention in order to engender follower conceptions that benefit the leader-follower relationship. One

highly effective intervention is gratitude journaling. Gratitude is a powerful emotion that people experience when they reflect on thankful events (e.g., appreciating others' kindness or benefits), and gratitude journaling has been found to be a low-cost and effective means of fostering relational development (Wood et al., 2010).

Taken together, the purpose of this randomized experimental study is to examine whether gratitude journals alter leaders' conception of their followers (i.e., objectify less, humanize more), resulting in higher desire for closeness and greater intention to engage in individualized consideration. We further consider whether this intervention is effective for all leaders, by examining leaders' need for power as an individual difference. We test this by asking leaders to write about grateful events that happened between them and one of their followers, and we then measure their concepts and motivations toward the follower (see Figure 7 in Appendix).

This research contributes to the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012), and the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012). First, we test the central propositions proposed in the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012), namely that gratitude reminds people of their existing or potential high-quality relationships, which changes the way people view their benefactor, and which motivates them to get close to the benefactor. We also extend upon this theory by considering how this motivation may translate into leadership behavior. Specifically, we find that gratitude indirectly increases leaders' individualized consideration by decreasing objectification toward the follower. Second, we integrate propositions proposed in the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012) to test one potential boundary of the find-remind-and-bind theory, namely that the benefits of gratitude may be limited for those with higher desire

for power. However, we find that leaders' desire for power does not hinder the effects of gratitude on objectification and perceived humanity, potentially suggesting that gratitude may be more powerful in affecting follower conceptions than originally thought. In light of our findings, we offer practical recommendations for leaders and organizations who are seeking to promote more constructive relationships between leaders and their followers while improving overall business outcomes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Leaders Conceptions and Treatment of Followers

   Leaders may engage in a variety of leadership behaviors that have been broadly

categorized as positive (e.g., transformational leadership behaviors) or negative (e.g.,

abusive supervision, passive leadership) (Bass & Riggio, 2005; Barling, 2014; Tepper,

2000; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). Positive leadership behaviors are those that focus on

motivating followers' performance via supportive behaviors (Barling, 2014), and have

been shown to be most effective in fostering leader-follower and co-worker relationships,

followers' job satisfaction, job performance, and commitment (Herold, 2008; Eliyana et

al., 2019; Nguon, 2022). The most widely studied positive leadership theory is

transformational leadership theory (Barling, 2014). Transformational leadership reflects

four leadership behaviors, namely idealized influence (i.e., demonstrating high ethical

standards), inspirational motivation (i.e., developing collectively shared goals),

intellectual stimulation (i.e., encouraging followers' self-directed thinking), and

individualized consideration (i.e., identifying, recognizing, and promoting followers'

needs and goals) (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Individualized consideration

specifically captures leadership behaviors that are focused on developing individual

relationships with each follower in order to identify their unique needs and organizational

goals, and to engage in supportive behaviors to enable followers to reach those goals.

Given our interest in understanding relational development between leaders and

followers, we focus our attention on understanding predictors of individualized

consideration.

We argue that leaders' engagement in individualized consideration likely depends on how they view followers. If leaders view their followers as a tool to better achieve their goals (i.e., objectification), they may lose interest in having close relationships with them (i.e., lack in perceived interpersonal closeness), and in turn, be less likely to consider their emotions or needs. In contrast, if leaders find their followers more capable of reasoning and experiencing emotions (i.e., humanization), they would be more likely to have close relationship with them (i.e., higher perceived interpersonal closeness), and in turn, be more likely to consider their followers' feelings and needs (i.e., greater individualized consideration). We next review the literature on these contrasting conceptualizations of followers, i.e., objectification and humanization.

Objectification

People may perceive others as objects (i.e., perceiving others as a means to an end), an attribution referred to as objectification (Gervais, 2013; Gruenfeld et al., 2014; Kant et al., 1997; Nussbaum, 1999). Objectification occurs when the body parts or functions of an individual are separated from their personhood and treated like instruments (Gervais, 2013). For example, from a capitalistic perspective, employers may reduce employees to their work qualities alone such as comparing them to a "gear tooth" (Marx, 1844/1964). In medicine, physicians may objectify patients by perceiving them based on their diseases and symptoms only (Barnard 2001: Foucault 1989). Women may also be sexually objectified when they are seen solely in terms of sexuality rather than as full individuals (Orehek & Casey 2017).

According to Nussbaum (1995; 1999), there are seven means of objectifying others, via: inertness, instrumentality, fungibility, denial of autonomy, violability, denial

of subjectivity, and ownership. Viewing a person as *inert* means denying their capability of agency. *Fungible* is to treat a person as interchangeable with one another. *Ownership* is viewing an individual as a commodity that can be offered for sale or trade. *Denying their subjectivity* is to disregard their personal feelings and experiences. When a target is *denied of their autonomy*, the target is viewed as lacking self-determination. *Violability* is when a target's personal boundaries can be harmed, and it is viewed as acceptable. And finally, Nussbaum suggested the most morally problematic means to objectify others is via *instrumentality,* which is to view a person as a tool serving specific goals or functions. To date, there has been much research regarding the experiences of those who are objectified outside of workplace settings. For example, substantial research has considered objectification within interpersonal relationship in non-work context (e.g., Ramsey et al., 2017; Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Less progress, however, has been made in studying objectification within interpersonal relationship in organizational context. This is surprising given objectification might be both common in the workplace (Belmi & Schroeder, 2021) and inherent in the nature of organizational structure. Indeed, employees are given job roles and titles that structure their time into repetitive and fragmented tasks, often lacking autonomy in how to complete those tasks (Nussbaum, 1995). This may result in employees being viewed as a function of their role in the organization, rather than as human beings. This is supported in one study where participants working in a factory were perceived more as instruments than as people (Andrighetto et al, 2017). Further, organizations are inherently hierarchical, reflecting that there are employees with more and less power relative to one another. The power-approach theory (Keltner et al., 2003) suggests that those with greater power tend to

approach those with less power as goal-relevant and able to provide potential rewards. As such, organizational contexts encompass features that facilitate the objectification of others.

Consistent with this perspective, the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012) purports that powerholders (such as supervisors) prioritize their own goals over maintaining relationships with followers, thus paying more attention to features and characteristics of the target that may enable the powerholder to continue succeeding. The social distance theory of power initially posits that leaders feel more subjective distance than their follower as a function of their greater power attributed to their role. To achieve something, a follower needs to be more dependent on resources that their leader has, and this asymmetric dependence on resources between the two gives rise to asymmetric experiences of social distance. This discrepancy in perceived social distance can explain why leaders are less likely to interact with their follower and feel distanced from them. Furthermore, this diminished interest in what their follower thinks or feel tends to lead to lower levels of empathic concern among those with higher power (e.g., leader), which can decrease the intensity (or even likelihood) of experiencing socially engaging emotions such as gratitude towards their counterparts.

The social distance theory of power also proposes that those with high power tend to view others with more abstract mental representations than those with low power, which means they focus on the essential qualities which define an individual, rather than giving attention to specific details. This can result in stereotyping and even instrumentalizing people with lower power (Goodwin et al., 1998), essentially viewing them based on what they have to offer. This is consistent with substantial research;

instrumentalization is heightened among those who possess greater levels of power (Copeland 1994; Gruenfeld et al, 2008; Kunstman & Maner, 2011; Overbeck & Park 2001, 2006). Taken together, the social-distance theory of power explains why powerholders, such as leaders, may be more implicitly inclined to objectify others: (1) because they have resources that others are dependent upon, (2) because they wish to maintain or increase their influence (Fiske, 1993), and (3) because their power leads them to focus on central characteristic of their follower as an employee, which is their work quality.

Perceived Humanity

Of course, followers are not only, or always, viewed as a function of the role they may serve to leaders. Instead, they can be seen as more capable of reasoning, experiencing vast and in-depth emotion, and offering more to others beyond their work role. Perceived humanity is the psychological process of understanding an entity as having inherent humanness (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Perceiving someone from a humanistic lens involves viewing a target based on their (1) capabilities for agency, (2) experience, and (3) capacity to experience positive and negative moral emotions (Rai et al., 2017). Agency is a mental capability that distinguishes humans from nonhuman animals, which includes intending, planning, reasoning, and remembering (Gray et al. 2007). Experience encompasses attributes such as emotion, consciousness, and personality, which distinguishes humans from robots and inanimate objects (Haslam 2014). Moral emotions (i.e., sentiments) are unique emotions that tend to have a longer duration than other emotions, encompass morality, cognition, and sensitivity, and appear

later in life. Examples of moral emotions include nostalgia, compassion, pride, remorse, melancholia, resignation, disarray, etc. (Leyens et al., 2001).

Similarly, to objectification, previous research on perceived humanity has mostly focused on studying such perceptions in relationships that mostly occur outside of the work context. For example, Leyens et al. (2003) found that people view others with less humanity when they are of a different ethnicity, nationality, race (e.g., Asian or Black), and ancestry-based subpopulations (e.g., Caucasian Americans or African Americans; Goff et al., 2008). This phenomenon has been further demonstrated in other contexts such as political discourse (e.g., democratic vs liberal; Blair & Banaji, 1996), media coverage of black athletes' performances (Bryant et al., 2007), and student evaluations of professors' performance in classrooms (Gurin et al., 2004).

Perceived humanity has also been explored within the context of work, but research thus far has mainly focused on the consequences of organizational dehumanization (i.e., lacking perceived humanity). For example, when subjected to organizational dehumanization workers tend to develop negative self-evaluations which further leads to decreased job satisfaction (Nguyen & Stinglhamber 2018). Furthermore, research suggests that organizational dehumanization leads employees in hospitality and nurses toward engaging in deviant work behaviors (Muhammad & Sarwar 2021; Sarwar et al., 2020). Lastly, abusive supervision results in decreased job satisfaction, commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Caesens et al., 2018) and leader-follower relationship quality has been found to be negatively related to organizational dehumanization (Stinglhamber et al., 2021). Thus, previous research has mainly considered the targets and consequences of organizational dehumanization (Christoff,

2014; see Haslam & Loughnan, 2014 for review), neglecting to consider how perceived

humanity can be promoted, and what consequences may emerge as a function of

perceiving employees from a humanistic perspective (e.g., Rai et al., 2017).

Given the combined detriments of objectifying followers with the benefits of

humanizing followers, we considered whether any organizational intervention may exist

that could (1) alter leaders' broad conceptualization of followers, (2) be low on

organizational resources (e.g., time, cost, effort), and (3) is theoretically derived. We thus

turned to the gratitude literature as a viable tool.

Gratitude

Gratitude reflects an empathic feeling that is experienced as appreciation to

others' kindness or benefits (Lazarus, 1991; McCullough et al., 2001; Emmons &

McCullough, 2004). Psychologists have identified three distinct forms of gratitude;

Expressed gratitude (Gordon et al., 2011) which is an emotional response to another

person's kindness; *State gratitude* (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) which refers to a

mood or attitude that reflects appreciation for the valuable things in life; and *Trait*

gratitude (Wood et al.,2010) which is an overarching orientation towards gratefulness

and appreciation for others and the world. Since we are interested in priming gratitude in

participants, we operationalize gratitude as state gratitude.

Researchers have focused on understanding the consequences of experiencing

gratitude for centuries. Adam Smith and Cicero (McCullough et al., 2001) purported that

gratitude immediately motivates people to reward others and is seen as the source of all

virtues. Recent research supported this by showing that gratitude increases prosocial

behavior such as helping or supporting (Ma et al., 2017). Importantly, experiencing

10

gratitude can be beneficial to interpersonal relationships by increasing the interpersonal warmth, trust, relationship quality as well as social bonds between individuals and their benefactors (Algoe et al., 2008; Barlett & DeSteno,2006; Bartlett et al., 2012; 2015; Drążkowski et al., 2017; Williams & Barlett et al., 2015).

Understanding the role and consequences of gratitude within an organizational setting is still in its nascency, but early research indicates that experiencing gratitude can engender many workplace benefits (e.g., Locklear & Sheridan, 2022). For example, Locklear et al. (2021) found that experiencing gratitude was effective in reducing workplace mistreatment such as incivility, gossip, and ostracism which are detrimental to interpersonal relationships. Moreover, gratitude can encourage employees more willing to be closer to each other than before (Tang et al., 2022). Taken together, gratitude reflects a social-moral emotion that is crucial for maintaining cooperative interpersonal relationships, and may therefore be particularly beneficial in promoting healthy relationships between leaders and their followers (Algoe et al., 2008; McCullough et al. 2001; 2004; Yu et al. 2018, Haidt, 2003; 2009; Wood et al., 2010).

Given the benefits of gratitude, researchers have also focused on identifying its antecedents. Social psychologist Tesser (1968) posited three central antecedents to experiencing gratitude - perceiving benefactor's intentions, cost incurred in providing benefit, and value of the benefit itself. These components do not necessarily have to occur simultaneously; one or more can still increase the likelihood of feeling grateful. More recently, scholars have investigated whether the components of gratitude can be primed via intervention.

Gratitude Interventions in the Workplace

      Gratitude interventions are often used to cultivate gratitude and have been shown to resolve psychological, or behavioral problems in social, educational, or clinical psychology studies (Komase et al., 2021). There are several different types of gratitude interventions that exist. First, participants may be asked to generate several lists of experiences for which they felt grateful. This can take several forms, for example, people may be asked to keep a diary, in which they write three things for which they are grateful, to be completed each night directly before bed. This intervention has been positively received in past studies, including participants reporting that the intervention is enjoyable and self-reinforcing, and choosing to continue the exercise even after the ending of the intervention (Seligman et al., 2005). Second, Locklear et al. (2021) used "gratitude journaling" which involves employees writing for a short period to reflect on positive experiences. This category also includes the grateful contemplation intervention, which involves not only listing things for which one is grateful but also expressive writing about what an individual is grateful for. Such expressive writing can include, for example, musings about the reasons behind a kindness received. Grateful contemplation can prompt thoughts about activities, events, people, and material objects. Interventions in this category have been shown to increase positive mood (Koo et al., 2008; Watkins et al., 2003) and well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh, et al., 2008; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Third, behavioral expressions interventions involve participants actively expressing their appreciation directly to others in either verbal or written form, rather than simply reflecting on it internally. For example, one of the most well-known forms, developed by Seligman et al. (2015), is known as a gratitude letter. With this

intervention, participants write letters expressing their gratitude to people who have contributed positively to their lives and then read them aloud to the benefactor.

Generally speaking, gratitude interventions across contexts (in the workplace and otherwise) have been shown to be effective. Emmons and Crumpler (2000) reported that an experimental gratitude intervention was successful in enhancing people's short-term moods and physical functioning. In a recent gratitude intervention study conducted within a workplace context, Locklear et al. (2021) found that gratitude journaling exercise reduces several forms of workplace mistreatment via increased self-control resource. In addition, Ritzenhöfer et al. (2017; 2019) found that leaders' gratitude expressions were effective in building follower trust, follower satisfaction, and commitment to the leader. The success of such interventions may be due to the many strengths associated with gratitude interventions, including, (1) easy-to-understand instructions, (2) time and cost-effective activities, and (3) low dropout rates (Davis et al., 2016).

Given the broad benefits of gratitude within interpersonal relationships and mounting evidence of gratitude interventions functioning within the context of work, we consider a gratitude intervention as a potentially useful tool in shifting the way leaders view and treat their followers. Specifically, we adopt Locklear's (2020) gratitude journaling approach given its tested efficacy in a workplace context and its low resource draw. We next provide theoretical rationale for our hypotheses drawing on the find-remind-and-bind theory.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Find-remind-and-bind theory

The find-remind-and-bind theory of gratitude (Algoe, 2012) posits that the emotion of gratitude promotes the development and maintenance of close interpersonal relationships. Experiencing gratitude spurs people to see their benefactor from a more positive lens which helps remind them of the potential to form high-quality relationships, which in turn motivates them to behave in ways that strengthen the relationship (Algoe et al., 2008). As such, we propose that reflecting on an event in which a leader is grateful towards their follower will alter the ways in which the leader views them (i.e., decrease objectification and increase perceived humanity). In turn, these shifted leader conceptualizations will foster stronger leader-follower bonds (e.g., increase in perceived closeness), thereby encouraging leaders to take action towards supporting their followers' goals (e.g., increase in individualized consideration). We explain our hypothesized relationships in greater detail below.

The Role of Gratitude on Conceptualization of Followers

Find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012) first suggests why feeling of gratitude can shift leaders' perception toward their followers. Specifically, experiencing gratitude promotes short-term cognitive shifts that result in leaders' consideration of the benefactor and their mutual relationship. Indeed, a closer look at the motivational effects of emotions reveals evidence of the potential utility of gratitude. For instance, Algoe and Haidt (2009) found that those randomly assigned to recall situations where they felt gratitude were more likely than those who recalled joyous experiences to spontaneously recognize new positive qualities in the benefactor, as well as be more willing to associate

with them in the future. In addition, after they found positive qualities in their benefactor, their conceptualization of the benefactor can shift to be broadly more positive (Gervais, 2013). As such, leaders who mainly find instrumental qualities of their followers (i.e., objectification), may start to identify other positive attributes of their followers when feeling grateful, which would therefore shift their focus away from what utility followers serve to them to instead focus on how they may reciprocate and serve their followers. Moreover, experiencing gratitude may further result in leaders' viewing followers' specific positive attributes and experiences, in essence, seeing the follower in greater detail with more human attributes (i.e., humanization). Thus, together we hypothesize:

H1: Leaders writing a gratitude journal (vs. writing a control scenario) will report lower objectification toward their follower.

H2: Leaders writing a gratitude journal (vs. writing a control scenario) will perceive their follower with higher humanity.

The Role of Conceptualization of Followers on Leadership Behavior

Find-remind-and-bind theory (Aloge, 2012) also suggests that gratitude can lead to motivational shifts, and behavioral modifications via this shift in perception. Specifically, experiencing gratitude and thereby viewing the benefactor as more human can promote a beneficiary's desire to be more interpersonally close with the benefactor in order to increase and maintain this interpersonal. (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Watkins et al., 2006). Moreover, this theory suggests that viewing a benefactor positively can additionally result in beneficiaries' actionable behaviors to facilitate and solidify the

15

relationship. For example, Gordon et al. (2012) found that gratitude encouraged participants to behave and care about their partner's needs to enable relationship maintenance. Taken together then, the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012) suggests the motivational and behavioral processes may occur concurrently as a function of more positive benefactor evaluations.

We expand on this view and draw upon Theriault (2023)'s biological and psychological model to instead propose that these processes occur serially. That is, we suggest that leaders' viewing followers from less of an objective lens, and more of a humanistic lens, will initially motivate their desire to form closer relationships with the follower. Following this desire for closeness, leaders will then plan out and intend to engage in supportive relational behaviors to benefit the follower (i.e., by engaging in individualized consideration behaviors). We suggest these processes occur serially rather than concurrently given previous evidence demonstrates that (1) shifts in views precede relational motivations, and (2) relational motivations precede behavioral intentions (e.g., Theriault, 2023). Taken together, we predict:

H3: Leaders writing a gratitude journal (vs. writing a control scenario) will report lower objectification toward their follower, which will in turn increase perceived closeness.
H4: Leaders writing a gratitude journal (vs. writing a control scenario) will report higher perceived humanity toward their follower, in which will in turn increase perceived closeness.

H5: Objectification and perceived interpersonal closeness will serially mediate the relationship between a gratitude intervention and intentions to engage in individualized consideration behaviors.

H6: Perceived humanity and perceived interpersonal closeness will serially mediate the relationship between a gratitude intervention and intentions to engage in individualized consideration behaviors.

The Moderating Role of Desire for Power

Up until this point, we have suggested that a gratitude intervention can increase leaders' individual consideration toward their followers due to the serial effects of decreasing objectification and increasing humanization via increased closeness. However, we do acknowledge there may be boundaries to these relationships, depending on individual differences, organizational norms, and types of industry (e.g., personality traits, dispositional gratitude, emotion norms, hierarchical structures; Delvaux et al., 2015; Lomas et al., 2014; Magee & Smith, 2012; Winslow et al., 2017). Specifically, we suggest leaders may differ in their desire for power which may influence the efficacy of our manipulation on shifting follower perceptions.

Indeed, some leaders may generally hold a greater desire for power relative to others, such that they wish to claim more resources and gain more control over others, within an organization. We turn again to the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012) to understand how leaders' trait desire for power may influence the indirect relationship between gratitude and intentions to engage in individualized consideration.

The social distance theory of power initially posits in its first principle that people with high power tend to feel more subjective distance (e.g., feeling of closeness) to those with lower power because of their asymmetry dependence on resources. This leads high-power holders to avoid interactions with their followers given they are less interested in what their follower thinks or feel. The discrepancy in the perceived social distance can explain why high-power individuals are less susceptible to others' attempts at influencing them; high-power-seeking leaders may observe a gratitude intervention as an attempt to sway their views of followers, and therefore reject such attempts. As a second principle, the social distance theory of power also proposes that those with high power tend to view people with lower power with more abstractly, focusing on the essential qualities which define an individual, rather than giving attention to specific details.

As such, engaging in a reflective gratitude exercise may be more challenging for leaders with a higher desire for power relative to those with a lower desire for power, such that they may not be able to (1) generate a reflective gratitude event, and (2) consider the details of that event and why they are thankful towards their follower. Taken together then, we suggest that leaders with a higher desire for power may be less susceptible to the gratitude intervention given (1) they may have greater difficulty recalling grateful events, (2) they may be less engaged in reflecting on their follower as part of this event, and (3) they are less susceptible to influence. Thus, we predict:

H7: *Desire for power will moderate the serial relationship between gratitude, objectification, desire for closeness, and individualized consideration such that the*

negative relationship between the gratitude intervention and objectification will be weaker for those with a higher desire for power.

H8: *Desire for power will moderate the serial relationship between gratitude, perceived humanity, desire for closeness, and individualized consideration such that the positive relationship between the gratitude intervention and perceived humanity will be weaker for those with a higher desire for power.*

Taken together, we anticipate that a gratitude intervention is less likely to reduce individual consideration through its effects on objectification and perceived closeness when a leader is more willing to have power in their company (i.e. when desire for power is low). Specifically, we propose a conditional serial indirect effects models (Hayes, 2022) in which the indirect effect of the gratitude intervention on the first mediator varies according to differences in leaders' desire for power.

Chapter 4: Method

Participants

The present study was conducted online and hosted on Qualtrics. We recruited 201 participants from Prolific (http://www.prolific.co), and they were compensated £2 for a 15-minute survey (see Appendix for recruitment material). Prolific is a transparent and reliable crowdsourcing website (Palan & Schitter, 2018) that helps researchers optimize the collection of high-quality data by connecting them to a sample that meets eligibility requirements. Eligibility criteria required participants to be at least 18 years old, live in Canada, the U.S., or the United Kingdom, be fluent in English, work full-time or part-time, work at least 21 hours per week[1], have regular interaction with other employees, have at least one subordinate, and hold supervisory duties.

Among 201 participants, 44 participants were excluded for not following journal instructions ($n = 24$), spending less than 9 minutes in the survey ($n = 23$), or failing attention checks ($n = 2$; "Please select strongly agree for your response to this item"), resulting in a final sample size of 156 leaders (95 male, 58 female, 2 non-binary, 1 prefer not to answer)[2]. Participants were predominantly Caucasian (81.6%) – Black (7.1%), East/South Asian (5.8%), South Asian (4.5%) Latino (1.9%), Middle Eastern (.6%), and prefer not to say (1.3%). For education, participants had Technical/Community college degrees (20.5%), Bachelor's degrees (51.3%), Master's degrees (18.6%), Doctoral degrees (3.2%), and Professional degrees (6.4%). Participants were in their 20s (17.3%), 30s (36.5%), 40s (24.4%), 50s (15.4%), and 60 to 80s (5.8). Participants were male (60.8%) and female (37.2%), non-binary (1.3%), with .6% of the sample responding that

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[1] 21 hours is a minimum working hour of part-time job.
[2] Five people were excluded for multiple exclusion criteria, resulting in 44 total participants excluded.

they prefer not to answer. The average job tenure was 5.6 years ($SD = 5.9$). An a priori

power analysis with G*Power 3.1 (Erdfelder et al., 1996) was performed for sample size

estimation, specifying $a = .05$, power $= .80$, and an estimated medium effect size $= .5$

(Cohen, 1988) for a between-groups comparison. Results indicated a sample size of 156,

suggesting the final sample size is sufficiently powered for H1 to H2.

      To test the predicted indirect and conditional indirect effects, we followed

recommendations by Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Shrout and Bolger (2002) who

suggest that a moderate sample of 20-80 cases is sufficient when using bootstrapping

procedures. This is further supported by a recent gratitude journal intervention study

published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (a top journal in our field), with a similar

research design which demonstrated that a final sample of 147 participants was sufficient

in detecting conditional indirect effects (Locklear et al., 2020). Taken together, a final

sample of 156 participants should be sufficient for testing hypotheses.

Procedure

      After reviewing the recruitment message via Prolific, participants were directed to

the consent form. Those who consented to participate and met all eligibility requirements

proceeded with the survey where they completed scales assessing their demographic and

job information and desire for power (Lammers et al., 2016). Next, participants were

randomly assigned to either a control condition ($n = 74$) or an intervention condition ($n =$

82) in which they reflected on an experience with their follower. Participants were

required to spend at least 3 minutes writing their journals and on average they spent 4

minutes and 30 seconds ($SD =192.55$ sec.). Participants then completed a manipulation

check (state gratitude; McCullough, 2002) and measures assessing objectification of

follower (Gruenfeld et al., 2008) perceived humanity (Rai, 2017), interpersonal

closeness, (Popovic et al., 2003), and individualized consideration (Podsakoff et al.,

1990). Finally, they were asked to complete information about their follower (i.e.,

relative status, race, gender, age, frequency, and length of interaction).

Chapter 5: Measures

Intervention manipulation

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The gratitude journal condition (i.e., intervention) provided participants with the following guidelines, which were modified from Emmons & McCullough (2003):

Try to think about a recent interaction with a follower at work (within the past month), for which you are grateful. This might involve a moment in which your follower was supportive, a time in which your follower made a sacrifice or contribution for you whether it's big or small, a time in which your follower was helpful beyond their job role, or any moment in which you felt thankful towards your follower.

Adapted from Locklear et al. (2021), participants in the control condition read:
Try to think about a recent interaction with a follower that affected you at work (within the past month). This might include any recent interaction between the two of you whether it's big or small, any correspondence between you and your follower, a time in which you worked on a project together, or a task in your job involving your follower.

Across conditions, participants were instructed to describe the interaction in detail. On average, participants spent 4 minutes and 30 seconds on this exercise and wrote 89 words in their journals ($m = 83$ words in the journal condition; 97 words in the control condition).

Manipulation check

To ensure the effectiveness of our manipulation, we evaluated the level of state gratitude among participants by employing the three-item gratitude adjective checklist (McCullough et al., 2002), which demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .97$). Following completion of the gratitude journal exercise, participants were instructed to rate the extent to which they experienced feelings of "gratefulness," "thankfulness," and "appreciation," using a five-point response scale ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("extremely").

Desire for power

To measure desire for power, participants responded to two items (inter-item correlation = .78). Participants indicated the degree to which they would like to have more power in their company and would like to have a better position in their company (Lammers et al., 2016) using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Perceived interpersonal closeness

Using Popovic et al.'s (2003) closeness measure, participants assessed two statements (inter-item correlation = .82) using a scale ranging from 1 (distant) to 6 (fully close) (i.e., how close they would ideally like to feel, and how close they currently feel toward the follower they mentioned in the journal exercise).

Objectification of the follower

We measured the extent to which participants objectify their follower mentioned in the journal exercise ($\alpha = .71$; Gruenfeld et al., 2008). Participants rated their agreement with 11 items ($\alpha = .71$) using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly

agree). Sample items included "I tend to contact [follower's initials] only when I need something from them." and, "I think more about what [follower's initials] can do for me than I can do for them."

Perceived Humanity

We measured perceived humanity (Rai et al., 2017) across four items. Specifically, participants rated the degree to which they felt as though the follower described in their journal was capable of agency (planning, reasoning, and remembering), experience (sensations like hunger, fear, and pain), positive moral emotion (love, and compassion), and negative moral emotion (anger, and hatred) using a 1 (not capable at all) to 5 (completely capable) ($a = .69$).

Individualized Consideration Intent

We assessed participants' intention to engage in individualized consideration behaviors towards their follower (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Participants rated four items (α = .65) using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. Sample items included "I will show respect for [follower's initial]'s personal feelings; I will behave in a manner thoughtful of [follower's initial]'s personal needs."

Control variable

We examined the effectiveness of the random assignment by examining whether conditions differed on participant gender, education, and weekly working hours using independent samples t-tests, with results showing no significant differences between groups (all ps > .53). However, conditions did differ in age (control condition $M = 38.7$ SD = 10.5; experimental M = 42.6 SD = 13.1 $p < .05$). Given previous research has established that the experience of gratitude is greatest in older adults and least in middle-

aged and younger adults (Chopik et al., 2019), we control for age. Further, though no

significant differences emerged between conditions on gender, a significant correlation

was found between state gratitude and gender ($r = -.20, p < .05$). Previous research

regarding gratitude and gender indicates men tend to feel less gratitude and experience

fewer benefits from helping behavior than women, suggesting the intervention may affect

women more than men (e.g., Froh et al., 2009; Kashdan et al., 2009). As such, we also

control for gender across analyses[3].

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[3] Despite the fact that the inclusion of controls did not alter the effects or levels of significance, we decided to keep the controls for age and gender in the primary analyses (which included unconditional and conditional indirect effects tests). This was done to demonstrate the intervention's incremental validity, i.e., its ability to provide value beyond the baseline measures (Locklear et al, 2021).

Chapter 6: Data Analyses

All analyses were completed using SPSS28. First, data were screened for evidence of careless responding following procedures discussed by McGonagle et al. (2016). Second, we calculated internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha for all variables measured with multi-item scales. All variables met or exceeded a reliability of 0.7 indicating measures had satisfactory reliability (Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler et al., 2016; however, intentions for individualized consideration has slightly lower than satisfactory reliability α = .65). Third, we examined frequency distributions for all variables and calculate zero-order correlations, reported in Table 1. Fourth, to verify the effectiveness of the manipulation, we examined whether conditions significantly differed in gratitude. To further validate the manipulation, the first author, and a second blind coder, coded journal responses on whether participants' interactions written were positive, neutral, or negative such that we can verify whether each condition worked as we intended it to work.

For hypotheses testing of H1 and H2, we conducted independent samples t-tests comparing conditions on objectification of a follower, and perceived humanity. Next, in order to test for the indirect effects predicted in H3 and H4, we used Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro model 4. Following, in order to test the serial mediation predicted across H5 and H6, we used Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro model 6 investigating whether the gratitude intervention decreased objectification and increased humanity, in turn increasing interpersonal closeness and individual consideration. To test the moderating effect of desire for power proposed in H7 and H8, we customized Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro model so that only the first mediator is to be variant across

values of the moderator. Results are reported in tables 2 and 3. This robust non-parametric bootstrap resampling procedure yielded an indirect effect beta coefficient estimate in conjunction with its bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI) and we report two-sided *p*-values. Statistical significance was established when zero was not included in the 95% confidence intervals. 10,000 random resamples with replacement were performed for the model evaluated[4]We controlled for participants' gender and age across analyses.

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[4] Resampling with replacement involves randomly selecting numbers from the original sample of size n and using a random number generator to generate new samples. This process is repeated until a new dataset of the same size is obtained (LaFontaine, 2021).

Chapter 7: Results

Preliminary analyses

Means, standard deviations, alpha reliability coefficients, and zero-order correlations appear in Table 1.

Table 1. *Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (n = 156)*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Experimental condition	0.5	0.5	—									
2. Desire for power	0.4	1.2	-.22**	(1)								
3. Perceived interpersonal closeness	3.6	1.0	.24**	-.095	(.90)							
4. Objectification of a follower	4.0	0.8	-.26**	.070	-.38**	(.71)						
5. Perceived Humanity	3.8	0.7	.18*	-.037	.41**	-.42**	(.68)					
6. Transformational leader behavior intention	6.0	0.9	.20*	.003	.34**	-.30**	.27**	(.65)				
7. State gratitude	3.8	1.2	.49**	-.13	.58**	-.32**	.36**	.34**	(.97)			
8. Age	41	12.1	.16*	-.30**	.023	-.05	.10	.09	.03	-	.03	
9.Gender	1.4	0.6	.05	-.025	-.21**	-.01	-.07	.00	-.20*		-	

Note. Reliability coefficients are shown on the diagonal in parentheses. Experimental condition = 1, control condition = 0. Gender was coded as Man as 1, and woman as 2

$* p < .05, ** p < .01.$

Next, we verified the effectiveness of the manipulation via two methods. First, we examined whether conditions significantly differed in state gratitude. An independent samples t-test found significant between-group differences in post-intervention state gratitude, $t(154) = -6.9, p < 0.01$, such that those in the experimental condition ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.8$) reported significantly higher state gratitude than those in the control condition

($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.3$). Second, to further validate the manipulation, the first author, and a second blind coder, coded participants' journal responses on emotional valence, (i.e., whether the interactions between the leader and follower were positive, neutral, or negative). Within the experimental condition, all but one journal entry was coded as positive (one coded as neutral) suggesting the intervention condition worked as intended. Within the control condition, 17 journal entries were coded as neutral, 26 were coded as negative, and 30 were coded as positive. This suggests that there was greater variability in the valence of journal entries within the control condition, and we discuss the implications of this within the limitations section of our discussion.

Main Analyses

We began by testing hypotheses 1 and 2 which predicted between-condition differences in objectification and perceived humanity (see Figure 1). Results showed that compared to the control condition, those in the gratitude journaling condition reported significantly lower objectification of their follower (H1; $M_{contorl}$ = 4.2, $SD = 0.8$ vs $M_{experimental}$ = 3.8, $SD = 0.7$; $t(154) = 3.38$, $p < .00$, d = 0.7), and significantly higher perceived humanity of the follower (H2; $M_{contorl}$ = 3.6, $SD = 0.6$ vs $M_{experimental} =$ 3.9, $SD = 0.6$; t(156) = -2.33, p = .02, d = .64). Thus, H1 and H2 are supported.

Figure 1. Group Differences of Objectification of The Follower/ Perceived Humanity of

The Follower

Gratitude Journal	— →	Objectification of the Follower

Gratitude Journal	+ →	Perceived Humanity of The Follower
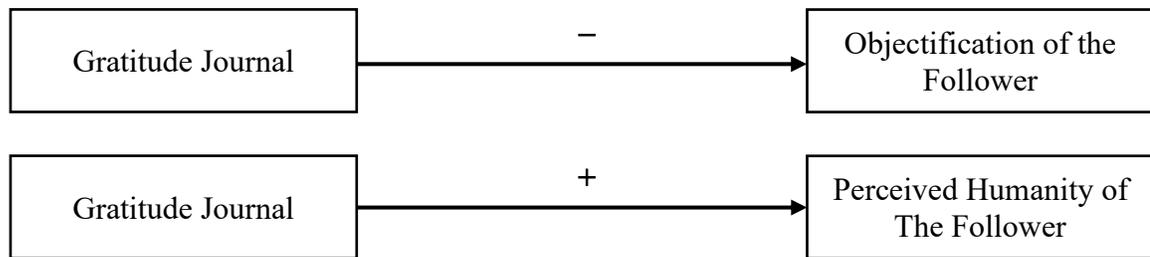
Next, we considered our indirect effects proposed in H3 and H4 (see Figure 2). In support of H3, objectification mediated the relationship between condition and interpersonal perceived closeness, such that compared to the control condition, those in the gratitude condition reported significantly lower objectification and, in turn, higher interpersonal closeness (indirect effect = .19, 95%, CI [.06 .33]; see Table 2). Second, in support of H4, perceived humanity mediated the relationship between condition and perceived interpersonal closeness, such that compared to the control condition, those in the gratitude condition reported significantly higher perceived humanity and, in turn, increased interpersonal closeness (indirect effect = .14, 95%, CI [.01 .27]; see Table 3).

Third, we tested the serial mediation proposed across H5 and H6 (see Figure 3). In support of H5. objectification and perceived interpersonal closeness serially mediated the relationship between condition and individualized consideration, such that compared to the control condition, those in the gratitude condition reported significantly lower objectification and higher perceived interpersonal closeness and in turn, higher individual consideration (indirect effect 1 = .08 (condition ->objectification ->individual consideration), 95%, CI[.09 .33]; Indirect effect 2 = .08 condition -> closeness -

>individual consideration), 95%, CI[.01 .18]; Indirect effect t3 = .04 (condition ->

objectification -> closeness -> individual consideration), 95%, CI [.01 .09], Direct effect

= .14 p =.32 CI [-.14 .41]), thus H5 is supported (see Table 4). Fourth, perceived

humanity and perceived interpersonal closeness serially mediated the relationship

between condition and individual consideration, such that compared to the control

condition, those in the gratitude condition reported significantly higher perceived

humanity and higher perceived interpersonal closeness and in turn, higher individual

consideration (ab1 = .04 (condition-> perceived humanity ->individual consideration),

95%, CI[-.01 .12]; ab2 = .09 (condition -> perceived closeness -> individual

consideration), 95%, CI[.02 .20]; ab3 = .03 (condition -> perceived Humanity ->

closeness -> individual consideration), 95%, CI [.00 .07], ć = .17 p =.2121 CI [-.10 .44]),

thus H6 is not supported. See Table 5 for detailed results.

Figure 2. Indirect Effects Model of Gratitude Journal on Perceived Interpersonal
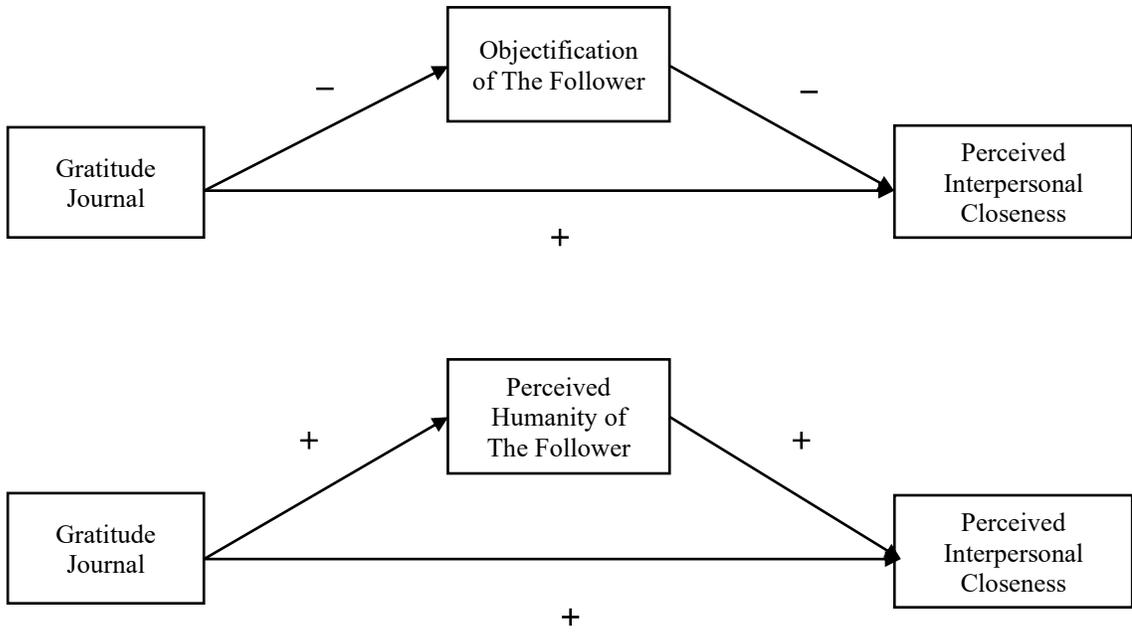
Closeness

Table 2. A Test of Hypothesis 3: Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on

Perceived Closeness through Objectification (n = 156)

Paths	Estimate	Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%	S.E.	P value	R^2
Outcome: Perceived Closeness						
Effect						
Total effect						
Condition -> Perceived closeness	**.55****	.22	.88	.16	.00	.11
Direct effect						
Condition -> Perceived closeness	**.36***	.04	.68	.16	.03	
Indirect effect						
Specific indirect effect						
Condition -> Objectification -> Perceived closeness	**.19**	.06	.33	.07		
Control variable						
Age -> Objectification	.00	-.01	.01	.01	.83	
Age -> Perceived closeness	.00	-.01	.01	.01	.88	
Gender -> Objectification	-.00	-.21	.21	.10	.99	
Gender -> Perceived closeness	**-40****	-.65	-.13	.13	.00	

Note. Bolding means the number is statistically significant

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 3. A Test of Hypothesis 4: Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Perceived Closeness through Perceived Humanity (n = 156)

Paths	Estimate	Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%	S.E.	P value	R^2
Outcome: Perceived closeness						
Effect						
Total effect						
Condition -> Perceived closeness	**.55****	.22	.87	.16	.00	.48
Direct effect						
Condition -> Perceived closeness	**.41****	.10	.72	.15	.00	
Indirect effect						
Specific indirect effect						
Condition -> Perceived humanity -> Perceived closeness	**.14**	.02	.27	.07		
Control variable						
Age -> Perceived humanity	.00	-.00	.01	.96	.34	
Age -> Perceived closeness	.00	-.01	.01	.01	.58	
Gender -> Perceived humanity	-.09	-.26	.08	.10	.29	
Gender -> Perceived closeness	-.34	-.60	-.09	.13	.00	

Note. Bolding means the number is statistically significant

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Figure 3. Indirect Effects Model of Gratitude Journal on Individualized Consideration
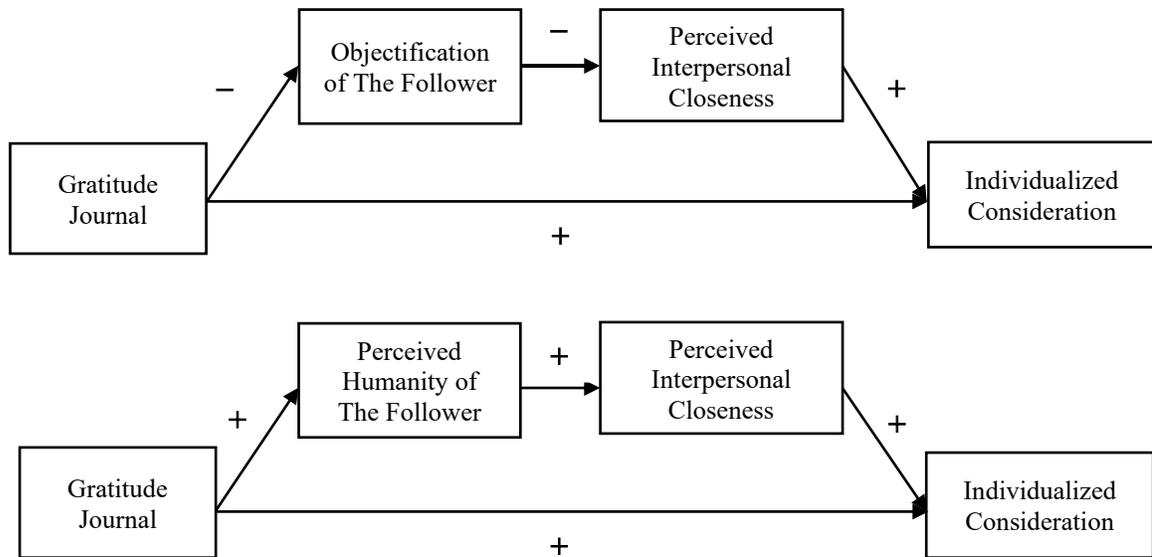
Table 4. A Test of Hypothesis 5: Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Individual Consideration through Objectification and Perceived Individualized Consideration (n = 156)

Paths	Estimate	Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%	S.E.	P value	R^2
Outcome: Individual consideration						
Effect						
Total effect						
Condition -> Individualized Consideration	**.34***	.06	.61	.14	.02	.04
Direct effect						
Condition -> Individualized Consideration	.14	-.14	.41	.14	.32	.16
Indirect effect						
Total indirect effect	**.20**	.09	.33	.06		
Specific indirect effect						
Condition -> objectification -> Individual consideration	**.08**	.00	.18	.04		
Condition -> perceived closeness -> Individual consideration	**.08**	.00	.18	.04		
Condition -> Objectification -> Perceived closeness -> Individualized Consideration	**.04**	.01	.09	.02		
Control variable						
Age -> Objectification	.00	-.01	.01	.00	.88	
Age -> Perceived closeness	.00	-.01	.01	.01	.82	
Age -> Individualized Consideration	.00	-.00	.01	.00	.48	
Gender -> Objectification	.00	-.21	.21	.10	.99	
Gender -> Perceived closeness	**-.40***	-.65	-.14	.13	.00	
Gender -> Individualized Consideration	.07	-.16	.29	.11	.54	

*Note.* Bolding means the number is statistically significant

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 5. A Test of Hypothesis 6: Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Individual Consideration through Perceived Humanity and Perceived Interpersonal Closeness (n = 156)

Paths	Estimate	Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%	S.E.	P value	R^2
Outcome: Individual consideration						
Effect						
Total effect						
Condition -> Individualized Consideration	**.34***	.06	.61	.14	.02	.04
Direct effect						
Condition -> Individualized Consideration	**.17**	.06	.61	.13	.01	
Indirect effect						
Total indirect effect	**.16**	.06	.28	.14		
Specific indirect effect						
Condition -> Perceived humanity -> Individualized closeness	.04	-.01	.12	.03		
Condition -> Perceived Closeness -> Individualized Consideration	**.09**	.02	.20	.05		
Condition -> Perceived Humanity -> Perceived Closeness -> Individualized Consideration	**.03**	.01	.07	.02		
Control variable						
Age -> Perceived Humanity	.00	-.26	.08	.00	.34	
Age -> Perceived closeness	.00	-.26	.08	.00	.34	
Age -> Individualized Consideration	.00	-.01	.01	.00	.52	
Gender -> Perceived Humanity	-.09	-.26	.08	.09	.30	
Gender -> Perceived closeness	-.34	-.01	.00	.00	.58	
Gender -> Individualized Consideration	.09	-.14	.31	.11	.43	

Note. Bolding means the number is statistically significant

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Tests of conditional indirect effects

We hypothesized that leaders with higher desire for power would display weaker intervention effects (Hypotheses 7 to 8). After controlling for age and gender, results showed that leaders' desire for power did not moderate the first stage of the indirect effect of condition on individual consideration through serial mediation of objectification of target follower and perceived interpersonal closeness, or through serial mediation of perceived humanity of target follower and perceived interpersonal closeness objectification of followers. As seen in Tables 6 and 7, all indexes of moderated mediation's CI include zero which means there were no significant differences between the indirect effects between the levels of the moderator in the 95% confidence interval (H7: Index = .01, SE = .01, 95%, CI[-.01 .04]); (H8: Index = .01, SE = .01, 95%, CI[-.02 .03]). Therefore, hypotheses (H7 and H8) were not supported for these mechanisms. This means leaders' desire for power did not significantly moderate the indirect effects of condition on individual consideration through objectification.

Figure 4. Conditional Indirect Effects Model of Gratitude Journal on Individualized
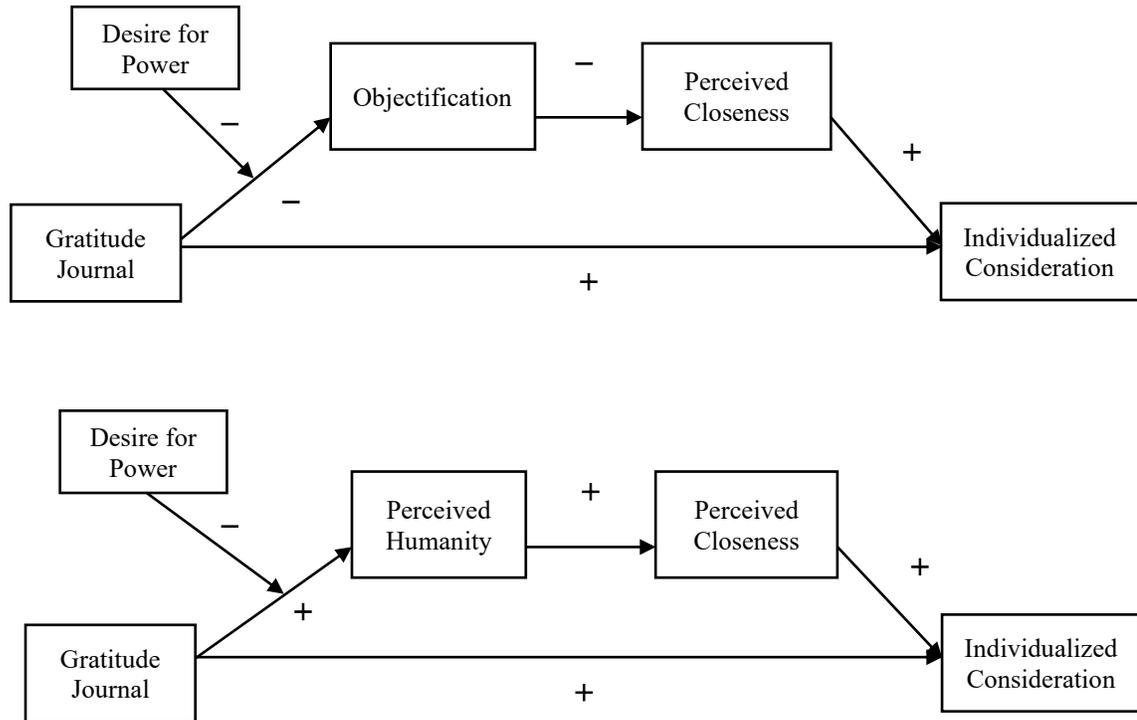
Consideration

Table 6. A Test of Hypothesis 7: Conditional Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Individual Consideration (n = 156)

Mediator	Index of moderated mediation		Low desire for power		Moderate desire for power		High desire for power	
	Index, (SE)	BCa CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI
			Dependent variable = Individual Consideration					
Objectification of the follower	.01 (.01)	-.01 .04	.03(.02)	.01 .08	.04(.02)	.01 .09	.05 (.03)	.01 .11

Note. The notation "Boot ab" pertains to the bootstrapped indirect effect, with a bootstrap sample size of 10,000. Unstandardized regression coefficients were obtained from bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (Bca CI). A confidence interval excluding zero indicates evidence in favor of the indirect effects

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 7. A Test of Hypothesis 8: Conditional Indirect Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Individual Consideration (n = 156)

Moderator: desire for power / Mediator	Index of moderated mediation		Low desire for power		Moderate desire for power		High desire for power	
	Index, (SE)	BCa CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI	Boot ab, (SE)	Bca CI
			Dependent variable = Individual Consideration					
Perceived Humanity of the follower	.01 (.01)	-.02 .03	.03 (.02)	-.01 .08	.03 (.02)	.01 .07	.03 (.02)	-.01 .09

Note. The notation "Boot ab" pertains to the bootstrapped indirect effect, with a bootstrap sample size of 10,000. Unstandardized regression coefficients were obtained from bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (Bca CI). A confidence interval excluding zero indicates evidence in favor of the indirect effects

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Chapter 8: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of gratitude journaling on leaders' individualized consideration intention toward their followers. To understand the mechanisms through which felt gratitude operates, we relied on tenets from the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012). We hypothesized that gratitude interventions can foster changes in leaders' concepts of their follower such as decreased objectification, and increased humanity. Results showed that compared to those in a control group, those who completed a gratitude journal experienced (H1) decreased objectification and (H2) increased perceived humanity toward their follower, supporting our first two hypotheses. These findings suggest that having leaders reflect on a time in which they are grateful towards just one follower, even for as little as 3 minutes, can change their concepts toward their follower in a positive way.

We hypothesized that gratitude intervention would increase perceived interpersonal closeness through the change in a leader's concepts toward their follower – decreased objectification and increased perceived humanity. Hypothesis 3 was supported with a statistically significant indirect effect. This means that the relationship between writing a gratitude journal and perceived closeness is partially mediated by the decrease in objectification. The results imply that gratitude intervention made leaders less objectify their follower, which in turn made them feel closer to them. We also found a significant indirect effect for hypothesis 4. Leaders in the gratitude intervention group reported that they view their follower as having more mental abilities like reasoning and moral emotions (i.e., increase in perceived humanity), then they felt more closeness to them compared to the control group. Taking hypotheses 3 and 4 together, we can conclude that

gratitude intervention increased desire to build the relationship through the change in their conception toward their follower.

Next, to understand the mechanisms by which a gratitude intervention works on leaders' behavioral intention toward their follower, we tested whether objectification/perceived humanity and perceived closeness would serially mediate the relationship. We found that the gratitude intervention increases leaders' intentions to engage in individualized consideration due to the serial effects of decreasing objectification via increased closeness (H5). However, we didn't find support for our hypothesis 6 which implies that perceived humanity was not increased high enough to mediate the relationship between condition and individualized consideration. While our test of serial mediation cannot conclusively reveal a causal order, our hypotheses grounded in the find-remind-and-bind theory suggest that gratitude interventions can change leader's responsive behavioral intention toward their follower via decrease in their objectification of the follower, and motivation to have supportive relationships.

Lastly, we also explored an important boundary condition to test the effectiveness of the intervention across leaders (H7 and H8). Since the social distance theory of power (Magee & Smith, 2012) suggests gratitude interventions can function differently for individuals with a high desire for power, we predicted that leaders' desire for power would moderate the effectiveness of the intervention. Specifically, we hypothesized that leaders' desire for power would moderate the link between the gratitude journal intervention and objectification/perceived humanity, such that the benefits of gratitude interventions would be reduced for those high in desire for power. However, we did not find support for desire for power as a moderator. This implies that gratitude may operate

similarly for leaders, regardless of their desire for maintaining or enhancing power in the organization.

In sum, our study provides evidence to suggest that a gratitude journal exercise can foster leader's positive leadership behavioral intentions toward their follower through changes in their concepts of follower and motivation to establish closeness.

Theoretical Contributions

First, this study extends the scope of the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012) into workplace contexts, revealing the utility of this theory to help explain how leaders' perceptions and motivations might drive future behavior. This is important given the unique aspects of a leader-follower relationship. Leaders are often incentivized to produce results and are performance-driven. Organizations need to better understand how to humanize this relationship in order to foster a more supportive and sustainable leader-follower relationship. In order to do this, we connected literatures on dehumanization and humanity to theorize mechanisms that might foster interpersonal closeness. Previous dehumanization (i.e., objectification, perceived humanity) studies were predominantly conducted outside of a workplace context (e.g., violence and intergroup conflict; Haslam, 2022). However, dehumanization might be particularly prevalent in workplace domains (Waytz & Schroeder, 2014), and can bring deleterious consequences in organization functioning by causing immoral behavior (Kouchaki et al., 2018), social exclusion and disconnection (Haslam, 2022), and decreases in well-being (Lagios et al., 2021). We built on this literature by testing relational processes as implied by the find-remind-and-bind theory.

Our findings provide support in particular for the "find" function of gratitude: we identified leader gratitude as an important antecedent to reduce objectification and increase humanization. Giving leaders time (even just a few minutes) to thoughtfully reflect on their gratefulness towards one follower fostered meaningful identification of potential high-quality relationship with the follower, short-term cognitive shifts (i.e., changes in objectification and humanization), motivational (i.e., a desire to be more interpersonally close), and behavioral changes (i.e., leader intention to enact individual consideration). This delineation of mechanisms helps to articulate more fully how the find-remind-and-bind theory (Algoe, 2012) may function in the workplace and provides an empirical test of a series of cognition and motivation mechanisms to explain this process. The theory posits that gratitude can result in short-term conceptual and motivational changes toward the benefactor (e.g., view the benefactor in a more positive way, more willing to associate with the benefactor). However, the theory does not mention whether there is a serial relationship between shifts in concepts and motivation. Our study integrates recent biological and psychological modeling regarding the process of emotion to motivation to behavior (Theriault, 2023), and results reveal a relationship between leaders' concept of follower (i.e., objectification/humanization) -- to interpersonal closeness -- to responsive behavioral intention (i.e., individualized consideration). In this respect, our study advances knowledge by investigating the serial mediation mechanisms undergirding the find-remind-bind process.

Lastly, our study did not find support for a moderating mechanism of leader's desire for power on the indirect effect of the gratitude intervention on the first mediator - objectification/perceived humanity –desire for power did not weaken or strengthen these

relationships. Though we predicted that those with a higher desire for power would be less susceptible to our intervention, results suggested that the intervention's effects across leaders' desire for power were not statistically different. The social distance theory of power has principles based on one's current status rather than the desire for power. Therefore, the theory may not influence one's desire for power, as explained by Magee and Smith in 2012. This can be because the social distance theory of power made their principles based on one's current status not on desire for power. For example, a leader may have much higher desire for power than the power that their current position can have, and the theory's principles may only apply to the power they can have with their current position. Therefore, the theory may not influence one's desire for power (Magee & Smith, 2012). An alternative explanation for non-significant effects may be attributed to methodological restrictions. Although there is no definite way to calculate the required participants for moderated mediation, some previous research gathered at least 350 participants (e.g., Yang & Tabri, 2022) suggesting our analyses in comparison may not have had a sufficiently powered sample (N =156), to support our moderated serial mediation model.

Practical Implications

Based on the results from this study, we offer practical implications for managers who seek to foster transformational leadership and relational development between leaders and followers. First, our results suggest that managers may want to consider gratitude journaling as a practice to increase positive relationships between leaders and followers, particularly on account of its utility to reduce objectification. Previous studies suggest that objectification is associated with reduced employee work performance, well-

being, and quality of interpersonal relationships, as well as increased workplace mistreatment (Christoff, 2014; Gervais, 2016; Ramsey et al., 2017; Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Given the various detrimental effects of objectification, gratitude interventions may be a versatile tool to improve a wide range of employee outcomes.

Furthermore, our study points to the economic advantage of such an intervention. Managers looking to improve leader behaviors should opt for gratitude journal interventions because they are low-cost and time-efficient compared to existing leadership interventions which require a more significant commitment from top management (Locklear et al., 2021). For example, transformational leadership interventions can include five days of workshops to systematically train managers' behavior (Richter et al., 2016). In contrast, the average time spent on the gratitude journal exercise in our study was around 4 minutes. Indeed, gratitude interventions have become a "hot topic" because of their cost-efficient advantage; for example, the former CEO of Campbell's Soup regularly wrote gratitude notes to his employees in order to foster make personal connections with each employee; companies who adopt gratitude intervention experienced relational and organizational benefits (Newman, 2017).

Limitations and Future Research

All research is not without limitations, and we highlight two limitations that could benefit from future research attention. First, one potential limitation of this study concerns the causality of our serial mediation model. It can be difficult to establish the temporal sequence of variables in a cross-sectional design where all measurements are assessed at the same time point (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). For example, it may be hard to determine whether the found associations between mediating variables (i.e.,

objectification, interpersonal closeness) are truly mediating the relationship between the gratitude intervention and the leader's intent to engage in individualized consideration in the order that we theorized. Future research could employ a longitudinal study design where the two mediators are measured at multiple time points to help establish the causal sequence between them.

Second, and related to our cross-sectional design and measurement of individualized consideration intent, we are unable to conclude that individualized consideration behavior will ultimately manifest. If the gratitude intervention only changes cognition and motivation but no changes in behavior, it may reduce efficacy. Future study designs could also include measurement of this behavior from the follower or other coworkers to alleviate concerns of common method bias.

A third potential limitation of our study is the lack of contextual consideration. Although we sampled leaders from various industries, we did not have a clear understanding of the specific industries that were represented or whether certain industries would benefit more or less from the gratitude journaling intervention. Therefore, future research should explore the various industry settings that may moderate the effectiveness of gratitude journaling in promoting positive leader-follower relationships. For instance, it would be valuable to investigate whether the hierarchical culture in military settings affects the effectiveness of gratitude journaling as an intervention to engender more positive conceptions of followers among leaders. Such research could shed light on the applicability of gratitude journaling as an intervention in different organizational contexts and inform the development of tailored interventions for specific industries or cultures. We also offer additional future research directions given

the results established in our study. First, given our results indicated that a short gratitude journal exercise was sufficient to shape cognitions and motivations, future research should investigate the benefits of this practice beyond the sole outcome examined in this study. Gratitude journaling may have other radiant benefits for the leader-follower dyad, and beyond. For example, gratitude can increase work performance, well-being, and quality of interpersonal relationships, and decrease increased workplace mistreatment (Christoff, 2014; Gervais, 2016; Ramsey et al., 2017; Zurbriggen et al., 2011) via change in one's cognitions and motivations.

Second, while we found significant effects to help predict individualized consideration intent, our cross-sectional design does not allow us to test how long short-term cognitive and motivational changes last. Future research should test the effects of a gratitude intervention to see if the benefits extend throughout a day, or longer.

Third, future research could explore potential alternative moderators to the relationships tested here. For example. leader's level of experience or followers' characteristics may serve as important boundary conditions. Indeed, people who are higher in trait gratitude, emotional intelligence, and high on certain traits of Big Five personality (e.g., extraversion, agreeable, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and less neuroticism) are more likely to feel gratitude (Szcześniak et al., 2020; McCullough et al, 2004; Wood et al., 2008).

Conclusion

This research contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics between leaders and followers, particularly in terms of conceptions that drive leadership behavior. Our findings suggest that gratitude is an effective intervention for fostering leaders'

individualized consideration intent through improvements in concepts and relational

motivation toward their follower. Specifically, we found that writing about grateful

events with a follower decreases objectification and increases perceived closeness toward

the follower, thus motivating higher individualized consideration from leaders. Moreover,

our results indicate that this effect may not be hindered by power-seeking tendencies

among certain individuals. As such, organizations might consider implementing gratitude

journaling as part of their leadership training programs in order to promote more

constructive relationships between leaders and followers while improving overall

business outcomes.

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Figure 5: Pre-screen survey measures

Thank you for your interest in our survey! Please start by answering the following questions.

In what country do you currently reside?	**PScountry** (1) United States (2) United Kingdom (3) Canada ==(4) Other==
How many hours do you work per week?	**PShours** ==(1) Less than 10 hours per week== ==(2) 11-20 hours per week== (3) 21-30 hours per week (4) 31-40 hours per week (5) 41-50 hours per week (6) 51-60 hours per week (7) More than 60 hours per week
What is your employment status?	**PSepstatus** **(1) Full-Time** **(2) Part-Time**

	(3) Due to start a new job within the next month
	(4) Unemployed (and job-seeking)
	(5) Not in paid work (e.g. homemaker', 'retired or disabled)
	(6) Other
At work, do you have any supervisory responsibilities? In other words, do you have the authority to give instructions to subordinates?	**PSsuprole** **(1) Yes** **(2) No**
Does your work require you to regularly interact with other employees (e.g. co-workers, colleagues, subordinates, assistants)?	**PSinteract** **(1) Yes** **(2) No** **(3) Rather not say**
Branching if a participant's answers include one of the items in yellow.	**End of the survey with a message "Thank you for interest in our survey; however, you do not meet inclusion criteria for participation. Have a nice day!"**

Thanks for participating in our research study! By participating in this, you will help us learn about how things are going for you at work.

Please enter your Prolific ID here (this should auto-fill; please take a minute to ensure it is accurate) _____

Figure 6: Demographics / Job Information

Instruction: The first part of our survey will ask questions to get to know more about you and your job.	
What is your age? Please enter in whole numbers (e.g., 39)	**AGE**
What race category best describes you? (Please check all that apply)	**Race** 1. Prefer not to say 2. Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent) 3. East/South Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent or Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent) 4. Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis descent) 5. Latino (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)

	6. Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian descent - i.e. Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish) 7. South Asian (e.g., South Asian descent - i.e., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean) 8. White (e.g., European descent) 9. Other _____ 10. Unknown
Branching: If Race = 9, then: If you selected 'other' for your race/ethnicity, please specify:	**Raceother (text box)**
How do you self-identify?	**Gender** *1 Man* *2 Woman* 2 *Non-binary* 3 Prefer to self-describe *4 Prefer not to answer*

What is your highest level of education?	**Educ** 1 Technical/Community college degree 2 Bachelor's degree 2 Master's degree 3 Doctoral degree 4 Professional degree (e.g., JD, MD, DDS)
Over the past month, what percentage of your work was done remotely or away from your central office?	**RemoteWk** **Q:** 0 = no remote work; 100 = all remote work 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Work arrangement
How long have you been working in your current position? Please provide the years and months using numbers.	**Jobtenure** Years: Months:

Figure 7: Study Measures

We will now ask you some questions about your experiences on the job and how you feel about your work environment.

Measurement Group 1: (Measures will be presented in presented order)

The Desire for power	
Lammers, J., Stoker, J. I., Rink, F., & Galinsky, A. D. (2016). To have control over or to be free from others? The desire for power reflects a need for autonomy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 42(4), 498–512. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216634064	
Instructions: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree 3: somewhat disagree 4: neither agree nor disagree, 5: somewhat agree, 6: agree, 7: strongly agree)?	
1. I would like to have more power in this company.	**DFP1**
2. I would like to have a better position in this company.	**DFP2**

*Note - Participants will be randomly assigned to one of the following journal exercise conditions.

Gratitude Journal Exercise

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84(2), 377–389. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377

The following is an exercise in journaling. We now would like you to spend some time reflecting on your experiences at work with **one of your followers (i.e., someone who directly reports to you, at work).**

It is required that you spend at least 3 minutes on this task (a countdown timer will help you keep track).

Experimental Condition: Try to think about a recent interaction with a follower at work (within the past month), for which you are grateful. This interaction might involve a moment in which your follower was supportive, a time in which your follower made a sacrifice or contribution for you be it big or small, a time in which your follower was helpful beyond their role, or any moment in which you felt thankful towards your follower. Please list the initials of this follower below:	Initialsecon *ECON*

Now, we would like to learn a little bit more about this interaction. Using the textbox below, please describe this interaction in detail. What did {the follower: piped initals} do? Why are you grateful for this experience?	
Control condition: Try to think about a recent interaction with a follower that affected you at work (within the past month). This might include any recent interaction between the two of you be it big or small, any correspondence or communication between you and your follower, a time in which you worked on a project together, or a task in your job that involves your follower. Please list the initials of this follower below:	Initialsccon *CCON*

Now, we would like to learn a little bit more about this interaction. Using the textbox below, please describe this interaction in detail. What did (the follower: piped initials) do? Why do you think it affected you?	

Manipulation Check: State Gratitude

The Gratitude Adjective Checklist (GAC) (Modified from McCullough, 2002)

Instructions: Think about how you feel after writing the previous journal. Using a scale from 1 (not at all), 2 (a little), 3 (moderately), 4 (quite a bit), to 5 (extremely). please choose a number to indicate your level of feeling the following: I feel grateful ___ I feel thankful ___ I feel appreciative ___	**MCgrat1** **MCgrat2** **MCgrat3**

Measurement Group2: (Measures will be presented in random order)

Perceived interpersonal closeness   Popovic, M. ; Milne, D. ; Barrett, P. (2003). The scale of perceived interpersonal closeness (PICS). Clinical psychology and psychotherapy, Vol.10 (5), p.286-301

* Note, in the blank space below, a follower's initials that the participant typed in the "Initials" question will be automatically inserted	
Please choose how you anticipate relating with _____ (initials). (Please choose one from 1.distant 2.neither close nor distant 3.a little bit close 4.moderately close 5.very close 6.fully close) 1. How close you would ideally like to feel to ____. 2. How close you currently feel to _____.	**PICSI** **PICSA**

Measurement Group3: (Measures will be presented in random order)

Objectification of follower Gruenfeld, D. H., Inesi, M. E., Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Power and the objectification of social targets. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95(1), 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.95.1.111 To what degree do you agree with these statements about how you think of_____? (1: strongly disagree, 4: neither agree nor disagree, 7: strongly agree). * Note, in the blank space below, a follower's initials that the participant typed in the "Initials" question will be automatically inserted

	OBF1
1. I think more about what _____ can do for me than I can do for _____.	OBF2
	OBF3
2. I tend to contact _____ only when I need something from him/her.	OBF4
3. I am interested in _____'s feelings because I want to be close with him/her (R)	OBF5
	OBF6
4. I try to motivate _____ to do things that will help me succeed.	OBF7
5. The relationship is important to me because it helps me accomplish my goals.	OBF8
	OBF9
6. _____ is very useful to me.	OBF10
7. My relationship with _____ is based on how much I enjoy our relationship, rather than how productive our relationship is. (R)	OBF11
8. Please select strongly agree for your response to this item.	
9. If the nature of my job (or _____) changed and _____ wasn't helpful anymore, the relationship probably wouldn't continue.	
10. Someone else with the same skill set could become equally important to me.	
11. I really like _____ a lot even though s/he is not all that useful to me. (R)	
(R) = reverse-scored item	

Measurement Group4: (Measures will be presented in random order)

Perceived Humanity - Humanity items

Rai, T. S., Valdesolo, P., & Graham, J. (2017). Perceived Humanity increases instrumental violence, but not moral violence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *114*(32), 8511–8516. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1705238114

* Note, in the blank space below, a follower's initials that the participant typed in the "Initials" question will be automatically inserted

* Scales are ranging from 1(not capable at all) to 5(completely capable)

1. To what extent do you think _____ is capable of engaging in thought processes such as planning, reasoning, and remembering?	HAgency HExperience HPMEmotion HNMEmotion
2. To what extent do you think _____ is capable of experiencing sensations such as hunger, fear, pain, and pleasure?	
3. To what extent do you think _____ is capable of love and compassion?	
4. To what extent do you think _____ is capable of anger and hatred?	

Transformational Leader Behavior – Providing individual support

We are now interested in your interactions with (Initials) in the future. To what degree do you agree with these statements (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat

disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly

agree)

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990).

Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader,

satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. The leadership quarterly, 1(2),

107-142

* Note, in the blank space below, a follower's initials that the participant typed in the

"Initials" question will be automatically inserted

1. I will act without considering _____'s feelings (R)	**TLIS1**
2. I will show respect for _____'s personal feelings	**TLIS2**
3. I will behave in a manner thoughtful of _____'s personal needs.	**TLIS3**
4. I will treat _____without considering their personal feelings (R)	**TLIS4**

Measurement Group5: (Measures will be presented in presented order)

Unexpectedness of the event	
To what degree was the event that you reflected on in the journal exercise unexpected? 1:not at all 6: very much	**UNEXP**

Relative Status	
Instructions: Relative to your own workplace status, how much job status would you say _____ has compared to you? (In the blank a follower's initials that the participant typed in the "initials" question will be automatically inserted)	
1. A lot less status 2. A little less status 3. The same amount of status 4. A little more status 5. A lot more status	**RS**

Demographics of the follower and the leader-follower relationship

What race category best describes _____? (Please check all that apply)	**FRace**
	1. Prefer not to say
	2. Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
	3. East/South Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent or Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent)
	4. Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis descent)
	5. Latino (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)
	6. Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian descent - i.e. Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish)
	7. South Asian (e.g., South Asian descent - i.e., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean)
	8. White (e.g., European descent)
	9. Other _____
	10. Unknown
Branching: If Race = 9, then: If you selected 'other' for your follower's	**Raceother (text box)**

race/ethnicity, please specify:	
How does _____ self-identify?	**FGender** *1 Man* *2 Woman* *4 Non-binary* *5 Other* [ ] *4 Prefer not to answer*
What the approximate age of your follower?	**FAge** 1.Under 20 years old 2. 20 – 29 3. 30- 30 4. 40 – 49 5. 50 – 59 6. 60 – 69 7. 70 – 79 8. 80 +

Frequency of Contact with the follower	FCL How often do you have contact and correspond with your follower? 1.Never 2.Rarely 3.Several times per month 4.Once per week 5.Several times per week 6.Once per day 7.Several times per day
Length of interaction with follower How long have you been working with_____? Please provide the years and months using numbers.	SFI Years: Months:

Open-ended

Instruction : Before we wrap up, do you have any additional comments about the topics you were asked about in this survey? Do you have any feedback about the survey itself? If not, you can continue to the end.

End of survey message: Thank you for participating in our study. Please click "Next" to be redirected back to Prolific so that we may arrange for your compensation.

Message for ineligible participants: You are ineligible for this study, as you have provided information which is inconsistent with your Prolific prescreening responses. Please return your submission on Prolific by selecting the 'Stop without completing' button.