

PREFERENCE FOR GROUP LEADERSHIP: TARGETING LEADERSHIP STYLES
BY CATEGORIZATION OF DOMAIN

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APPROVAL PAGE

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PREFERENCE FOR GROUP LEADERSHIP: TARGETING LEADERSHIP
PREFERENCE BY CATEGORIZATION OF DOMAIN

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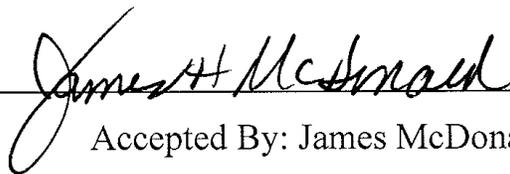
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PREFERENCE FOR LEADERSHIP STYLE: TARGETING LEADERSHIP
PREFERENCE
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Participating as a member of a group is a common role encountered in families, work groups, social settings and decision-making committees. Research seeks to identify characteristics of groups and teams that help them function smoothly and achieve success. This study focuses on one such characteristic, the style of leadership each group or team member prefers to work with. Group pitfalls arise due to a number of diverse issues, among them the rift between a group leader's style of leadership and the needs of group members for a type of leadership style. This dilemma could be addressed if a preference for leadership style was known for each group member prior to organizing a group. This investigation will indicate if individual's preference for a specific type of leadership (autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire) can be identified by correlation with psychological domain. Each individual operates in one of three psychological domains: affective, behavioral or cognitive. Each domain is a channel for how individuals' interpret their environment. Through identification of psychological domain and correlation with preference for leadership style, results will indicate if any preference for leadership style can be identified in group or team members. Results of this study indicate that regardless of psychological domain a significant portion of participants preferred to work with a democratic leader. However, while democratic leadership style was the primary preference, three secondary preferences were reported that indicate a correlation between leadership style and psychological domain. Individuals who reported being affective based, also preferred autocratic leadership as a secondary preference. Likewise, cognitive based individuals reported a secondary preference for laissez-faire leadership. In all instances, democratic leadership was preferred by behavioral-based individuals. Results indicate a significant correlation between preference for leadership style and psychological domain.

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Chapter I

Preference for Group Leadership Style:

Targeting Leadership Preference by Categorization of Domain

Working in groups is a part of life; it is unavoidable (Fujishin, 1997). Usain Bolt cannot run from it, Michael Phelps cannot swim from it, and no one individual regardless of talent or ability can avoid interacting in group settings. If group communication is such an unavoidable part of life, then the study of group communication should hold some level of importance to most people. Listing several instances and situations in everyday life where people must participate in groups is not difficult. Individuals in work, school or social settings cannot make it through one day without interacting in a group setting. This being said, the prominence of group work in daily tasks promotes good reason to pursue the study of preference for group leadership. Research investigating how groups successfully function are widely generalizable because of the number of individuals involved in group work or a group experience on a frequent basis.

Scholars have focused heavily on areas of group communication such as group leadership and group membership (Cummins, 2009). Individuals hold careers, enjoy hobbies, and experience daily life all while participating in areas of group communication. This being the case, few people other than scholars take notice of which settings or criteria of group work are most successful or desired. Some of the criteria for success focus on how relationships are formed, why they form, and what environment is best in order to facilitate the healthiest relationships between group members and group leaders (Galanes, 2009). Going through life interacting in groups without understanding the workings and proceedings of what makes a group successful is counterproductive. Yes, groups who achieve success on little preparation, or limited understanding of how

groups work are encountered. However, according to Verderber, Verderber and Sellnow these groups are highly unlikely to achieve long term success or consistent results because of their lack of goals (2009). Furthermore, Verderber et al. says that specific, consistent, challenging and acceptable goals are a vital part of any successful group activity. Groups who rarely meet or prepare, and hope to achieve success on little group work are not likely to set goals or address those goals during group meetings or group evaluation times. In a study conducted on task-oriented groups Wittenbaum, Hollingshead, and Botero (2004) discovered that groups who meet over longer periods of time usually disclose information that would typically remain unshared in short term groups. The extra information that is known to the entire group increases the success of the decision making process and overall knowledge of the group. This process of sharing information would likely be nonexistent in groups who meet and operate on short notice or by “winging it”. Additionally, Wood suggests that these types of groups who operate on a “whim” never learn the value or structure of correct decision making methods or correct methods of leadership (2009). Groups composed of members who understand their role in the group and who are dedicated to that group are more likely to find success in group work than groups who do not understand group dynamics. These groups are bound to be less successful and less comfortable for members.

Individuals seek to create and join with groups that present a comfortable, successful atmosphere. For example, an athletic program that has experienced success in winning championships and has become well known through television exposure does not need to put as much effort into recruiting because athletes are drawn to their team naturally (Fizel & Bennett, 1996), the same is true of a reputable and successful business.

Group-oriented research focuses on the relationship between group leaders and group members to potentially increase group comfort and success. This relationship can either be negative or positive, harmful or successful; it can significantly influence the overall outcome of group work (Cummins, 2009). Scholars have focused on different ways to increase positive relationships between group members and group leaders by experimenting with gender, race, education levels, and multiple other variables that might impact the relationship (Koch, 2005). These investigations are helpful in illustrating the influence between group leaders and group members. In the literature review, further literature will be discussed in detail, including studies that have contributed to these previously mentioned areas. First, the outline and focus of this study must be established.

As noted earlier, research has focused repeatedly on creating positive, successful relationships between group members and leaders (Cummins, 2009). The goal of this study is to identify pre-existing preferences of group members that may allow them to be specifically paired with a group leadership style. The designed research draws from two related disciplines — communication and psychology — to provide a possible method for systematically matching a style of leadership with a participant's psychological domain, or thought process. Through the results it will be possible provide information that is relevant in developing future experimental research to develop causal relationships between psychological domain and preference for leadership style. One purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between preference for leadership and psychological domain; thus, possibly providing indications of already existing preferences for leadership style among group members. Establishing this existing

preference for leadership style is a first step in providing research that will lead to the formation of successful, efficient groups.

Psychological domain refers to the way individual's process information in their surroundings. Lazarus (1989) explains that three domains exist, affective, behavioral and cognitive. Explaining psychological domains in general Lazarus states that domains categorize how individuals process information based on a setting or situation they find themselves in. For example, individuals categorized as affective will use emotions and feeling to make sense of, and interpret their surrounding and environment. Behavioral individuals will act out, or use gestures and non-verbal communication to understand their environment. Likewise, to understand their surroundings cognitive individuals use thought processes and patterns to create meaning. Lazarus also clarifies that one individual may process information through several different domains as the setting changes around them. For this study, participants' psychological domain will be identified in accordance with how they process information in the setting of a group member working with a group leader.

Group communication scholars have given Lewin, Lippit and White (1939) credit for coining the three primary leadership styles in groups: democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire. Lewin et al. (1939) also provides the qualities and properties that define each style. Additional studies (Foels, Driskell, Mullen and Salas, 2000; Swain, 2004) have focused on the kinds of individuals who prefer the different leadership styles, including demographic characteristics best-suited to each style. However, minimal literature exists identifying the relationship between leadership style and the way individuals process the information and environment around them. To clarify, the

relationship between preference for leadership style and psychological domain needs further investigation.

The fields of psychology and communication have combined to create an extensive research background in psychological domains, or how individuals process information. Psychology scholars have identified the way individuals' process information into three domains or categories: affective, behavioral, and cognitive (Lazarus, 1989). Each domain represents different channels in which individuals process their surroundings using emotions, behaviors, and thought processes. This study will identify psychological domains as a method to identify preferred leadership styles. Research projects have worked to indicate preference for leadership style (Swain, 2004); however, few have used the psychological domains to target a preference for leadership style.

This investigation will use a pairwise-comparison survey that will test for significant correlations between subjects' psychological domains and preferred leadership styles. The balance of this thesis will consist of four additional chapters, beginning with a review of the literature to provide a firm base for understanding group communication and psychological domains. Previous research outlined in the literature review will provide a rationale for the current study, culminating in research questions and hypotheses. The method section will consist of a specific outline of the procedures, the measurement tools used to gather data, the participants involved in the study and the procedures used to gather, and evaluate data. Finally, in the results and discussion sections, the findings of this study will be reported along with the significance of the

study, the implications, meanings, limitations and recommendation for future research that emerged during this research project.

Chapter II

Literature Review

For ease in reading the literature review will follow a specific structure of broad to narrow covering several topics. First, literature in small group communication as a whole will be discussed including definitions and examples. Literature will be presented on group formation and centered on group leadership research. Specifically the three types of leadership pertinent to this study will be discussed as well. Previous research of psychological domains will also be a component of this literature review. A broad understanding of domain literature will be followed by specific illustrations of each domain in previous research.

Small Group Communication

Rothwell (2007) defined group communication to be any group of people who work towards a common goal who influence each other. Group communication is “more than people standing at a bus stop.” (p. 32). Scholars commonly agree that small groups consist of three to eight individuals (Rothwell, 2007; Galanes & Adams, 2010). As research has become more fully developed the limit of what is, and is not included in group communication have become more defined. Small group units often include the family, units of friends, co-workers, study groups and organized business committees (Fujishin, 1997). Fujishin also proposed that very few individuals are not involved in one of these groups daily or at least weekly (2007).

Group communication has been identified and defined in terms of its characteristics, such as apprehension in groups (Limon & France, 2005; Wright, 2000), investigating why some group members are more reluctant to comment, or why some

members simply do not show up to meetings. Language of groups (Gonzalez, 1998) has been researched in regards to the multiple languages used in groups, as well as languages that define gangs and any other co-cultures that identify themselves as a group (Adegbija, 1993). Further studies have included success strategies of groups (Millar, 1994; Armstrong, 2004), task oriented groups that are commonly identified as business committees or other professionals who are organized into a group to achieve a specific goal (Koch, 2005; Fisher, 1971), and social groups or friends (Alley-Young, 2009).

Fujishin (1997) suggests that people are so aware of groups that “working in groups is a part of life,” and that people will always “be working with others in small groups to solve problems” (p. V). The large role that groups play in life’s daily interactions has allowed for extensive research in some areas of group communication. In addition to the previously mentioned areas of group communication, further research focuses on areas such as communication apprehension of group members (McCroskey, 1984), gender differences and how males and females react to different roles (Foels et al., 2000), group competency, and the overall efficacy of the group, specifically the feelings that the group has about their talent and skills to complete an assigned task (Christ, Beebe, Barge, 1994). Studies focusing on leadership preference and influence (Swain, 2004) also should be included in this discussion for their close relationship to the purpose and design of this study as well as their pertinence to the field of group communication. These studies are just a few that have investigated phenomenon in the group arena.

Group Formation

Before continuing the discussion of group characteristics, an explanation of why and when groups form is necessary. The current study focuses on identifying variables of groups that may play an important role in how groups form based on individual preference for leadership style.

There are multiple reasons that exist for why people join groups. Burns (2007) suggests that despite multiple reasons being present for joining a group, the primary reason for an individual joining a group is to meet one or more needs. These needs are outlined by Maslow (1954) in his hierarchy. Some of the needs that are met through group formation are psychological needs, social needs and esteem needs. Dnes and Garoupa (2010) agree that groups form around needs; additionally, their research is specifically centered on gang formation. Furthermore, Dnes and Garoupa also suggest “that gangs (or groups) are formed around particular traits of direct value to the group” (p. 518). Interpreting the research by Maslow (1954) and by Dnes and Garoupa (2010) we can establish that groups form around to main criteria, meeting the needs of individuals and centering on similar values.

In addition to answering the question, “why groups form?” research suggests answers to the question, “when do groups form?” Ounnas, Davis, and Millard (2009) investigate one of the most common areas that groups exist in, the classroom. In their 2009 investigation Ounnas, Davis and Millard suggest the classroom is one of the highest arenas that promote group work, but that within these groups “different approaches have been developed to assist teachers to allocate students to groups based on a set of constraints. However, existing tools often fail to assign some students to groups creating a problem well known as ‘orphan students’” (p. 44). Ounnas, Davis and Millard propose

that existing tools do not include all students in group formation, and create problems by leaving students who go unassigned to a group.

The current study will seek to fill this need during group formation by providing a method for assigning all potential group members to a group. Not only will this study offer ways to assign group members to a group, but investigators will seek to assign group members to specific styles of leadership. Following this method all group members are assigned to a group with a leader who exhibits leadership styles group members prefer. The assignment of group members to group leaders will be possible by identifying a group member's psychological domain.

Group Leadership

Multiple pages could be used to outline general investigations into group communication. Focusing on group leadership allows for literature to be focused on an aspect of group communication that is a constant in group communication (Marken, 1999). In fact, Pavitt (1999) says that more than eight thousand studies have focused solely on group leadership (Pavitt, 1999).

Rarely, if ever, do groups form without a leader being assigned or emerging out of the group (Rosenfeld & Plax, 1975). Group literature outlines investigations specifically designed to focus on the group leader, such as, group leader apprehension (Hawkins & Stewart, 1990), emergent leaders (Andrews, 1984; Wright, 1977), and preference for leadership style (Aldoory & Toth, 2004) all focus their efforts on the group leader. Bass (1960) confirms that only fifty years ago, there were more than one hundred and twenty definitions of leadership. If definitions of group leadership were numbered well over one hundred seventy years ago, the number of definitions now must be overwhelming.

Rothwell (2007) clarified that “Despite the numerous definitions of leadership, there is an evolving consensus on what leadership is and is not” (p. 151). Difficult as group leadership may be to define, Rothwell also suggested that regardless of what kind of group or organization is being led, “leaders must have two things: followers, and influence over those followers”(pp. 151-152).

Without a solid definition of what a leader is, there have been numerous attempts to define what kinds of leaders exist in the group-communication settings. Rothwell listed such leadership types as “credible leaders, transformational leaders, transactional leaders, and charismatic leaders” (pp. 152-153). The exact definitions of these types of leaders will not be used in this research at this time; however, understanding that among all of the different explanations of leadership, there are hundreds of definitions in the literature is an important component in leadership literature and lends to the support of future research focused on leadership aspects.

Marken (1999) investigated what he defined as the three most commonly known sources of leadership: democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire leadership styles as they are defined and put forth by Lewin et al. (1939). Galanes and Adams (2010) support the use of democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles by explaining that these styles are the most dated; however, they continue to be the most simplistic and basic definitions of leadership that exists among small group leaders.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leaders are those who seek suggestions and ideas from the group through discussion (Marken, 1999). Galanes and Adams (2010) expanded the criteria for democratic leadership by suggesting that these leaders invite input, and make suggestions

that help structure the group. Primarily these leaders “encourage members to participate in group decisions, including policy-making decisions” (p. 182). When working with a democratic leader, the group might hear a statement such as, “What ideas would you suggest for getting this done?”(p. 183). Democratic leaders are often associated with following theory Y set forth by McGregor (1960). Theory Y states that people by nature are problem-solvers who take control of their own personal work assignments. Democratic leaders only provide the structure and environment for group members classified by theory Y to thrive in (Galanes & Adams, 2010).

Further research on democratically led groups indicates that they are generally more successful within the United States culture (Gastil, 1995). Additionally, democratically led groups are more successful at solving problems when given the proper structure (Galanes & Adams, 2010). Democratic leadership is more productive in natural settings; and in controlled settings it produces higher productivity on highly complex tasks (Gastil, 1995). One highly studied area of democratic leadership is the effect of gender on group leadership and preference for group leadership style between males and females. Foels, et al. (2000) reported that men in controlled settings, such as work groups or study teams, found democratic leadership to be the most preferred, while women preferred democratic leadership in most instances, regardless of the groups setting or goals. On the other hand, males tended to fluctuate between democratic and autocratic leadership styles depending on the setting and goals of the group. With multiple investigations into preferences for leadership, the research does not indicate many instances where leadership style is targeted toward a specific psychological domain based on emotions, thoughts or behaviors.

Autocratic Leadership

While democratic leadership forms around theory Y, autocratic leadership is preferred by individuals who can be categorized by theory X. McGregor (1960) developed theory X to explain the actions of individuals who will not work, or who do not like to work and must be compelled by others to complete assignments and stay on task. The people who compel these individuals must be strong, controlling and supervise the progress of individuals. To form a definition that supports McGregor's theory, Galanes and Adams (2010) reported that autocratic leaders closely monitor their group, directing all interaction of group members and giving orders. Autocratic leaders ask fewer questions but normally answer more questions than democratic leaders. Group members often hear statements such as, "I've decided that this is what you're going to do, first..." (p. 183).

The research on autocratic leadership styles and processes is just as extensive as investigations into democratic leadership. White and Lippitt (1960) concluded that autocratic groups often are found to work harder when the group leader is present. However, the same study found results indicating that autocratically led groups experience more aggression, hostility and apathy than any other group. Foels, et al. (2000) reported that men involved in naturally occurring group settings, such as a group of friends, preferred autocratic leadership. On the other hand, women in any situation rarely prefer autocratic leadership styles. Galanes and Adams (2010) found that those individuals and groups who are "unmotivated, uninterested, or unfamiliar with a task" benefit the greatest from working with autocratic leaders (p. 183). Autocratic leaders have been found to influence multiple types of people and be helpful in certain settings.

The extensive investigation into autocratic leadership style touches on many topics; however, there is little evidence found in support of autocratic leadership or any leadership style being used to target group members according to emotions, thoughts and behaviors. This apparent dearth of research supports the focus of this study that individuals may prefer different types of leadership style based on psychological domains. Autocratically and democratically led groups have both been researched and are known to have specific settings in which each is desirable to different types of people. Males usually prefer either democratic or autocratic leadership based on the setting they find themselves working in. Females usually prefer democratic leadership regardless of the situation. From these results we can conclude that depending on the setting and other demographic variables there are times when different types of leadership styles are preferred. The third type of leadership used in this study is much different than the previous two styles. Laissez faire leadership has led to debates among scholars over whether it can even be listed as a leadership style at all.

Laissez Faire Leadership

Unlike democratic or autocratic leadership, laissez faire leadership cannot be formed around theory X or theory Y as outlined by McGregor (1960). Rothwell (2007) argued that laissez faire leadership amounts to no effort on the leaders part and “is by definition, non-leadership” (p. 165). Rothwell continued the argument that because laissez faire leadership is non-leadership, it has been dropped from significant research on leadership styles (2007). However, investigation into the literature on group leadership and scholarly work on leadership styles indicate that scholars find laissez faire leadership quite effective such as Galanes and Adams (2010) who defined a laissez faire leader as a

group leader who takes no initiative to structure or organize the group, but who will respond to inquiries from group members. Furthermore, Galanes and Adams concluded that groups consisting of members who have worked together before; or are familiar with their tasks, operate more successfully under laissez faire leadership than other types of leadership. Marken (1999) contributes to the literature in support of laissez faire leadership style, stating that laissez faire leaders are often hands-off but are seen as the main source of information and authority in the group. Furthermore, Marken indicates that laissez faire leadership is used by most global organizations. In his 1999 article Marken investigated leadership styles within large organizations. When discussing laissez faire, or as he calls it “free-rein” leadership Marken insists that,

“This free-rein or laissez-faire style of management is best if you feel that your- staff is well-trained, very responsible and professional. This type of leadership is required in many organizations when people have to make immediate decisions, or if your staff is in remote areas and have little direct supervision. Free-rein leadership is used by most global organizations. Within certain limits, individuals are allowed to set their own goals. Most of the time, this results in outstanding performance”

(p. 41).

Laissez Faire is not only found to be a term describing a laid-back or hands-off style to leadership in group settings, but it also has been used to label hands-off leadership or members of families (Shearman & Dunlao, 2008), conflict managements styles (Wu, 2009), economics (Kintz, 2007) and even thought processes (Armstrong, 2006). While scholars generally support the democratic and autocratic leadership styles,

laissez faire leadership style is still being debated as to its usefulness and application it has in group leadership research. For this study, the laissez faire leadership style is considered useful and applicable to the knowledge of group leadership styles. However, laissez faire leadership is similar to the previously mentioned autocratic and democratic styles because the research does not support any investigations into the preference of leadership styles based on psychological domain.

Based on the literature discussing democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire leadership styles, this study will investigate group members' preferences for leadership style using these three types of leadership. Research supports the claim that democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire leadership are often the most commonly encountered leadership styles by members of small groups (Marken, 1999; Lewin et al. 1939). Therefore, this study will seek to determine group members' preferences for these three types of leadership style and determine whether those preferences correlate to the individual's psychological domain.

While autocratic, democratic or laissez faire leadership style is just half of the research being conducted, the other half is highly researched and studied in communication and psychology. Psychological domains are a large part of psychological and communication research and will be used in this study to identify preferred styles of leadership.

Psychological Domains

The styles of group leadership discussed previously are just one of two main focuses for this research. Preference for leadership style is only valuable if there is another variable that correlates to that preference. Lazarus (1989) defined three primary

domains, which are areas that allow an individual to break down the way other individual's processes, imagine, think or feel about, or behave toward the world and happenings around them. Lazarus named three major domains: affective, behavioral and cognitive. He wrote that these domains allow researchers to "better gain a thorough, holistic understanding of the person and his or her social environment" (p. 13). Furthermore, Lazarus explained that the affective, behavioral and cognitive domains are three areas in which individuals may be categorized, based on their emotional, physical, and mental view of issues, topics and individuals they encounter in their surroundings (1989). The primary use of domains in psychological studies is to identify individuals for treatment or information processes that allow them to work at the most successful levels possible. The research from the psychological aspect suggests that identification of the domain is helpful for clinical therapy and developing psychological evaluations in children (Keat, 1990), youth counselors (Greenburg, 1982; Gerler, 1982; Ponterotto, 1984), mentally ill patients (Brunell & Young, 1982), sexual-abuse victims (Neland, 1988), and patients with eating disorders (O'Keefe & Castaldo, 1985). There is also sufficient evidence that the domains have been used in communication studies as well. Domains have been used to treat and identify communication apprehension (Heuett, 1998), advertize and evaluate consumer privacy (Rapp, Hill, Gaines & Wilson, 2009), argumentation (Ripley, 2008), and non-verbal gestures in speech (Rose & Douglas, 2006).

Studies on the separation of individuals for treatment focused on the usefulness of the psychological domains in both communication and psychological studies. For the majority of this study, we will focus more on the communication uses of the

psychological domains, what the different domains consist of, and how they are used. Psychological domains will be investigated in this study by categorizing individuals according to their domain. This includes identifying which of the three domains participants are categorized into when participating in groups. Some individuals will be more emotional in interpreting their surroundings and will be labeled as affective, others will act out through gestures and be labeled as behavioral, and others will process their surroundings in groups through their thought processes being labeled as cognitive individuals. A discussion of the literature on these three domains follows.

Affective Domain

Defining the affective domain, Lazarus (1989) explained that affective-based individuals are emotionally based. This “refers to the emotions, moods, and strong feelings” that individuals experience when interacting in certain settings or with certain individuals (p.76). Lazarus argued that affective problems or concerns do not stand alone. These problems that cause individuals to feel emotional usually stem from the emotions, behavior or actions of other individuals or their own emotions or behaviors, these emotions may even be triggered by thoughts of others or their own thoughts (1989). Research on the affective domain often focuses on fears and anxieties that individuals have as these conditions are related directly to the emotions and feeling of individuals. Scholars have published literature connected with affective domains in areas such as performance anxiety (Lazarus & Abramovitz, 2004), doubting abilities or efficacy (Wolpe, 1958), anticipation of negative outcomes (Anderson & Coussaoule, 1980; Beatty, 1984; Behnke & Beatty, 1981; McCroskey, 1984), and fear of public speaking (Ayres & Hopf, 1993). While affective studies always deal with the emotions and

feelings of individuals as shown above, the affective domain relies heavily on the other two domains we will focus on for this study, behavioral and cognitive.

Behavioral Domain

Unlike the affective domain, which deals with emotions, the behavioral domain “refers mainly to overt behaviors: to acts, habits, gestures, responses, and reactions that are observable and measurable.”(Lazarus, 1989, p. 76). A review of the literature surrounding behavioral domains suggests there is little extant research concerning individuals who demonstrate behavioral-type characteristics and preference for group leadership style. However, the study of the behavioral domain is a topic familiar to communication and psychology scholars. Literature based on behavior are found in subjects such as, public speaking (Ayers & Hopf, 1993; Anderson & Coussaoule, 1980; McEwan & Devins,1983) , intercultural encounters (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Kim, 2008), nonverbal communication (Samp & Monahan, 2009; Dunsmore, Halberstadt, & Perez-Riveria, 2009), health communication (Wanzer, Sparks, & Frymier, 2009), intimate relationships (Santore, 2008), dating (Hendrickson, Goei, 2009), and family communication (Petronio & Bourhis, 1987).

The behavioral domain is perhaps the most-investigated domain and phenomena in psychology or communication because it is the easiest to observe. However, when behavior is correlated with some other action or preference, such as leadership style, it becomes more difficult to observe and calls for in depth research to be conducted. Questionnaires and experiments are designed to test thoughts and attitudes, but basic observation of behavior can tell a lot about individuals and groups. While behavior itself has been studied in group communication the notion of the behavioral domain as it is

outlined by Lazarus (1989) and its connection with group leadership style is a new concept to the field. In connection with the affective domain, it calls for more scholarly attention. Even though the behavioral domain in dealing with the outward gestures and responses of individuals is nothing like the affective domain, which relates to emotions and feelings, a similarity can be found in the idea that neither domain has been studied in connection with preference for leadership style. While defining the affective and behavioral domains and giving examples from the literature is still possible, both domains rely heavily on cross-comparative evaluation and research between the affective, behavioral and cognitive domains to find significance.

Cognitive Domain

Lazarus (1960) defined the cognitive domain in the form of a question, proposing that the domain can be defined through response to queries such as “What sorts of ideas, values, opinions, and attitudes get in the way of your happiness?”(p. 76). As defined here, the term *happiness* can be replaced with the topic of study by the researcher. For example, “Which thoughts, ideas and opinions get in the way of you being a good speaker, a good mother or father, and effective boss or valued employee?” In simpler terms, Lazarus suggested that the cognitive domain is easier understood as the thoughts or opinions that are formed around a situation (1989).

Literature supports the idea that cognitive processes or thought patterns are highly researched within different areas of communication. Scholars have invested time developing research centered on cognitive complexity or how many signals an individual can interpret and handle at one time (Galanes & Adams, 2010). Extensive investigation has been done with animals’ cognitive processes (Matsuzawa, 2009; Ross, 2009;

Wobber, Hare, Koler-Matznick, Wrangham, & Tomasello, 2009; Adachi, 2009). Though this study will focus on individuals in small groups, it is valuable to note the extent of the research focused on cognitive processes. Just as is the case with the affective and behavioral domains, the cognitive aspect of the trio is vulnerable alone. While domains are important individually, together they are valuable to furthering research in the field of communication.

Chapter III

Rationale, Research Questions and Hypotheses

Overall, research suggests that group communication and leadership styles have been investigated rather thoroughly. The domains of individuals have been investigated heavily, as have styles and effects of group leadership. However, the literature indicates no research that attempts to correlate any of the three domains with a preference for leadership style. With this in mind, this study may now combine these two areas to form an investigation to indicate preferences or lack of preference that individuals have for leadership style. Identifying a relationship between leadership style and domain may potentially provide indications for a preference or a lack of preference for leadership style among individuals. Furthermore, identifying an individual's preference for leadership style would allow for group members and group leaders to be paired together before a group was actually formed. As mentioned previously scholars have dedicated some time and effort into identifying factors that increase group comfort and success. The information provided by this investigation could lead to identification of a variable that would increase group comfort and success because group member's preference for leadership style would be known before-hand.

Likewise, Lazarus (1989) intended for the identification of domains to aid individuals in overcoming some undesired effect in a certain situation or individuals to be targeted for specific types of information or learning techniques. Research into psychological domains offers few, if any instances when treatments have been applied to individuals based on their domain in regards to leadership style. Building on this information, this study will attempt to target affective, behavioral and cognitive domains according to leadership style to provide insight into the preference group members have

toward styles of group leadership. There is sufficient research to suggest that identification of psychological domains are helpful for psychological studies, such as evaluations in children (Keat, 1990), youth-counselor training (Greenburg, 1982; Gerler, 1982; Ponterotto, 1984), mentally ill patients (Brunell & Young, 1982), sexual-abuse victims (Neland, 1988), and patients with eating disorders (O'Keefe & Castaldo, 1985). However, as mentioned above, little to no research targeting preference for leadership styles have ever been conducted using domains. This investigation may indicate that it is possible to separate group members by leadership style just as previous research indicates that individuals who are in need of psychological treatment may be separated through identification of domain.

Providing a lull in the existing research that can be filled by this current study is but one justification for carrying out this investigation into preference for leadership style according to domain. Possible findings reported in this study could influence the field of group communication in two ways. First, results could potentially influence the knowledge existing on the way groups form. Previous research indicated that males and females reported preference for different kinds of leadership based on setting (Foels et al., 2000). This continues to be true; however, this study could indicate that regardless of the way employees, co-workers, or students think or interpret their surroundings, most will prefer to work with a leader who demonstrates a specific style. Instead of organizations putting together committees and assigning random managers or supervisors, organizations can train leaders to lead in a manner that is preferred by the group they will be leading. When facing the dilemma of training five or six group members to work with a specific leader, or training one leader to work with five or six

group members, most organizations would prefer to train one person rather than five or six. Overall, the outcome of this investigation may indicate that there is a dominant, primary leadership style that group members hold a preference for.

The second possible impact of this study could be found in the preference of leadership style based on participant's psychological domain. There may be cases when a group leader cannot be trained, or the choices of leadership style do not include a leader who matches the group's primary preference. For example, a committee is organized to fill a position within a company. Such a committee usually includes four to five members and a leader to organize potential employees and plan for interviews. Random assignment to this committee could potentially match committee members with a leader who they do not prefer based on leadership style. This does not mean that leaders or group members must be retrained each time a group is formed to provide ideal work settings. However, if group member's preference for leadership style could be identified before the formation of a group, members of a committee as discussed above could be matched with a leader whom they prefer. Findings of this study may indicate that if the group member's domain can be identified, this could indicate one set of variables that allow group members to be systematically assigned to leaders, and have a preference for working with that type of leadership style.

Previous reports indicate that group members either prefer or do not prefer leadership styles based on a setting or situation (Foels et al., 2000; Cummings, 2009). This study could potentially shed light on the secondary preferences of group members based on psychological domain. Within organizational and other group settings, matching a leadership style with the preference of the group every time is unrealistic.

Settings have and will continue to arise when group members must adapt to and work with a leader who does not lead using their primarily preferred method. Instead of situations when group members either fully like, or totally dislike the type of leadership style they are dealing with, a secondary preference for leadership style can be identified if group member's psychological domain can be categorized. For example, if a development team is organized to draw up plans for a new park in town. Many of the members of this team may not prefer the type of leader who they work under. If the members of this team can be categorized by psychological domain, it may be possible to match each member with a leadership style they prefer in a secondary many. If many group members primary preference is democratic leadership, and no democratic leader is available, each member may be identified by a secondary choice, say autocratic leadership. Instead of random assignment of a leader if no leader who displays the primary preference is available, secondary preferences may be evaluated and matched with a leadership style to provide a comfortable work setting.

Now instead of being in a win or lose situation, this study may indicate a second preference for leadership style according to individual psychological domain. This second preference would give group members a leader who they would still prefer, even if it is not their first choice for leadership style. This could potentially limit the number of settings when group members and group leaders are put into situations where the leader is either preferred or not preferred; it offers a second preference.

A final rationale for this study offers a possible solidification of not only preference for leadership style but of psychological domains and the research supporting each area. A primary motive of this study is to compare leadership preference against

psychological domain head to head. Regardless of whether an overall leadership style is reported, or if psychological domain is a primary indicator of preference for leadership style, each body of literature will receive additional support based on our methods and results.

When correlating leadership preference with psychological domain it is possible that two outcomes could be indicated in the results. On one hand, the outcome would indicate that preference for leadership style is more prominent in participant reporting. These results would indicate an overall preference for leadership style regardless of the psychological domain they are categorized by. For example, results of this nature would indicate preference for autocratic leadership across a significant portion of participants categorized by affective, behavioral or cognitive domains.

On the other hand, correlations could indicate that no preference for leadership is dominant. These relationships would suggest that psychological domain must be identified before any preference for leadership can be determined. Regardless of the way the results turn out, leadership oriented or domain oriented, there will be evidence to add to each body of literature and the research that precedes this study. With the amount of literature reviewed, and the definition of both leadership style and domain clearly explained, research questions and hypotheses are formulated to suggest how the results will be represented. Recalling the previous literature and comparing the method that both leadership styles and psychological domains have been researched using the following research questions were asked.

RQ1: To what extent, if any, will individuals report a preference for a specific leadership style, regardless of domain?

RQ2: To what extent, if any, will individuals' domains correlate to one of the three leadership styles?

Individuals categorized according to domain could possibly report a preference for a specific style of leadership. This preference has the potential to maximize the group experience by matching preference of group members for a specific type of leadership style to an actual group leader. According to the descriptions that the literature provides for each style of leadership and the characteristics of individuals classified in each psychological domain the following hypotheses have been formulated for this study:

H1: Democratic Leadership style will be preferred over autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles regardless of affective, behavioral or cognitive domain assessments.

If indeed democratic leadership style emerges as dominant among participants, we further hypothesize that...

H2: Individuals categorized in the affective domain will prefer autocratic leadership style as a secondary preference.

H3: Behavioral individuals will prefer democratic leadership in all instances.

H4: Cognitive individuals will prefer laissez-faire leadership style as a secondary preference.

We hypothesize that the literature will be supported in its claim that all participants will report a preference for leadership style. We also present the hypothesis

that domain will have an impact on the preference for leadership style; however, this will only indicate a secondary preference. Overall, predictions indicate that results will be leadership oriented. Participants will prefer an overall type of leadership style regardless of domain. However, domain will be useful in predicting secondary leadership preferences. These predictions are based on previous literature and do not indicate that identification of psychological domain will be necessary to identify preference for leadership style.

Chapter IV

Method

As part of gathering data for this study a pilot study was conducted prior to the complete study being carried out in its entirety. The pilot study consisted of 84 participants and was used to test the reliability and validity of the instrument. The results of the pilot study will be combined with the results of the complete study and reported as one investigation. There was no difference in the procedures or instruments used in the pilot study when compared with the procedures and instruments used to carry out the full study.

Participants

Participants involved in this study were drawn from undergraduate communication courses. Individuals received an informed-consent statement that included information about the study and instruments they would be asked to respond to. Participants were primarily freshman students, although some were sophomores, with a few juniors and a minimal number of seniors rounding out the sample. Participants' ages, races, genders and other demographic details were not recorded or requested. There were 205 participants in this study resulting in 1,845 analyzed responses.

Procedure

Individuals involved in undergraduate communication classes were asked to complete a nine item paired-comparison survey. Surveys were administered to each set of students at the beginning of class during the first half of the semester. Each subject received and was asked to read an informed-consent statement; the statement was also read aloud. Then each individual was asked to complete the survey. The survey

consisted of nine statements, and each statement presented two different attitudes toward leadership style. Participants then picked between the two choices to indicate which leadership style they would enjoy working with the most as a member of a group. On a consistent basis, individuals completing the survey were finished between five and eight minutes after receiving the survey. Questions regarding the survey or study were directed toward the researcher at the completion of all surveys. After completion of the survey, participants were debriefed and asked to return to their regular class activities. Participants were allowed to remain in a comfortable, controlled setting during completion of the survey with prior permission to distribute the survey given by all participating instructors. Using class time and allowing students to remain in a familiar setting was a designed part of our data collection process.

Instruments

When selecting the type of instrument to use in this investigation it became apparent while preparing to collecting data that the paired-comparison survey was the best choice. The paired-comparison survey was selected for the multiple variables it measures without repeated administration. As we constructed the survey items, we noted that a total of six variables would be measured by the instrument, three leadership styles and three psychological domains. To match each participant in the study with a domain and a preference for leadership style, the paired-comparison survey was a necessary and practical choice.

Each paired-comparison survey consists of a number of items based on the total number of variables existing in the study. For the purpose of this investigation, we combined six variables to be measured and recorded: three from the domains and three

from leadership styles. The paired comparison-survey takes every possible combination of these variables into consideration. Therefore, the survey administered for this study consisted of nine items each with two choices allowing each of the three domains to be matched and compared against each of the leadership styles. Each statement was designed to contain two parts. The first half of the item is worded to indicate a specific domain; for example, if the item began with the words, "I feel connected with," that would be an affective domain indicator because it connects the individual emotionally through feelings. If the item began with, "I am outgoing and excited when working with," it would indicate a behavioral domain indicating outward actions or gestures. Statements consisting of, "My thoughts are in line with" are cognitive indicators that connect the individual's thoughts to a leadership style. The first part of each statement only allows us to categorize individuals into the proper domain from which they stem. The final portion completes the item and allows for evaluation of an individual's preference for leadership style.

Regardless of the statement beginning each item, the second half of each item was designed to indicate leadership style. For instance, a statement ending with "...a leader who seeks ideas and suggestions through discussion" indicates a democratic leader. Additionally, items that end with "...a leader who determines policy and makes final decisions" are considered to have an autocratic preference for leadership. Finally, statements that end in "... leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information" are consistent with laissez faire style leaders. The paired-comparison survey allows the design of each item's prefix and suffix to be matched to a preference

for leadership style and psychological domain, giving subjects the equal opportunity to read and select the domain and leadership style of their choice.

The wording for each item was based on two prominent sources. The wording of beginning segments was taken from the original surveys that Lazarus (1989) used to determine individual domain. In instances where Lazarus categorized individuals into domains, his items started with similar wording as the statements designed for this study. The concluding portions of the items that target preference for leadership style were taken from Rothwell's definitions of the leadership styles (2007). As they completed the survey, participants were confronted with two choices for each item and asked to select which scenario they agreed with most. By allowing time for nine items each individual was also given equal opportunity to select the domain and leadership style they preferred when compared against all other possible domains and styles. The survey's organization allows information about leadership style and domain to be gathered in a single administration of the instrument.

The paired-comparison survey used for this study (Appendix A) had to be specifically designed for this investigation. Because of this, the reliability and validity of the instrument naturally can be called into question. To justify the instrument, its reliability and validity was measured by correlating each item against all other items in the instrument and calculating Pearson's r for each pair. Eight of the nine pairs correlated at significance levels of .05 or .01. Given the significant correlation of the items, we are confident that the items are measuring the same things, and that they are measuring what they were designed to measure. Therefore, we are confident in

proceeding with the investigation into domain and leadership style using our paired-comparison survey.

Control

While control tends to be a significant concern in experimental research, survey research includes fewer areas where control may become a concern. However, just because survey research is being conducted and not experimental research, does not mean that possible issues of control are disregarded. The primary issues of control present themselves in the use of the paired-comparison survey. The survey was pilot-tested and was found both valid and reliable, which is not surprising, given the origin of the language used to construct survey items.

Before administration of the survey, participants were asked not to discuss the survey until all surveys had been gathered. During administration of the survey, research assistants observed participants to ensure that they were doing their own work and not discussing questions with other participants. As a final control measure, we discarded incomplete surveys. Given these control measures of the environment during survey administration, and the questions composing each instrument, we are confident any outside influences have been minimized, and that the variables designed to be tested by the survey instrument were the variables tested.

Chapter V

Results

This study investigated the overall preference group members have for leadership style. Additionally, this investigation sought to determine whether group members reported a preference for leadership style that correlated with a specific psychological domain. Table 1 represents the number of scenarios selected by each individual and their preference for leadership style as well as their reported psychological domain (n =1,845).

The initial hypothesis stated that democratic leadership would be dominant in all participants regardless of psychological domain. This hypothesis was based on previous research indicating numerous settings when individuals preferred democratic leadership. The results indicate that 53.8% of participants reported a preference for democratic leadership regardless of domain; therefore, the results support the conclusions drawn in Hypothesis 1, that democratic leadership is the dominant preference among all participants ($p < .01$). The results indicating significance were generated by conducting a Chi Square test, as well as calculating the value of Cramer's V .

Democratic leadership, emerging as the primary leadership preference among a significant amount of participants, allows for evaluation of the results to be compared with the second set of proposed hypotheses. Hypothesis 2 suggests that group members who reported a secondary preference for autocratic leadership will also be classified as affective domain individuals. According to results of this study, 184 items were selected by participants indicating preference for autocratic leadership style as well as being classified as affective domain individuals. This indicates a significant correlation between individuals who were identified in the affective domain and a secondary

preference for autocratic leadership ($p < .01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported by the results of this investigation.

Hypothesis 4 is similar to the prediction of Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 4 states that individuals who are classified in the cognitive domain will also report a secondary leadership preference for laissez-faire leadership. Results indicate that 210 scenarios were selected by participants indicating individuals classified in the cognitive domain also prefer laissez-faire leadership styles as a secondary preference to democratic leadership styles. This suggests a significant correlation between participants who reported a secondary preference for laissez-faire leadership style and classification into the cognitive domain ($p < .01$). The results support Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 3 is similar to Hypothesis 1 in that it targets democratic leadership. Hypothesis 3 indicates that participants classified in the behavioral domain will prefer democratic leadership in all instances. The overall correlation between democratic leadership style and all group members supports Hypothesis 3. However, participants classified as behavioral domain individuals reported 142 instances when autocratic leadership was preferred to 153 instances when laissez-faire leadership was preferred as a secondary preference. These results indicate that in behavioral domain individuals, democratic leadership style is the primary preference and no secondary preference was significantly reported. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is not completely supported, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Results indicate that participants in the behavioral domain do prefer democratic leadership as a primary style; however, behavioral individuals may not prefer democratic leadership in all instances. The results suggest that behavioral individuals did not report a significant secondary preference for leadership style and this

should not be taken to mean that behavioral individuals prefer democratic leadership in all instances. These individuals simply did not report a significant secondary preference for leadership.

Overall, results indicate that significant correlations are present between all group members and their preference for democratic leadership style as a primary preference. Also significant correlations existed between autocratic leadership and affective participants as well as laissez-faire leadership and cognitive participants as a secondary preference for leadership.

Table 1
Preference for Leadership Style According to Psychological Domain

Psych. Domain	Leadership Style			%
	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez Faire	
Affective	184	331	76	32.0%
Behavioral	142	339	153	34.4%
Cognitive	88	322	210	33.6%
%	22.4%	53.8%	23.8%	100%
Totals (N=1845)	414	992	439	1845

$$X^2(4, N=1,845) = 95.8, p < .01$$

Additionally, Cramer's V is reported as .161 ($V = .161, p < .01$). The reason for calculating Cramer's V in addition to the significant results of the Chi Square test is to validate the significance of the results. By using a Chi Square test, it is possible that the large sample size in this study influenced artificial significant results. The results may be inflated and therefore incorrect. However, applying Cramer's V corrects for bias created due to the large sample. The results of Cramer's V indicate that the significance indicated

by the Chi Square test is not a result of an inflated sample size. The results reported in this section are due to significant correlations and relationships caused by the design of the study and participants responses to survey items, not by a large sample size.

Chapter VI

Discussion

As hypothesized, correlations between preference for group leadership style and psychological domain were indicated by results of the survey administered in this study. These results support the previous research in group communication; they also offer insight into further analysis of psychological domain as an indicator of group leadership preference. Further analysis of the results will provide insight into the relevant implications this study offers to the field of group communication and more specifically group leadership. In this section, the results mentioned previously will be interpreted to include support this study provides for previous literature, the implications and insights this study may offer to the field of communication now, and the heuristic characteristics of this study.

Previous research indicated that individuals reported preference for different kinds of leadership styles. A majority of these preferences were dependent on the setting of the group interaction (Foels, et al.,2000). Results of this current study support the idea that different group settings will create differences in preference for leadership styles. However, this study indicates that regardless of the way group members think or the setting in which the group functions, a significant portion of group members will prefer to work with a democratic leader. A practical example of this idea is seen when organizations form committees. Instead of assigning random group leaders or supervisors to head a group, individuals may be trained to lead in a democratic way, knowing that most group members reported preference for democratic styles. Additionally, when faced with the possibility of training five or six group members to

work with a specific leader or training one leader to work with five or six group members, most organizations prefer to train one leader rather than five or six group members. Therefore, knowing that a significant proportion of group members reported a preference for democratic leadership, groups may be adjusted to fit these criteria before the group is even formed, rather than disrupting the group after formation to allow for a preferred type of leader to be added.

Further inspection of results indicates the secondary preference participants reported for leadership style based on categorization of psychological domain. Lazarus (1989) indicated through his research that individuals can be categorized into three psychological domains depending on the setting in which they function. In the settings of group work and group membership, participants were successfully identified according to their affective, behavioral or cognitive domain. Results indicate significant correlations between the categorization of domain and preference for leadership style. Although a significant portion of participants preferred democratic leadership, correlations indicate that autocratic leadership is preferred as a secondary style of leadership by participants whose domains were affective (emotionally driven while working as a member of a group). Likewise, the results indicate a significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership as a secondary preference and individuals who reported being cognitively based when working in groups. Overall, results did not indicate a significant correlation indicating any secondary preference for individuals classified as behaviorists while working in groups.

There are bound to be instances when group leaders do not exhibit methods that reflect democratic leadership. This does not mean that group leaders must be retrained in

each setting to lead in a democratic manner. Significant correlations indicate that, when democratic leadership is not present, group members may still be paired with a leadership style they prefer. In this instance democratic leadership is identified as the most preferred method of leadership. This does not mean that democratic leadership is the best style of leadership in every instance, but in this study is identified as the most preferred by group members. By identifying group members' psychological domains, affective, behavioral and cognitive group members can be paired with autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. As mentioned before, autocratic leadership is preferred by affective individuals and laissez-faire leadership by cognitive individuals. These domains, if identified before group formation, can be precursors to successful group leadership and member interactions before the group is formed. These comfortable interactions can take place if members are matched to their primary preference of democratic leadership or even a secondary preference according to domain

Previous reports indicated that group members either prefer or do not prefer leadership styles based on a setting or situation (Aldoory & Toth, 2004). This research suggests that preference for leadership style is a "win-lose" scenario. Participants in Aldoory and Toth's research only indicated that they did or did not like the leadership they were paired with. Current implications of the results indicate that group members report secondary preferences for group leadership style based on domain. Meaning, that instead of group situations existing where group members blatantly like, or dislike leadership styles, now a secondary preference for leadership style is present. This second preference gives group members a leader they would still prefer, even if the leader does not satisfy their first choice for leadership style. This could potentially limit the number

of difficult interactions caused by differences in leadership style and group members' preferred leadership styles. Basically, instead of group members having a yes or no choice in regard to preference for group leadership style, results support the claim of a middle ground, or secondary preference that has not been identified before.

This study supports the previous research focusing on preference for leadership style and psychological domains. The design of this study was to investigate leadership styles and psychological domain as they relate to preference for group leadership. Correlations of leadership style and psychological domain focusing on preferred leadership style indicate that research in both areas of leadership style and psychological domain are strengthened by the results. Reports of significant democratic dominance in leadership preference does not suggest that psychological domain is unaccounted for in the results. As a secondary choice, the categorizing of domains, correlate significantly with subjects' preferences for leadership style. Participants reported that both domain and leadership style have an influence on group members' preferences for leadership style. Both domains and leadership style are reported to be significant in regard to preference for leadership style, and claims for both sides are strengthened by the findings in this study. Multiple factors influence an individual's preference for leadership style; this study indicates that two strong influences are psychological domain and group leadership style. As mentioned previously this study was partially designed as a head to head comparison of the two variables, after reviewing results it is not clear that either side had more influence than the other. This conclusion indicates that both variables should be recognized for their influence on leadership preference.

The design of this study did not include demographic indicators, nor did this study seek to identify causal effects associated with the correlations that emerged through this research. This is due, in part, to the preparatory nature of this study. This study was conducted as part of a future, larger project to identify causation and test whether participants' self-reported preferences for group leadership actually hold up during and after group interaction. Therefore, a major reason for not collecting any demographic information was because only a significant correlation was sought between leadership style and psychological domain. Now that this significant correlation has been established, and hypotheses supported, further research, including the gathering of demographic indicators can take place. Additionally, the control of the study was increased and the precision of the study was better defined without testing for demographic information.

Two previous experiments that may challenge the findings of this initial study are those of Solomon Asch (1956), who conducted research on group conformity, as well as Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1984), who built on Asch's work and introduced the spiral of silence, also focusing on conforming to group norms. Asch (1956) conducted research known as the "lines on a page" experiment. His experiment consisted of showing participants one line and having them choose from a second group of lines the one line that most closely represented the same length as the initial line. Before the participant in the study would answer, other members in the group would intentionally choose the incorrect line from the second group. Asch's study indicated that, in a significant number of groups, the one participant would end up agreeing with the group's answer, even though that answer was obviously incorrect. Therefore, Asch concluded that individuals

would rather bow to group pressure and agree with an incorrect answer than stand their ground against the group.

In a similar study, Noelle-Neumann (1984) conducted the “train test” to gauge group conformity. During her experiment she asked individuals to imagine themselves on a lengthy train ride. Noelle-Neumann then presented situations to subjects where they encountered others whose beliefs and values differed from their own. After hearing the opinions of other group members on their opinions and beliefs, Noelle-Neumann observed that a significant number of individuals would not respond. Rather than object and argue against what was being said, most individuals decided to say nothing; thus, the spiral of silence. Both the experiments of Asch and Noelle-Neumann question the current research.

Is it possible that responses group members reported as being primary and secondary preferences for leadership will change if situations arise for group conformity? Responding to this question requires the evaluation of differences between the two studies mentioned above and this current study. Both Asch and Noelle-Neumann focused on how a single individual would respond when confronted by an entire group who held opposing beliefs and attitudes. Both studies concluded that individuals will conform or be silent in response to group members. The question arises, if the minority consisted of more than just one individual, would conformity and silence come as it did in their studies, if it came at all? This is the situation faced in the current study. If group members were paired in this study with their preference for leadership, the entire group would prefer the same type of leadership. Therefore, the group would have no minority and no possibility of conforming to the opinions or beliefs of the majority. However,

future research may investigate whether preference for group leadership correlated with psychological domain is strong enough to hold up to group conformity or bows to spurts of silence. Future research could also take into consideration that participants reported preference for leadership style may change once the participants actually become involved in group work. Further steps in conducting experimental research in correlation with this current study will be to measure the consistency of group members' preference for leadership style before, during and after actual group work.

Additional theories that connect to the current research are uncertainty reduction theory and social identity theory based in interpersonal communication, as well as contingency theory and leader-member exchange theory, based in small group communication. The purpose of discussing these theories is not to further question the current research, but to provide a possible explanation or insight as to why participants reported preferences for leadership style as they did. In discussing these theoretical implications future research would be needed to know for sure if these theories can be a complete explanation for influencing the nature of the reported results.

Uncertainty reduction theory developed by Berger and Calabrese (1975) indicates that communication by nature is an anxiety building interaction. When individuals become uncertain or anxious in a communication setting they will, through verbal and non-verbal communication, seek to lower their anxiety or levels of uncertainty. This reduction in uncertainty could be accomplished through a variety of methods. Individuals could use questions to clarify statements of uncertainty or adjust their position accordingly to account for the proximity of the setting. Regardless of the

technique, the uncertainty reduction theory explains that communication creates uncertainty and individuals involved in the setting seek to reduce it.

The application of the uncertainty reduction theory could be a possible explanation for why democratic leadership was selected as the dominant preference regardless of domain. If communication settings create anxiety this is sure to include communicating in small groups and communication between leaders and members of groups (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Participants in this study could possibly have selected the style of leadership that they perceived would create the lowest levels of uncertainty or anxiety. The selection of leadership style based on the perception of lower uncertainty rates would not allow psychological domain to be the factor in determining a preference for leadership style, but perceived levels of uncertainty instead. By selecting democratic leadership, participants were selecting the style of leadership they perceived to create the lowest levels of uncertainty within themselves.

Uncertainty reduction theory introduces a unique factor to this study. Research centered on uncertainty reduction theory is based on data gathered after a communication setting has already begun. If uncertainty reduction behavior is a possible explanation for participants reporting preference for democratic leadership in this study, results now apply to a setting when uncertainty reduction theory plays a role before communication takes place. This implication would be new to uncertainty reduction research and need further investigation.

Similar to uncertainty reduction theory is social identity theory. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) identifies individuals of a group based on their beliefs about themselves and the groups they associate with. Social identity theory operates on

the definition of “self” held by one member of the group and how that definition of “self” aligns with other group members. Individuals in groups tend relate to, and therefore prefer, other group members who share the same ideas or beliefs about who they are in constructing a “social self” — consisting of similar attitudes, beliefs, and values (Tajfel, 1982). The basis of social identity theory is seen when individuals create different self-concepts depending on the group they are associating with. Individuals can change their sense of self to fit in with others. In relation to this study, the preference for leadership style could have been made on what will be best for the group as a whole, not the individual. Members of groups often make decisions and choices on what will benefit all members of the group who share their sense of self, not what is best for the individual (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These individuals align their sense of self so closely with other members of the group that they make decisions based on the effect that choice will bring to the group as a whole, even if the decision is personal. Since participants live in a democratic society with a democratic government and a society who places high priority on collectivism, preferences for leadership might reflect styles of leadership who share these traits. By definition, the closest style of leadership matching these criteria would be democratic leadership. Again, further research would need to be conducted to solidify this claim that social identity could influence preference for leadership style.

In addition to these interpersonal theories, two small group theories narrow the possible explanations for the findings of this study. First, contingency theory (Fiedler 1964) operates under the assumption that specific leadership styles can be matched to specific settings to increase the power and control the leader has over group members. Basically the amount of power and control is contingent on the setting of the group, and

the structure of the group. The matching of leadership styles to a setting and structure is similar to the design of this study, that is, to match leadership style with psychological domain rather than setting and structure. While this theory may not offer any explanations about why individuals reported preference for leadership style, the theory lends itself to the argument that leadership styles are correlated to different variables to measure group member experiences.

Contingency theory establishes that leadership style matched with group setting and structure increases the power and control a group leader has during group interaction. This idea provides grounds for a primary implication of the current study. The results and outcomes of this study precede contingency theory by offering a variable (psychological domain) that may identify preference for group leadership prior to group formation. Overall implications could indicate that while contingency theory creates power and control by setting and structure, identification of psychological domain could naturally bring about power and control before a group has their first meeting. This power and control would be present due to the preference for leadership styles each member reports. Further research would be needed to determine whether power and control are byproducts of early detection of leadership preference according to psychological domain.

The final theory that has implications for this study in relation to the larger communication field is leader-member exchange theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen, 1976). Leader-member exchange theory is centered on the idea that each leader of a group must treat the members of the group as individuals by creating dyadic communication. Northouse (2010) explains that “before

leader-member exchange theory, researchers treated leadership as something leaders did toward all of their followers. This assumption implied that leaders treated followers in a collective way, as a group, using an average leadership style” (p. 151). Leader-member exchange further implies that the more dyadic communication existing between a leader and a member, the greater the success of the group. Specifically, Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell (1993) identified high exchange groups as having less employee turnover, more positive performance evaluations, higher frequency of promotions, greater organizational commitment, better job attitudes, and more support from the leader.

All the benefits of leader-member exchange theory could indicate that the dominant preference for leadership style could be prevalent because participants identified democratic leaders as the highest possibility for creating dyadic relationships with their group members. This identification of democratic leadership and high leader-member exchange would imply higher levels of group success.

While leader-member exchange, as well as the three other theories discussed have been proven to create success in groups in past studies, it is important to keep in mind that these theories are only possible explanations for why results were reported in the manner they were. While significant correlations are indicated between psychological domain and leadership style it is important to make a connection with the uncertainty reduction theory, social identity theory, contingency theory, and leader-member exchange theory. These connections to existing theory imply that research centered on psychological domain and leadership style is not innovative or brand new to communication research. These connections do establish that theory and research already exist that could further indicate exactly why the correlations between leadership style and

psychological domain turned out the way it did. However, further research would need to be conducted and limitations of this study taken into account before any existing theory can be identified as a specific reason for why results are indicated as they are in this study. Further research in each of these areas is necessary to solidify any of these possible influences.

Implications of each theory are based on the idea that group members prefer leadership styles that most closely relate to their own attitudes, beliefs, values, and their desired outcomes for the group. Each theory mentioned previously could indicate a reason for the dominance of democratic leadership. However, through a review of the literature and the application of theory there were no indications or explanations for the presence of psychological domain as an indicator for a secondary preference for leadership style. While the theories outlined may indicate a possible explanation for the dominance of democratic leadership, there is little existing theory to account for the presence and significant impact that psychological domain had on leadership preference. In the larger scheme, the link between secondary preferences for leadership style and psychological domain as indicated in this study cannot be accounted for theoretically.

Each of the theories discussed above, uncertainty reduction, social identity, contingency theory, and leader-member exchange focus on phenomena and interactions that take place within a group after the group is formed, and usually after the group has already met to establish a purpose. The primary implication of this study is the pre-group focus these results apply to. The results of this study indicate that prior to a group meeting, or prior to a group leader being selected; identification of psychological domain can identify a preference for group leadership among group members. Because results

are oriented toward this pre-group formation factor, the implication of this study precedes the theories discussed above. Rather than waiting for a group to meet and relationships to develop among group members and leaders before observing factors that influence the leader-member relationship, identifying psychological domain in each member offers a preference for leadership style that is identified prior to group formation. This grouping of group members to a preferred group leader changes the dynamics of the leader-member relationship. Research focused on group leadership preference usually has started from scratch when observing the interactions of members and leaders. However, by forming groups based on a preference for group leadership a relationship is already formed between the group leader and group member prior to the group forming. This prior preference could change the nature of such theories as the uncertainty reduction theory. Why would a member of a group need to exhibit uncertainty reduction behaviors when interacting with a leader who they have already reported a preference for? Further results could indicate that they do not.

Application of the pre-group focus of this study is evident in organizational settings. An example of the application and benefit of identifying preference for leadership style before the formation of a group can be seen in a typical health organization setting. According to Leach, Myrtle, Weaver, and Dasu (2009) teams of doctors/surgeons and nurses are formed based primarily on a schedule of availability. This random sequence for forming health groups often results in conflict or unease of group members based on who the doctor or surgeon leading the group is. Implementing the results of this study would require that teams be formed on the basis of who group members prefer to work with by identifying psychological domain. In the instance of

health teams, nurses and surgeons would be assigned to teams not according to similar schedules, but only after affective, behavioral or cognitive domains had been identified in each individual. After this identification each team member could be placed on a team being led by a doctor or surgeon who displays leadership styles they prefer to work with. Essentially, by identifying leadership styles and psychological domain each team scheduler, or organizer is given the information stating what group members will prefer to work with what group leaders. Individuals in charge of organizing groups and group leaders might find this information very helpful.

The implication and application of the results also change the way groups are researched and observed. When observing a health or organizational team researchers usually search for features and interactions in a group that occur after the group has already met and when the group has already been formed. However, as implied in the example above, these phenomena that researchers usually observe may be altered because of the existing relationship involving preference for leadership style before the group ever forms. When researching a group that is totally unfamiliar with each other there may be aspects of that group's interaction that differ from a group who knows what style of leadership they will be matched with. While group members may not have been introduced to each other, the knowledge that the group leader will display a certain style of leadership could certainly change the dynamics of that group's interaction, even before they meet for the first time.

Interpersonal and group theory does lend a partial explanation for possible reasons that democratic leadership was preferred regardless of domain. Uncertainty reduction theory and social identity theory suggest that democratic leadership might have

been dominant because group members select leaders who are similar to themselves, or leaders who they perceive will create the lowest levels of uncertainty. Contingency theory suggests that group leaders, if assigned to a group in the ideal setting will increase their control and power over the group. Leader-member exchange theory explains that group members may select leaders that interact most with the group. The more interaction between group leaders and members the more comfortable and successful the group becomes. All of these theories suggest possible implications as to why democratic leadership style emerged as dominant. However, the primary implication of the results of this study is the pre-group implications. Research has focused on group interactions after group formation; however, this study introduces a method of group formation that focuses on the assignment of group members to leadership style before the group is formed and that could take place before the group is even needed.

Limitations

Limitations in this study fall primarily within the generalization of this study. Reviewing previous research investigating group leadership, there is no shortage of literature that suggests many groups function under emergent leaders. In some instances, no group leader is assigned at the commencement of the group, and group members end up looking to a member who comes from within the group for leadership. The design and organization of this study would be specific to groups who have assigned leaders. Rothwell (2007) indicates that a large majority of these groups exist in corporate settings when individuals in management are assigned to lead groups of lower-level workers to accomplish a task. Therefore, the limitation comes in the spectrum that these results

cannot be generalized to all groups. This study could be generalized within corporate groups or groups that have assigned leaders.

Additionally, the generalizability of this study could be better identified if demographic information had been gathered. As mentioned earlier the focus of this study was to establish the correlation between leadership styles and psychological domain. For this purpose, collecting demographic information was not a priority when the instrument for this study was designed. Although the unknown impact of demographic information is a limitation to this study, by not collecting demographic information the precision of the instrument is increased. By only collecting data concerning the correlation of leadership to domain the control of the study was increased. Not having to incorporate any information other than domain and leadership preference the results of this study are very specific. Because of the increase in the precision of the study, the variables that need to be controlled for are limited.

Future Research

Future research, as discussed above, could take two primary routes. First, as a preparatory study, this research can be taken one step further by collecting demographic information and seeking a causal relationship through experimental research to further explain the correlations reported in this investigation. Second, future research may also address the issue of consistency throughout the group work process. Does participants' preference for leadership style remain the same before, during and after work in groups? And if there is the possibility of conformity, does having a preference for leadership style correlated with participants' psychological domain make resisting conformity easier?

As mentioned before, the purpose of this study was to establish that preference for group leadership style could be correlated with psychological domains. Having established significant correlations through this study, future research may take these correlations and investigate causal factors.

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Appendix A

This study is being conducted by Kyle Heuett, a graduate student in the Communication Department at Southern Utah University. The topic of this research project is group communication and leadership styles. This survey is made up of 9 questions. Each questions will provide two choices, please place an “x” next to the choice that most suits you when working as a member of a group. If both choices suit you, place an “x” next to the statement you most prefer.

On average this survey should take you between 5 and 8 minutes to complete, please take your time and answer as truthfully as you can. If you have any questions please raise your hand and I or one of my assistants will come to you. Please do your own work and do not discuss answers with others or discuss the survey until all surveys have been collected.

This survey is completed on a voluntary basis, should you decide not to participate you will not be negatively affected. You do not have to answer questions that you do not feel comfortable with or that you do not wish to answer. You may discontinue the survey at anytime. Your participation, while not compensated, is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to know the results of this study, or have a copy of the completed study you may contact me at k_heuett1851@hotmail.com or inquire at the Communication Department in Centrum office 213.

Kyle Heuett

Supervising Advisor: Dr. Paul Husselbee



Appendix B

Directions: Make sure you place an “X” by only one statement in each pair of questions. If you prefer both styles of leadership described in the pair, place an “X” by the statement that you **MOST** prefer. Thank you!

1. A. I feel connected with a leader who seeks ideas and suggestions through discussion.
B. I am outgoing and excited when working with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.
2. A. I feel connected with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information.
3. A. I am outgoing and excited when working with leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who seek ideas and suggestions through discussion.
4. A. I feel connected with leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information.
B. I am outgoing and excited when working with leaders who seek ideas and suggestions through discussion.
5. A. I feel connected with a leader who seeks ideas and suggestions through discussion.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.
6. A. I am outgoing and excited when working with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information.
7. A. I feel connected with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.
B. I am outgoing and excited when working with a leader who exercises little control and are viewed as a source of information.
8. A. I feel connected with leaders who exercise little control and are viewed as a source of information.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who seek ideas and suggestions through discussion.
9. A. I am outgoing and excited when working with leaders who seek ideas and suggestions through discussion.
B. My thoughts are in line with leaders who determine policy and make final decisions.

Appendix C

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9
Item 1									
Item 2	.003								
	.989								
Item 3	-.324	-.204							
	.099	.307							
Item 4	-.317	-.037	.423*						
	.107	.854	.028*						
Item 5	.371	-.031	-.051	-.171					
	.057	.877	.800	.393					
Item 6	-.238	.630**	-.053	-.154	-.402*				
	.232	.000**	.793	.442	.038*				
Item 7	-.257	.426*	-.200	.037	-.645**	.633**			
	.195	.027*	.317	.853	.000**	.000**			
Item 8	-.191	-.111	.502**	.325	-.034	.106	-.216		
	.340	.583	.008**	.098	.867	.598	.279		
Item 9	.331	-.145	-.162	-.022	.248	-.359	-.182	-.143	
	.091	.470	.419	.915	.211	.066	.363	.477	

$N = 27$

*Significant at the .05 level

**Significant at the .01 level

Appendix D

Leadership Style

Psych. Domain	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez Faire	%
Affective	74	131	43	32.8%
Behavioral	65	129	64	34.1%
Cognitive	46	125	79	33.1%
%	24.5%	50.9%	24.6%	100%
Totals (N=756)	185	385	186	756

$X^2(4, N=756) = 17.30, p < .01 (p = .002)$