

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: STEPPING INTO THE BREACH:  
FOLLOWERS RECLAIMING LEADERSHIP  
FROM FORMAL LEADERS

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Recently, DeRue (2011) reconceptualized leadership as a dynamic process in which individuals engage in interdependent and interlocking acts of leading and following called “double interacts.” The behaviors that take place in double interacts are categorized as claims and grants, and they signify the assertion or bestowment of status as leader or follower in interpersonal exchanges. The present study ( $N = 367$ ) builds upon DeRue’s theoretical model by testing antecedents to claiming and granting. Results show that leader behavior predicts followers’ decisions to claim or grant leader status. Furthermore, followers’ trust perceptions mediate the relationship between leader behavior and claiming and granting, and leader identity magnitude moderates the mediating effect of trust. This study has implications for understanding leader influence, claiming and granting, trust, and leader identity construction.

STEPPING INTO THE BREACH: FOLLOWERS RECLAIMING LEADERSHIP  
FROM FORMAL LEADERS

by

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**Table 1.** Item Desirability Comparison

| Item Comparison    | t-value | df     | p-value |
|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Claim 2 vs Grant 3 | -.40    | 165.97 | .69     |
| Claim 3 vs Grant 4 | -.42    | 166.01 | .67     |
| Claim 5 vs Grant 5 | -.97    | 167.8  | .34     |
| Claim 4 vs Grant 1 | 1.57    | 166.83 | .19     |
| Claim 1 vs Grant 2 | 1.39    | 165.84 | .16     |

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**Figure 1**

*Proposed Theoretical Model*

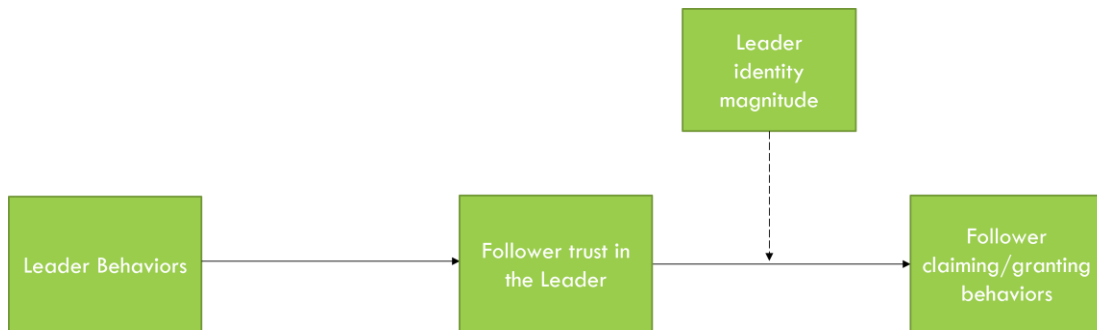
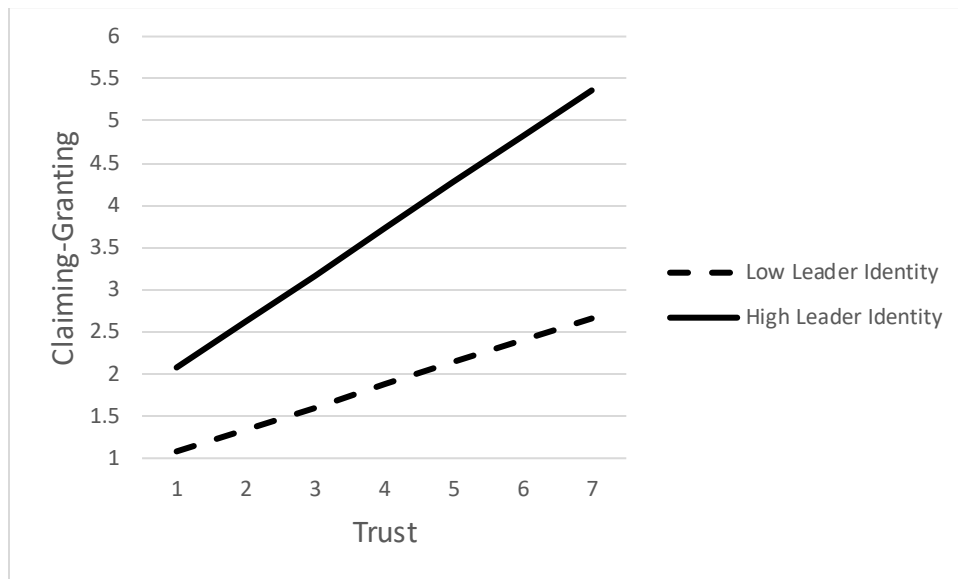


**Figure 2**

*Plot of Predicted Values*



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Recently, top-down, hierarchal definitions of leadership have given way to a more dynamic conceptualization in which leadership emerges from the repeated interactions among team members over time (Northouse, 2019; Uhl-Bien, 2014). In other words, leadership is not a property of individuals and leaders cannot exist independently from followers. This reconceptualization is called the relational leadership perspective (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In this perspective, repeated interactions among team members require them to occasionally lead and occasionally follow (Uhl-Bien, 2014).

If a particular team member (e.g., team member 1) wants to claim team leadership, the other team members have to be willing to grant that role to team member 1. Granting the leader role to others requires the rest of the team members to enact follower roles. Over time, different team members may claim and be granted the leader role. The pattern of claiming and granting of leadership among members of a team forms a unique team interaction fingerprint that DeRue (2011) calls the “double interact.” The double interact is a central feature of DeRue’s adaptive leadership model.

DeRue’s adaptive leadership model highlights the importance of people’s identity as a leader for this claiming and granting process. Prior research has demonstrated that one’s identity affects one’s subsequent behavior (e.g., Epitropaki et al., 2017) as well as one’s patterns of interactions with others. Not surprisingly, then, seeing oneself as a leader effects motivation to lead (DeRue, & Ashford, 2010; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & van Dijk, 2007) as well as the seeking out of opportunities to develop leadership skills (Day et al., 2008). In other words, the stronger a person’s leader identity is, the more likely that person is to make a claim for the leader

role in the future. However, the relationship between leader identity and the frequency of claiming the leader role is not unidirectional. A person's identity as a leader develops and strengthens over time as the frequency of successful enactments of the leader role increases (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Knippenberg et al., 2004; Lord & Brown, 2004; Lord et al., 1999; Markus & Sentis, 1982; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). The process of creating these identities is called identity work (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). In the leadership realm, identity work involves people thoughtfully experimenting with possible alternative versions (aka provisional selves) of leadership each time they have an opportunity to enact this role (Day & Harrison, 2007; Day & Dragoni, 2015; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Ibarra, 1999; 2004; Snow & Anderson, 1987). People retain the parts of these experiments that are reinforced by others and reject those parts that are not. As the leader and follower identities develop and start to generalize over contexts and time, they become linked to the person's core values and thus, the identity becomes more central to the person's self-concept (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Of course, people only have the opportunity to do this identity work if the other group members trust that person and grant them the leader role. Trust is a cornerstone upon which leadership is built (Simpson, 2007) and it is a central topic in contemporary leadership literature (Burke et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Drescher et al., 2014). The level of trust among leaders and followers influences a variety of outcomes, such as follower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, citizenship behaviors, and cooperation (Bligh, 2017; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). However, despite repeated documentation that leader behaviors influence organizational outcomes through trust (Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Gilstrap & Collins, 2012;

Goodwin et al., 2011), less is known about the impact of trust on claiming and granting behaviors between leaders and followers.

My study addressed DeRue and Ashford's (2010) call for research on the double interact process and, more precisely, on the antecedents to claiming and granting behaviors. Of course, a complete test of DeRue's model requires a longitudinal approach to study the dynamic interaction between one's identity and the claiming/granting process. However, due to fact that this was the first empirical assessment focusing on the antecedents of this process, I froze this dynamic process at a single point midway in its evolution. I accomplished this by using the traditional leader-follower paradigm in which there is an identifiable leader. I then had study participants play the role of followers. In this way, I assessed the impact of leader behavior on followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. This paradigm also allowed me to address several gaps in the literature. Specifically, I explored (a) how leader behaviors influence followers' actions through trust; (b) how follower trust in the leader affects the claiming/granting behaviors of followers; (c) the role that followers' internalized leader identity plays in their decisions to grant or claim the leader role; and (d) whether leader behavior effects follower claiming/granting behavior through the mediating role of follower trust. I addressed these gaps by conducting a cross-sectional vignette-based study in which I analyze the mediating effects of trust on the relationship between leader behaviors and followers' decisions to accept, reject, or assert influence. Further, I examined the moderating effects of followers' internalized leader identity on the leader trust-follower claiming/granting relationship.

As a result of freezing this dynamic leader-follower interaction in my study, participants were placed in the role of followers who faced a dilemma with their formal leader in which they had to decide between claiming the leader or follower role. Therefore, my study was framed to

address Uhl-Bien et al.'s (2014) concern regarding the limited testing of the constructionist approach to followership. This approach emphasizes followers' power in influencing the leader-follower relationship (p. 2). Additionally, I investigated Burke et al.'s (2007) proposition that trust in the leader facilitates followership. To illustrate my conceptualization of the relationships between leader behavior, trust, and identity I provide my theoretical model in Figure 1 (please see Appendix A).

As shown in this figure, I proposed that leader behavior influences follower claiming and granting behavior through follower trust in the leader. Furthermore, I contended that the relationship between follower trust and claiming/granting behavior is moderated by the degree to which the follower holds the identity of "leader" as part of their self-concept. To better explain the reasoning behind my proposed study and theoretical model, I begin with a review of the literature on the leadership process.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Leadership as a Relational Phenomenon**

In the 1940s and 1950s, applied psychology conceptualized leadership as a property of individuals who were born with a set of attributes and traits that destined them to emerge as leaders (Northouse, 2019). Over time, however, this conceptualization evolved and incorporated more factors so that it better captured the reality of leadership. The field moved from seeing leadership as one best style applicable across all situations to a more complex picture in which different leadership styles are optimal as a function of context. For example, situational leadership theory, which suggests that effective leadership requires a tailored leadership style, is based on a variety of situational factors (McCleskey, 2014). The importance of context was highlighted in the GLOBE Study which found that members of different societies held differing expectations of leaders, and that their expectations were influenced by cultural values (House et al., 2004). The field's conceptualization of leadership became even more complex when it was realized that followers play an active role in forming and determining the nature of the leader-follower relationship. Thus, the field moved away from a leader-centric perspective to the relational perspective.

One traditional leadership theory, the leader member exchange (LMX) theory, is very consistent with the new relational perspective (Bauer & Erdogan, 2015; Van Breukelen et al, 2006). However, for many years, and despite its consistency with the relational perspective, LMX was interpreted as a leader-centric model. Indeed, our contemporary understanding of the relational perspective actually grew out of the LMX research line (Uhl-Bein, 2006; Antonakis & Day, 2018) and scholars are continuing to advance it today (e.g., Hanges et al, in press).

According to the relational perspective, leadership is co-created by leaders and followers. As groups (ranging from 2 individuals to many) form and members start to interact with each other, their behavior becomes increasingly coordinated. Group member coordination occurs as a result of each group member either unintentionally or deliberately influencing other group members. Over time, the influence of various group members starts to become asymmetric. One group member (Member A) may have a stronger and more frequent influence than other group members. Leadership is said to exist as the degree of asymmetric influence among group members increases and stabilizes over time (Hanges et al., in press).

The relational perspective contributes to the field in important ways. First, this perspective acknowledges that there can be one or multiple group leaders at any given time. Additionally, it allows for the possibility that the leader(s) at time one may not remain the leader(s) at a later time as influence is negotiated between group members (Epitropaki, 2018). Furthermore, the relational perspective distinguishes leadership from formal roles, occupations, and hierarchical positions. As such, it makes leadership available to those who do not occupy roles in which leader behavior is formally required. Finally, the dual influence process that can occur between group members is consistent with the growing literature on followership. This provides a necessary bridge for connecting two parts of the leadership process that have often been insufficiently studied in isolation. (Uhl-Bien, 2014; Bastardo & Van Vugt, 2019).

#### *Double Interacts as the Foundation of the Leadership Process*

DeRue (2011) defines double interacts as interdependent and interlocking acts of leading and following. Consistent with the relational perspective, DeRue rejects the unidirectional influence pattern that traditional leadership theories maintain, and instead emphasizes that leaders and followers have reciprocal influence on each other (Uhl-Bien, 2014; Fairhurst &

Grant, 2010). The interdependent nature of double interacts stems from the idea that leadership is only present when one actor's attempt to assert or accept influence is met with a reciprocated assertion or acceptance of influence. In other words, one can attempt to lead all they want, but it is only when another chooses to follow that the individual acts of leadership and followership are legitimized, and an iteration of the leadership process is consummated. Double interacts are also understood as interlocking because leadership and followership are simultaneously a function of and contingent upon the reciprocated behavior of another. When influence is asserted and accepted, an ongoing and patterned series of responses begins to form. Every subsequent response from one actor primes the response of the other, and thus an interlocking relationship is established and perpetuated until one or both actors decide to break the pattern.

Double interacts describe the co-construction of leader identities through claims and grants of status (DeRue, 2011; Acton et al., 2019). Identity claims involve actions and behaviors that assert one's identity as leader or follower whereas identity grants refer to actions and behaviors that bestow a leader or follower identity onto another person (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Marchiondo et al., 2015). Leader identity development has gained recent popularity in the literature (Epitropaki, 2017; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Miscenko et al., 2017). Findings from recent studies have highlighted relationships between leader identity and several aspects of leadership, including motivation to lead (Guillen et al., 2015), leader behavior (Chang & Johnson, 2010), leader development (Day & Harrison, 2007), and leader emergence (Kwok et al., 2018). The present study advances the literature on leader identity by examining the differential effect that one's internalized leader identity has on their decision to grant or claim status when facing uncertainty.

There are several important points to make about the nature of claiming and granting. First, DeRue notes that there is no order of precedence to claiming and granting. While a grant may occur in response to a claim, one may also initiate or prescribe a leader-follower relationship by first granting status to another. For example, a person may bestow a leader identity on another by simply referring to them as their leader before any leadership claim is made. This is often the case when new members join organizations in which specific role relationships have been collectively endorsed. On the other hand, a person may grant a follower identity to another by specifying their expectation that the other person act in accordance with instruction received from a third party. Second, claims and grants may be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal claims and grants involve spoken endorsement of leader or follower identities, whereas non-verbal claims and grants involve behavior that is consistent with the claiming and granting. Finally, claims and grants can also be direct or indirect. Direct identity claims and grants involve overt actions and behaviors that communicate one's identity as leader or follower, whereas indirect claims and grants are more subtle. The grants and claims are often combinations of the last two points. For example, a direct verbal leadership claim might include a public statement such as "I am the leader of our organization." In this instance, one is claiming leader status for themselves and expecting that the other team members will grant this status to them. On the other hand, an indirect non-verbal granting of the leadership role to others occurs when an organizational member actively waits to be called upon by a specific other in a meeting before answering a question for which they have the answer. In this case, one is granting the leader role to another and thereby claiming follower status for themselves.

As previously mentioned, double interacts function as the basic unit for identity work (DeRue, 2011). Leader identity work takes place at three levels: individual internalization,

relational recognition, and collective endorsement (DeRue, 2011). At the individual level, a person signifies internalization of a leader identity by making a claim or grant. This behavior involves acting in a way that asserts leader status (claiming) or bestows follower status (granting) to others. At the relational level, these acts are either reciprocated or rejected by others. When they are rejected, it signals that the attempted claim or grant is seen as invalid, and thus no double interact takes place. However, when such acts are accepted through reciprocal behavior, it signals that the identities being claimed or granted are relationally recognized, thus leading to an increased likelihood that similar claims and grants will take place within the relationship in the future. Over time, one's identity is collectively endorsed by other members of the broader group who begin to engage them in patterned claiming and granting behaviors. As double interact patterns are repeated, asymmetrical influence relationships stabilize. The collective level of co-construction is evident when a given individual is viewed as a leader or follower throughout the organization. However, it could also lead to the group view that particular characteristics and/or roles are reserved for leaders and followers respectively, and that any relationship between two parties is only permissible insofar as the double interacts that occur in the relationship align with appropriate role identities.

The exchanges that take place within double interacts are sensitive to the past experiences of the individuals engaging in the exchanges (Aiken et al, 2019; Vallacher & Nowak, 1994). As such, it follows that the identity work that individuals engage in at time point T1, under conditions Ca, and relative to actors Ac, will impact their decisions to claim or grant status as leader or follower at time T2, under conditions Cb, and relative to actors Ad. Therefore, an individual's previously internalized identity is likely to impact their behaviors in subsequent relationships and the broader social system by extension. Likewise, the match of particular group

members to the group's shared leader and follower schemas are likely to affect whether influence is asserted or accepted in a given social exchange (Lucas & Baxter, 2012; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Hogg et al., 2012).

To summarize, DeRue describes the process of repeated claiming and granting as double interacts. Double interacts form the foundation of a broader complex adaptive system in which repeated exchanges result in some individuals seeing themselves as a leader and internalizing that identity as part of their self-concept. Over time these identities become relationally recognized, and ultimately collectively endorsed (DeRue, 2011, p. 137). As asymmetrical influence relationships stabilize, specific individuals and/or roles are granted powerful institutional endorsements as leaders and/or followers. Given the central role that double interacts play in the leadership-followership relationship, I will next address DeRue and Ashford's (2010) call for research on the antecedents to the double interact process. Namely, I discuss the role of leader behavior and follower trust in the leader as antecedents to claiming and granting.

#### *Antecedents to the Double Interact: Leader Behavior and Follower Trust*

In a recent and well cited publication, Bligh (2017) acknowledges the relational nature of trust and attempts to consolidate previous definitions found in the organizational behavior and leadership literature in this way: "Trust is an expectation or belief that one can rely on another person's actions *and* words and that the person has good intentions to carry out their promises. Trust is most meaningful in situations in which one party is at risk or vulnerable to another party (p. 21)." Adams et al. (2008) further elaborate this definition by highlighting common dimensions of trust which include competence, integrity, benevolence, and predictability. These dimensions are aligned with the various definitions of trust that permeate the literature on

leadership (Burke et al., 2007; Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Jong, 2022), organizational climate (Rousseau et al., 1998; Schoorman, 2007), and interpersonal relationships (Reis et al., 2017; Rempel et al., 1985). *Competence* refers to one party's perception that another party possesses the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and characteristics needed to fulfill their responsibilities and accomplish a job. *Integrity* concerns the extent to which one party is seen by another party as honorable and their words congruent with their actions. *Benevolence* is the extent to which one party sees another party as being genuinely caring and concerned about their interests and well-being. Lastly, *predictability* (dependability) refers to the extent to which one party views the behavior of another party as consistent.

Leadership involves the negotiation of influence between people who are often in relationships in which status and power are asymmetrical (Lucas, 2003; Hanges et al., 2016; Collinson et al., 2005); thus, it is not surprising that leadership scholars are interested in trust. However, potential connections between trust and the basic mechanisms that underline the social exchanges that take place within leader-follower relationships remain largely unexplored. Given that DeRue's theoretical model proposes the concept of "double interacts" as foundational to leader-follower relations, I argue that it is important investigate the possible links between trust and this foundational process.

As previously mentioned, trust is a highly relational construct and most meaningful when one party is vulnerable to another party. This has important implications for DeRue's model because the acceptance of influence from another party is often tied to the acceptance of increased vulnerability to that party as well. Social psychology literature suggests that a person's behavior is a function of their perceived vulnerability. For example, *social exchange theory* posits that people seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs in social exchanges. Social exchange

theory has often been used to explain interpersonal relations between supervisors and employees in the workplace (Cropanzano et al., 2017). When discussed in terms of a two-person relationship, the basic premise is that one person's ( $P_1$ ) acceptance of influence from another ( $P_2$ ) increases the vulnerability of  $P_1$  relative to  $P_2$  because  $P_1$  is exposed to increased risk and potential costs. As such, when both parties trust one another, the perceived costs and benefits of the relationship are balanced and double interacts between the two parties maintain their reciprocal pattern. However, when  $P_1$  is uncertain about the trustworthiness of  $P_2$ ,  $P_1$  is likely to seek ways to decrease their vulnerability (i.e., minimize potential costs).  $P_1$  might be able to decrease their vulnerability by revoking or blocking influence from  $P_2$  (i.e., rejection of  $P_2$ 's claim for the leadership role) or  $P_1$  could assert their own influence (i.e.,  $P_1$  claims leadership role). Both of these behaviors disrupt any established pattern of double interacts between  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ .

In my study I explored how destructive leaders differentially influence follower claiming and granting behavior compared to non-destructive leaders. According to Schmidt (2008), destructive (toxic) leaders are those who engage in narcissistic, self-promotive, unpredictable, abusive, and authoritarian behavior and supervision patterns. Schyns and Schilling (2013) elaborate on the impacts of such leader behaviors on followers in their meta-analysis in which they found that destructive leadership was related to followers' negative attitudes, resistance, and retaliation towards their leader. Furthermore, Mackey et al. (2021) suggests that destructive behaviors such as leader bullying, exclusion, and denial of acceptance are related to follower turnover intentions, counterproductive work behaviors, and incivility. I expected to find that followers are more likely to attempt to claim leader status when dealing with a destructive leader compared to a non-destructive leader. This will result in a diminished willingness to remain in a vulnerable position,

and thus they will attempt to reshape the relationship by claiming leader status for themselves. However, it is important to note that fear of punishment may act as a boundary condition to the trust-claiming relationship. Specifically, when followers believe that their leader has direct punishment and reward power, and that the likely punishments will be severe, they may become reluctant to claim leader status. This may prove true even when followers do not trust their leader, as the cost of the punishment could outweigh the benefits of claiming leader status. For example, a follower who fears capital punishment as a probable consequence for attempting to reclaim leader status for themselves is likely to refrain from doing so, even if they deem their leader untrustworthy. In my thesis, participants are presented a scenario in which the leader is a peer who has been appointed to lead a small committee that includes the participant. As such, no formal punishment or reward power was granted to the leader. Therefore, given the absence of formal punishment and reward power, I expected followers' trust perceptions of the leader to play a determining role in their decisions to claim or grant leader status.

The present work also explored the moderating role of followers' current internalized identities as leaders on the relationship between leader trust and claiming/granting behavior. Prior research has shown that seeing oneself as a leader effects motivation to lead (DeRue, & Ashford, 2010; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & van Dijk, 2007) as well as the seeking out of opportunities to develop leadership skills (Day et al., 2008). Building on this work, I contended that before a person attempts to claim leader status, they must first hold a leader identity as part of their self-concept. Without a developed leader identity, one may not even consider the possibility of claiming the leader role. However, I expected to find that the strength of one's leader identity moderates their willingness to endure a relationship in which they are vulnerable to a leader that

they perceive as untrustworthy. The below hypotheses are provided to clarify my conceptualization of these relationships.

### Hypotheses

**H1.** Leader behavior will affect follower trust such that there will be lower level of follower trust in the destructive leader condition than in the non-destructive leader condition.

**H2.** Leader behavior will affect follower claiming/granting behavior such that there will be higher levels of follower granting in the non-destructive destructive leader condition compared to the destructive leader condition.

**H3.** Follower trust in the leader will be negatively related to follower claiming behavior and positively related to follower granting behavior.

**H4.** Trust will mediate the leader behavior-claiming/granting relationship.

**H5.** The trust-claiming relationship will be moderated by follower's leader identity.

Specifically, the negative trust-claiming relationship will be stronger when leader identity is stronger.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Scale Development and Pilot Study

Prior to conducting my study, I developed a measure to assess my dependent variable (claiming vs granting). To accomplish this, I used DeRue and Ashford's (2010) descriptions of claiming and granting behaviors to generate five claiming items and five granting items. To ensure appropriate content validity, I used the respective items to develop a measure in which participants had to choose between either a claiming or granting behavior. The measure was balanced such that claiming items were at the low end of the scale, and granting were at the high end.

After developing potential items, I conducted a pilot study to separately assess the desirability of each claiming item and each granting item. All participants for the pilot study ( $N = 85$ ) were recruited from Prolific and all were citizens of the United States. The mean participant age was 35 years ( $SD = 13$ ,  $Min = 20$ ,  $Max = 72$ ). 57% of participants were men, 39% were women, and 3% were non-binary. In terms of race/ethnicity, 11% of participants identified as Black, 15% as East Asian, 5% as Hispanic/Latino/a, 2% as Native American/Native Alaskan, 63% as Non-Hispanic White/Caucasian, 1% South Asian/Indian, and 3% elected not to identify with a particular race.

Participants were provided with a vignette that placed them on a committee tasked with developing a strategy for solving one of their company's most important issues. The vignettes said that participants overheard a member of the upper management team asking the leader of their committee to provide certain deliverables by the close of business the next day. The vignettes noted that the leader's actions would have a material impact on the incentives provided

to the members of the committee. Upon reading the vignette, each participant was asked to rate the extent to which they would like to work with a coworker who exhibited each of the claiming behaviors. Next, each participant was asked to rate the extent to which they would like to work with a coworker who exhibited each of the granting behaviors. A higher mean score on an item indicated, on average, a more desirable behavior. I ranked the respective claiming and granting items in terms of their desirability and then paired them. Specifically, I created my claiming/granting items by pairing each claiming and granting items in terms of their desirability. Lower scores on this measure indicate claiming behaviors whereas the higher scores are indicative of more granting behavior. After ranking and pairing all the claiming and granting behaviors, I conducted a t-test between the desirability scores of the claiming and granting items in each pair to ensure that I was successful in matching the desirability of the behaviors in each pair of items. Results are listed in Table 1 (please see Appendix C).

I next collected a new sample from Prolific (N=367) to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to assess the underlying factor structure of the five pairs of claiming and granting items (CG1-CG5). The results showed that a one-factor solution provided a good fit to the data, with a chi-square of 16.14 (df = 5,  $p < .01$ ). A single factor (eigenvalue = 2.58) accounted for 51.6% of the variance. Furthermore, the factor loadings were all high, ranging from .65 to .81. The reliability of this new scale was good ( $Total \omega^2 = 0.84$ ).

### Primary Study

#### **Research Design and Participants.**

The research design was a completely randomized between-subjects design (CR-2) in which leader behavior (i.e., destructive leader versus non-destructive leader) was manipulated

using vignettes. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two leadership conditions. All participants were recruited from Prolific and all were citizens of the United States. The mean participant age was 36 years ( $SD = 13.4$ ,  $Min = 18$ ,  $Max = 76$ ). Fifty percent of participants were men, 49% were women, and 1% were non-binary. In terms of race/ethnicity, 8% of participants identified as Black, 8% as East Asian, 11% as Hispanic/Latino/a, 2% as Native American/Native Alaskan, 70% as Non-Hispanic White/Caucasian, and 1% elected not to identify with a particular race.

Power analysis conducted through the G-Power program (2017) indicated that a total of 128 participants would provide 80% power for a medium effect ( $f^2=0.25$ ). However, to achieve a more robust sample size, I recruited a total of 384 participants. The final data set consisted of 367 participants who answered all questions and completed the study in an appropriate amount of time.

### **Procedure.**

Participants first completed the Leader Self-Identity Scale developed by Hiller (2005). After completing this measure, they were randomly assigned to one of the two leadership conditions. Participants read a vignette describing a scenario in which they encountered a new leader. Participants learned about this new leader by reading descriptions from fictional co-workers who had supposedly interacted with the leader previously. After reading the vignette, participants completed Adams et al.'s (2008) Trust in Leaders measure, followed by the claiming-granting measure created in the pilot study. All participants were asked to provide demographic information, including their race, age, and gender.

### **Manipulation: Destructive/Non-destructive Leader Behaviors.**

I manipulated leader behavior by providing participants one of two possible vignettes. In both vignettes, participants assumed the role of an employee in a fast-paced Information Technology (IT) organization in a highly competitive market. Participants were also told that a new competitor had emerged, and that the new competitor was outperforming their organization. As a result, participants were told that they were on a special committee assigned the task of developing a strategy to regain the competitive advantage for their company. This committee was led by a leader named Jessie.

The participants learned about Jesse by reading descriptions of him from other committee members. One vignette described Jesse as a destructive leader (i.e., abusive, self-focused, and erratic) and the other vignette described Jesse as a non-destructive leader (i.e., civil, other-focused, and steady). The specific behaviors contained in each vignette come from Hanges et al's (in press) work to create a destructive leader behavior scale. Both vignettes are shown in Appendix B.

### **Measure 1: Leader Identity Magnitude.**

I assessed leader identity magnitude using the Leader Self-Identity Scale developed by Hiller (2005). The scale measures the extent to which participants see themselves as leaders, their confidence in their view of themselves, and how important being seen as a leader is to them. This scale has thirteen items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ) and participants respond to each item using a 7-point Likert scale. This measure is shown in Appendix D.

### **Measure 2: Follower Trust in the Leader.**

Follower trust in the leader was assessed using Adams et al.'s (2008) Trust in Leaders Scale. The scale measures the four dimensions of trust (i.e., benevolence, integrity, predictability, and competence). There are 4 benevolence items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .94$ ), 5 integrity items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ), 5 predictability items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ), and 5 competence items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ). Participants responded to each item by using a 5-point Likert scale. The items associated with each dimension are shown in Appendix E.

### **Measure 3: Follower Claiming/Granting Measure.**

As previously discussed, I created a measure of claiming and granting behavior in which low scores were indicative of claiming behavior and high scores were indicative of granting behavior. This new measure consisted of 5 claiming/granting items. Participants were asked to select the likelihood that they would act in a claiming or granting manner. This measure is shown in Appendix F.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis (H1)** stated that leader behavior will affect follower trust such that there will be lower levels of follower trust in the destructive leader condition than in the non-destructive leader condition. In other words, I predicted that followers trust destructive leaders less compared with leaders who demonstrate more positive leader behaviors. I used linear regression to test this hypothesis. Results supported H1 and showed that the relationship between leader destructiveness and follower trust was negative and significant ( $F(1, 365) = 417.1, p < .001$ ). Participants in the destructive leader condition exhibited a lower mean level of trust ( $M = 2.83, SD = .85$ ) compared to participants in the non-destructive leader condition ( $M = 4.94, SD = 1.44$ ). Furthermore, approximately 53.3% of the variance in follower trust can be explained by leader behavior ( $R^2 = 0.533$ ).

**Hypothesis (H2)** concerned the effects of leader behavior on followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. Specifically, I predicted that followers are more likely to claim leader status when they encounter a destructive leader, and more likely to grant leader status when they encounter a non-destructive leader. Results from linear regression supported H2. There was a significant relationship between leader behavior and followers' decisions to grant leader status ( $F(1, 365) = 25.73, p < .001, R^2 = 0.065$ ). Participants were more likely to grant leadership status when they had a non-destructive ( $M = 3.60, SD = 1.33$ ) leader as opposed to a destructive leader ( $M = 2.95, SD = 1.10$ ). Approximately 6.5% of the variance in followers' claiming-granting behavior is accounted for by leader behavior ( $R^2 = .065$ ).

**Hypothesis (H3)** predicted that follower trust in the leader would be positively related to follower granting behavior. Results from Pearson's correlation analyses supported this hypothesis. A positive relationship between follower trust and granting behavior was obtained  $r(365) = .40, p < .001$ .

**Hypothesis (H4)** predicted that followers' trust perceptions mediate the relationship between leader behavior and followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. I tested this hypothesis using model 4 from Hayes' Process program. The Hayes Process Model results once again supported H1 in that leader behavior significantly influenced followers' trust perceptions ( $b=2.11$ , bootstrap 95%CI [1.90, 2.31]). Additionally, results show that follower trust perceptions were significantly related to claim/grant status ( $b=0.40, p<.05$ ; bootstrap 95%CI [.25, .53]) even after accounting for leader behavior. Finally, using bootstrapping, the Hayes Process Model indicated that the indirect effect (i.e., mediation) was significant (Indirect  $ab = 0.83$ , bootstrap 95% CI [.53, 1.13]). These results support my hypothesis that follower trust mediates the relationship between leader behavior and follower claiming and granting. More specifically, when leaders are destructive, follower tend to trust them less, and subsequently are more likely to claim leader status for themselves. Conversely, when leader behavior is positive, followers tend to trust their leaders more, and subsequently more likely to grant leader status to their leader.

**Hypothesis (H5)** concerned the ways in which leader identity magnitude influences followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. Specifically, H5 predicted that leader identity moderates the trust-claiming relationship, such that the negative trust-claiming relationship will be stronger when leader identity is stronger. I tested this hypothesis using model 15 from Hayes'

Process program. The results indicated that, as predicted, leader identity moderated my mediation model (moderated mediation index = .23, bootstrap 95%CI [0.06 0.41]).

It should be noted that Model 15 of the Hayes Process Model tests whether leader identity moderates both the indirect relationship and the direct relationship. I examined the results in more detail to determine if, as H5 predicted, leader identity moderated the trust to CG behavior relationship. This additional test supported H5. Leader identity significantly interacted with the trust to CG behavior relationship ( $b=0.11$ ,  $p<.01$ ). As predicted, the strength of the trust to CG relationship increased as participants' leader identity increased. A plot of the interactions can be found in Figure 2 (please see Appendix G).

While not directly hypothesized, Hayes Process Model 15 also tested whether leader identity would moderate the direct leader behavior - Claiming/Granting behavior relationship. Surprisingly, results indicated that leader identity also significantly moderated this relationship as well (direct moderation of  $c' = -.37$ ,  $p<.01$ ). As leader identity increased, the direct leader behavior – Claiming/Granting relationship became increasingly negative. For the most part, this direct relationship was not significant. The direct effect was only significantly differ from zero once leader identity was very strong. In other words, for participants that strongly identified as a leader, destructive leader behavior decreases the likelihood that the participants will grant the leader role to the leader.

In summary, these findings provided support H5 and show that the effect of trust on followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status is moderated by the extent to which they see themselves as leaders.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The present study focused on the process by which leader behavior influences followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. Following the work of DeRue (2011), I conceptualized leadership as a relational process in which claims and grants of influence are made and reciprocated. I hypothesized that the behavior of an individual in a formal leadership position would predict follower claiming and granting through follower trust perceptions of their leader. Furthermore, I predicted that leader identity magnitude would moderate the trust-claiming/granting relationships.

My findings suggest that leader behavior influences follower trust. Follower trust increased as the leader's behavior became more supportive and less destructive. This finding supported previous research which demonstrated that followers are more likely to trust leaders who they view as inspirational, supportive, empathetic, other-focused, dependable, and authentic (Agote et al., 2016; Joseph & Winston, 2005, Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Northouse, 2021). Additionally, these findings show that destructive leader behavior reduces trust. As previously noted, when followers viewed their leaders as destructive, they were less inclined to trust them. Conversely, when they viewed their leader as positive, they tended view their leader as more trustworthy.

Additionally, I found that leader behavior also affects followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status. Further, there was evidence that this leader behavior to granting relationship was mediated by followers' trust in their leader. As suggested earlier, social exchange theory, which considers interpersonal relationships in terms of costs and benefits, is supported by this finding. Trust involves making oneself vulnerable to another in the face of uncertainty (Bligh, 2017; Burke et al., 2007, Dirks & Jong, 2022). Social exchange theory

would predict that people will seek to reduce potential costs associated with interacting with an untrustworthy individual. This would be especially true when the untrustworthy person is someone who has power over you and who can punish you. Safely reclaiming influence may be an attractive way to reduce potential costs associated with regular exposure to untrustworthy individuals.

Finally, results indicated that leader identity magnitude moderates the trust-claiming/granting relationship. As leader identity increased, the strength of the mediating effect of trust on claiming and granting also increased. This finding suggests that the impact of leader trust in followers' decisions to claim or grant leader status is sensitive to the extent to which followers view themselves as leaders.

## **Chapter 6: Limitations and Future Directions**

My study was limited by time and resource constraints. As such, I chose to freeze the leadership process at a single point in time by using a vignette methodology. While vignettes provided the first method to test the relationship between leader behavior and trust, future research should replicate the present study with a more realistic manipulation. One example of such a manipulation may involve recording presentations of a leader showing destructive or supportive leadership as well as followers' reactions to that leader.

The present study showed that leader behavior in the absence of any other information will affect trust. This may limit the generalizability of the findings. People often have considerable information about their leaders, their tendencies to retaliate against employees, the organizational context, etc. Future research would benefit from observing subjects in non-experimental settings. By studying behavior in a real-world environment, researchers would also have the added benefit of analyzing the next iteration in the double interact process. That is to say that researchers could watch the ways in which leaders respond to followers' grants or claims of their leader status, which would show the impact of previous double interacts on subsequent exchanges.

The trust score used in my study (overall trust) was computed by averaging trust across four separate dimensions: benevolence, integrity, predictability, and competence. Although my study was only concerned with overall trust, future research may benefit from isolating the various dimensions and analyzing the mediating effects of each dimension on followers' decisions to claim or grant status. By doing this, researchers may find that one or more dimensions of trust are more important than others as it affects follower claiming and granting.

I was unable to measure the ways in which follower identity interacted with trust and claiming/granting due to a lack of existing measures. Given that leader identity influenced the trust-claiming/granting relationship in my study, I believe there is value in developing a measure for assessing follower identity. Seeing oneself as a leader was associated with a tendency to claim leader status, however, due to measurement limitation, it is currently difficult to assess whether holding a follower identity is associated with a tendency to grant leader status. A follower identity measure would provide a way to completely test DeRue's theoretical model, and fully assess the impact of both identities on the double interact process.

In the introduction, I suggested that self-protection is a motive for claiming. However, future research should investigate the role of pro-social motivation – the desire to protect the well-being of others – as a potential motive as well. This may be particularly relevant in industries such as the military where organizational values such as service, selflessness, and sacrifice are emphasized, and where one's dependency on one's teammates are seen as necessary to achieve group success.

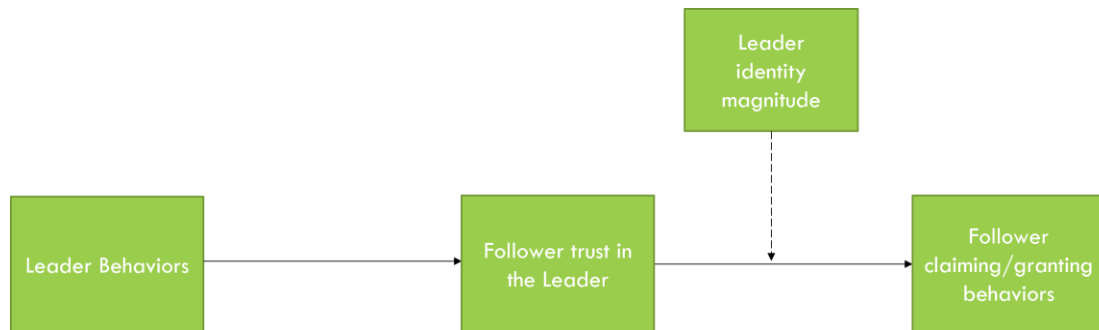
Lastly, this study was the first to create and use a granting and claiming measure. This is an addition to the literature. Future research will benefit from using this measure to advance DeRue's theoretical model by testing antecedents to claiming and granting, such as trust and leader identity magnitude.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

**Figure 1**

*Proposed Theoretical Model*



## **Appendix B**

### **Leader Behavior Scenarios**

#### ***Background (Shown to all participants)***

You are working in a fast-paced Information Technology (IT) organization in a highly competitive market. Your organization has a reputation for being extremely responsive to growing consumer demand and can quickly develop and deliver products that are huge successes with their customers. Unfortunately, a new competitor appears to be growing its reputation and, with increasing frequency, your organization has been outperformed by this new competitor. A special committee has been assigned the task of developing a strategy to regain the competitive advantage for your company. You are a member of this 10-person committee.

Jessie has been appointed as the committee's leader. As such, he is responsible for organizing committee meetings, consolidating information, and communicating directly with the organization's upper management. You haven't worked with Jessie before, so you ask a few committee members what they have heard about Jessie. This is what they said:

#### ***2.1.1. Destructive Leader Scenario (Leader behaviors: abusive/self-focused/erratic)***

*Person 1:*

"He only does things that will help him get promoted. I have seen him take credit for the ideas and work of coworkers."

*Person 2:*

"Jessie has explosive emotional outbursts during the day. His moods can switch on a dime. One second, everything is going well and he is friendly and the next second, he is yelling and cursing

at you. You can never figure out what sets this guy off. You never know which version of Jessie you will encounter.”

*Person 3:*

“Jessie is mean and disrespectful toward others. He has no problem telling coworkers that they are stupid or a screw-up in front of people. He will make fun of anyone in a group just because he thinks it is funny.”

### ***2.1.2. Positive Leader Scenario (Leader behaviors: civil/other-focused/steady)***

You are working in a fast-paced Information Technology (IT) organization in a highly competitive market. Your organization has a reputation for being extremely responsive to growing consumer demand and can quickly develop and deliver products that are huge successes with their customers. Unfortunately, a new competitor appears to be growing its reputation and, with increasing frequency, your organization has been outperformed by this new competitor. A special committee has been assigned the task of developing a strategy to regain the competitive advantage for your company. You are a member of this 10-person committee.

Jessie has been appointed as the committee’s leader. As such, he is responsible for organizing committee meetings, consolidating information, and communicating directly with the organization’s upper management. You haven’t worked with Jessie before, so you ask a few committee members what they have heard about Jessie. This is what they said:

*Person 1:*

“He cares deeply about helping others accomplish their goals. He is very attentive to the needs and desires of all his coworkers. In fact, on several occasions, I have seen him downplay his own accomplishments, just so that other members of his team got the recognition that they deserved.”

*Person 2:*

“Jessie is very stable. He always behaves in a composed and predictable manner. You can count on him to remain calm no matter how much pressure he’s under.”

*Person 3:*

“Jessie is kind and respectful to everyone. He goes out of his way to make sure people feel valued.”

***Situation (Shown to all participants)***

Prior to your first meeting, a representative from upper management addresses the committee. He states that all committee members will receive a two-week bonus and one extra day of paid vacation for your work. However, he also notes that the fiscal year ends in two days, and organizational policy requires that all monetary and vacation bonuses must be processed before to the end of the fiscal year. The following conversation between the representative and Jessie is heard by all members of the committee:

Manager: Jessie, I have your information on file, so I can process your bonus immediately. However, I need you to send me the names and employee identification numbers of your committee members by the close of business tomorrow for them to receive their bonuses as well. If I do not receive their information by the close of business tomorrow, then they will not be eligible to receive their bonuses.

Jessie: Ok. I am leaving for a work trip this evening, but I will try to send it to you after I arrive at my destination.

### **Appendix C**

**Table 1.** Item Desirability Comparison

| Item Comparison    | t-value | df     | p-value |
|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Claim 2 vs Grant 3 | -.40    | 165.97 | .69     |
| Claim 3 vs Grant 4 | -.42    | 166.01 | .67     |
| Claim 5 vs Grant 5 | -.97    | 167.8  | .34     |
| Claim 4 vs Grant 1 | 1.57    | 166.83 | .19     |
| Claim 1 vs Grant 2 | 1.39    | 165.84 | .16     |

## Appendix D

### Hiller (2005) Leader Self-Identity Measure

#### Leader Self Identity Measure – Descriptiveness

Please rate the extent to which the following statements describe you, using a scale from 1 (*not at all descriptive*) to 7 (*extremely descriptive*).

- A. I am a leader
- B. If I had to describe myself to others, I would use the word “leader”
- C. I prefer being seen by others as a leader
- D. I see myself as a leader
- E. People think I was born to lead – added to measure narcissism

#### Leader Self Identity Measure – Certainty

Please rate the extent to which the following statements describe you, using a scale from 1 (*not at all certain*) to 7 (*extremely certain*).

- A. I am a leader
- B. If I had to describe myself to others, I would use the word “leader”
- C. I prefer being seen by others as a leader
- D. I see myself as a leader

#### Leader Self Identity Measure – Importance

Please rate the extent to which the following statements describe you, using a scale from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

- A. I am a leader
- B. If I had to describe myself to others, I would use the word “leader”
- C. I prefer being seen by others as a leader
- D. I see myself as a leader

## **Appendix E**

### **Adams et al. (2008, p. 16) Trust in Leaders Scale**

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following statements to be true, using a scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*completely true*).

#### **Benevolence Measures:**

1. I have confidence in Jessie's motivations.
2. Jessie will watch my back.
3. Jessie will be genuinely concerned about my well-being.
4. Jessie is likely to protect me.

#### **Integrity Measures:**

1. I believe that Jessie will be fair.
2. I believe that Jessie will be honest.
3. I will be able to depend on Jessie to be fair.
4. Jessie will put his words into action.
5. I know that Jessie will keep his word.

#### **Predictability Measures:**

1. I anticipate knowing how Jessie is going to react.
2. I will be able to anticipate what Jessie will do.
3. I anticipate knowing exactly what Jessie will do in difficult situations.
4. I will be able to rely on Jessie to behave predictably.
5. Jessie will behave in a very consistent manner.

Competence Measures:

1. Jessie will perform his job well.
2. I have confidence in the abilities of Jessie.
3. Jessie will be capable at his job.
4. Jessie will be highly skilled.
5. Jessie will know what he is doing.

## Appendix F

### Dependent Variable – Claiming/Granting Assessment Questions

Please select the below statement that best describes the behavior that you would most likely choose to do.

1.

- I would **definitely** take it upon myself to send committee members' information to the management representative, even if Jessie **did not ask** me to do it (Claim).
- I would **very likely** to take it upon myself to send committee members' information to the management representative, even if Jessie **did not ask** me to do it (Claim).
- I would **likely** take it upon myself to send committee members' information to the management representative, even if Jessie **did not ask** me to do it (Claim).
- I would **likely** take it upon myself to send the information to the management representative, **but only** if Jessie specifically asked me to do it (Grant).
- I would **very likely** take it upon myself to send the information to the management representative, **but only** if Jessie specifically asked me to do it (Grant).

- I would **definitely** take it upon myself to send the information to the management representative, **but only** if Jessie specifically asked me to do it (Grant).

2.

- I would **definitely** take charge to ensure the management representative got all the information on time.
- I would **very likely** take charge to ensure the management representative got all the information on time.
- I would **likely** take charge to ensure the management representative got all the information on time.
- I would **likely** wait to be told what I could do to help Jessie get the information to the management representative on time.
- I would **very likely** wait to be told what I could do to help Jessie get the information to the management representative on time.
- I would **definitely** wait to be told what I could do to help Jessie get the information to the management representative on time.

3.

- I would **definitely** take the responsibility of ensuring everyone understands what they need to do to accomplish our task.
- I would **very likely** take the responsibility of ensuring everyone understands what they need to do to accomplish our task.
- I would **likely** take the responsibility of ensuring everyone understands what they need to do to accomplish our task.

- I would **likely** ask Jessie if there was anything I could do to support him.
- I would **very likely** ask Jessie if there was anything I could do to support him.
- I would **definitely** ask Jessie if there was anything I could do to support him.

4.

- I would **definitely** delegate tasks to group members to ensure our goal was accomplished on time.
- I would **very likely** delegate tasks to group members to ensure our goal was accomplished on time.
- I would **likely** delegate tasks to group members to ensure our goal was accomplished on time.
- I would **likely** follow any instructions Jessie gives me to accomplish the task.
- I would **very likely** follow any instructions Jessie gives me to accomplish the task.
- I would **definitely** follow any instructions Jessie gives me to accomplish the task.

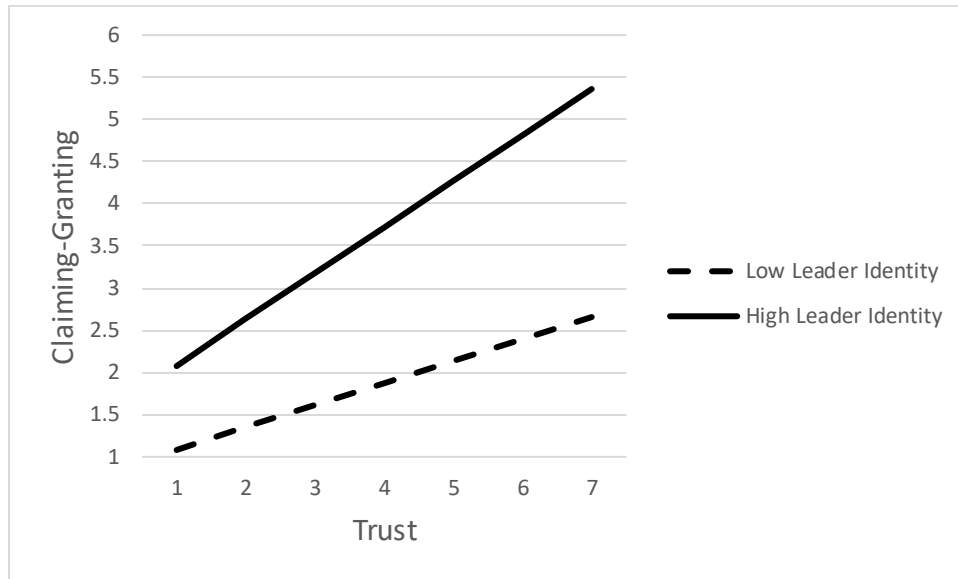
5.

- If we met to discuss the task, I would **definitely** stand or sit where all committee members, including Jessie, could see and hear me clearly as I gave them instructions.
- If we met to discuss the task, I would **very likely** stand or sit where all committee members, including Jessie, could see and hear me clearly as I gave them instructions.
- If we met to discuss the task, I would **likely** stand or sit where all committee members, including Jessie, could see and hear me clearly as I gave them instructions.
- If we met to discuss the task, I would **likely** stand or sit in a position that communicated that I am ready to listen and act when called upon.
- If we met to discuss the task, I would **very likely** stand or sit in a position that communicated that I am ready to listen and act when called upon.
- If we met to discuss the task, I would **definitely** stand or sit in a position that communicated that I am ready to listen and act when called upon.

## Appendix G

**Figure 2**

*Plot of Predicted Values*



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