EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: HOW POWER AND STATUS AFFECT PERCEIVED TRUSTWORTHINESS AND BEHAVIOR

A Thesis
by
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Abstract

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We are often faced with situations where there is more than one leader that has influence at a time. A leader can lead through official authority and power, but just as often they use inspiration, persuasion, and personal connections to influence their followers. The current study's purpose is to investigate how, when there is more than one leader present, the type of influence (i.e. status or power) a leader has affects the perceptions (e.g. trustworthiness) and behaviors of followers. Power and status have been defined as different constructs for decades, but little research conceptualizes them as different. Some research has been done to highlight the practical differences between these two, with the results leading to two core hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Participants will rate low-power, high-status individuals as more trustworthy than the high-power, low-status individuals

Hypothesis 2: Participants will follow the directions given by high-power, low-status individuals more often than those given by low-power, high-status individuals

A third exploratory hypothesis investigated the role dominance-motivation and status-aspiration may have on who a participants listens to and who they view as more trustworthy. These hypotheses were tested using a vignette, where participants were required to rate perceived trustworthiness of an official (high power, low status) and unofficial (low-power, high-status) leader. The current study will contribute valuable information on how followers react when there is more than one leader present.
Keywords: power, status, trustworthiness, leadership, teams

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Effective Leadership: How Power and Status Affect Perceived Trustworthiness and Behavior

When thinking about leadership, it is easy to fixate on larger-than-life leaders such as Presidents and CEO's; however, most examples of leadership occur on a smaller scale, and involve cases where an individual directs a small team to success on a specific task. Leadership can be defined as the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates, and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals ("Red Hat CEO", 2014). Understanding what makes effective leaders involves examining the ways leaders wield influence, and how these different types of influence affect their followers. In some cases, leaders may lead through expressions of power – that is, withholding or distributing resources in ways that benefit their cause. Just as often, however, leaders may use their status—respect gained from perceived competence and past performance—to inspire and persuade their followers.

These two types of influence, power and status, have been studied for decades, though most past research examine these types of influence in isolation, usually focusing on a single leader. Yet, everyday life is replete with situations where leadership may be shared and individuals' power and status may be at odds, and people must decide whom to follow and trust. For example, imagine a case where a worker has a novel, ambiguous problem to solve and a boss (high power) and a veteran co-worker (high-status) provide different guidance on how to solve the problem. Understanding how followers react to leaders with differing levels and types of influence plays an integral role in measuring leadership effectiveness, such as the ability to influence a group to achieve its performance goals. The present study takes the first steps in

understanding these interactions by testing whether people preferentially trust and follow the directions of leaders with status compared to leaders with power.

Below, I review the research on power and status, focusing on each construct separately before investigating the overlap and distinctions between the two concepts. I then review the literature on trustworthiness, combining it with past research on power and status, to develop predictions for how power and status will affect people's behavior and their perceptions of a leader's trustworthiness.

Power

Power has been defined in a variety of ways; some definitions focus on the ability to socially influence others, while other definitions focus on where power is located, or on the psychological experience of feeling powerful (e.g., emotional experience) (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Common throughout these diverse conceptualizations of power is that having power entails being able to affect others' outcomes (e.g., access to resources, professional advancement). Indeed, Keltner and colleagues, in one of the most widely used definitions of power, argue that power is "an individual's relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments" (2003, p. 5). Thus, power is explicitly hierarchical (it involves a leader giving or withholding resources), and power is not affected by subordinates' beliefs. That is, subordinates may like or dislike a powerful leader, but that has little effect on the leader's power.

Because power is hierarchical and largely unaffected by others' beliefs, having power tends to disinhibit people. For example, in three studies Galinsky, Gruenfeld, and Magee (2003) demonstrate that having power increases people's approach tendencies. In Study 1 they found that people who possess structural power were more likely to take risks (e.g. take a card in a

simulated game of blackjack) than those who lacked power. The second study found that participants primed with high power were more likely to act to reduce discomfort, even when it is ambiguous as to whether such action is allowed, suggesting that power leads to less inhibited, goal-directed behavior. In the third study, participants were either primed with high power, low-power, or no power, and then given either a commons (e.g. action constitutes taking from a common resource) or a public-goods (e.g. action constitutes contributing to a common resource) social dilemma. This study found that participants primed with power were more likely to act in a social dilemma, regardless of the prosocial or antisocial consequences of the action. Specifically, they found that power is linked to the depletion of a valued resource in the commons dilemma and the continuation of a valued resource in the public-goods dilemma. Together these findings indicate that power increases approach tendencies, regardless if the outcome is positive or negative.

In this same vein, Keltner et al. (2003) found that feeling powerful increased the experience of approach-related moods and emotions (e.g. amusement, desire, and enthusiasm). Moreover, people with power became more attentive to social rewards, and began to process information in more automatic, simplistic ways, compared to a control condition. Finally, Keltner et al. (2003) demonstrate that feelings of power caused people to become less inhibited and more willing to break social norms of behavior. Power's impact on these behavioral inhibitions does not exist inside a vacuum and can be influenced by other factors.

Maner and Mead (2010) conducted five studies to identify both personal and social factors that determine whether leaders wield their power for group goals or their own good. Studies one and two tested the relationship between dominance-motivation and the decisions a leader makes. The results indicate that when there is instability within a hierarchy, leaders high

in dominance-motivation make decisions that protect their own power over decisions that benefit the entire group. In studies three through five, a rival outgroup was introduced to test when dominance-motivated leaders would see their group members as allies. Results from these three studies indicate that when a rival group is present, leaders will make decisions that benefit the group regardless of dominance-motivation. Together these studies indicate that when leaders are low in dominance-motivation, they often make decisions that are consistent with group goals. When leaders are high in dominance-motivation, they were more likely to make decisions that prioritized self-interest over group interest, specifically when they perceived that there was a possibility that power could be lost. Specifically, these leaders would withhold valuable information from the group, exclude a highly skilled group member, and prevent a proficient group member from having any influence over a group task in order to hold on to power, unless there was a rival outgroup.

Mead and Maner (2012) later conducted three studies to deepen our understanding of how leaders react when they perceive a threat to their power. The main hypothesis for these studies was that fear of losing one's power would cause individuals to seek proximity to ingroup power threats. Individual differences in power-related motives, stability of the group hierarchy, and presence of intergroup rivalry were investigated as moderators to the relationship between perceived threat and proximity to ingroup power threats. Study 1 served as an initial test of the main hypothesis by assigning participants to a position of leadership or equal authority. Participants were assigned to a condition within a 2x2 design that manipulated the stability of power and presence of intergroup competition. The participants were then asked to set up two chairs, one for themselves and one for their alleged partner, and the distance between these chairs served as a measure of desire for physical proximity. Analysis of this study found a three-

way interaction between dominance-motivation, position stability, and intergroup competition. Specifically, those in the unstable condition with high dominance-motivation moved closer to their partner if there was no intergroup competition.

Study 2 was designed to replicate study 1, but changed the dependent variable from distance between chairs to whether or not the alleged partner was put in the same or different room. Additionally, participants were told that letting their partner working in a different room would maximize group performance. Results from study 1 were replicated such that those in the unstable condition with high dominance-motivation chose to keep their partner in the room if there was no intergroup competition more than those in the control condition or with low dominance-motivation. Importantly, proximity to the perceived threat was kept even though it was likely to negatively impact group performance. The third study sought to add to the first two by adding a stable leadership condition alongside the unstable and control conditions. A neutral, non-threatening group member, was also included to test whether leaders' desire for proximity is specific to the skilled ingroup competitor. This study also expanded the first two studies by directly testing whether desire for proximity was mediated by the desire to monitor the skilled group member.

Analysis found that when there was instability in the group hierarchy, leaders high in dominance-motivation sought to position themselves as closely as possible to the skilled group member as a way to protect their own power. Together these studies show that leaders high in dominance-motivation sought proximity to group members that they perceived as a threat to their power, but only when power was unstable and there was not an outgroup rival present.

Not only does power reduce behavioral inhibitions and promote action orientation, power also reduces moral inhibitions. Brown and Levinson (1987) demonstrate that feeling powerful

causes people to become more likely to violate conversational politeness norms (e.g., talking with one's mouth full). Moreover, consistent with the view that power is hierarchical and unaffected by subordinates' beliefs, Brown and Levinson show that the willingness to violate politeness-related communication norms is explained via powerful individuals being less concerned about loss of face. Similarly, research on teasing by Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, and Heerey's (2001) revealed that people with power are more likely to behave in hostile ways (e.g. increased teasing and more aggressive provocations) than those with no or low-power.

Together these studies highlight two effects of power that bear on perceptions of trustworthiness. First, having power makes people more action oriented (i.e., being more willing to take practical action to deal with a problem or situation), even at the expense of breaking social or moral norms. Second, power causes people to construe others in terms of how they satisfy their own goals and needs. Power causes people to become more driven to achieve goals—a trait perhaps desired in leaders—but it also causes people to become more willing to break the rules and harm others, which one would expect to reduce perceptions of trustworthiness.

Status

Whereas power is often concretely defined in terms of one's control over another's resources, status is a more nebulous concept. Status is defined as the prestige, respect, and esteem that an individual has in the eyes of others (Blader & Chen, 2012). It has also been defined as the extent to which an individual or group is respected or admired by others (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). For the current study, we utilize a combination of these definitions, defining status as the extent to which an individual is admired, viewed as prestigious, or respected by others. Thus, in contrast to power, status is not hierarchical, but rather, it is strongly affected by

the beliefs of others. That is, a leader's status derives nearly exclusively from his or her reputation with other group members rather than the leader's place in an organization's hierarchy. One anecdotal example of this would be that of a Master Sergeant in the Army; while any commissioned officer (e.g. Captain) occupies a more powerful place in military hierarchies, oftentimes Master Sergeant's enjoy high-status owning to their considerable experience.

Research by Hardy and Van Vugt (2006) investigated the interaction between status and altruism to understand how one obtains status. They conducted three studies, which showed that those who behaved altruistically (e.g. fully contributing in a public good dilemma) received a higher status rating than those that did not. Specifically, the measure of status used perceived ability, perceived effectiveness, perceived legitimacy, preference for a spokesperson, perceptions of who should make the final decisions in the group, and willingness to cooperate to rank status of an individual. Results also found that these individuals were offered a greater choice of interaction partners, such that they were more likely to be chosen as a preferred partner than their low-altruistic counterparts. Similarly, Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, and Henrich (2013) found that status is given to those who are perceived as more respectable, supporting the definition of status utilized in the current study.

Berger, Rosenholtz, and Zelditch (1980) theorized that those who are perceived as having high-status are given more control over group decisions and communication patterns than those with lower-status. This theory is supported by research done by Van Der Vegt, Bunderson, and Oosterhof (2006). Their framework looked at how a person's perceptions of an individual's expertise affects their commitment and willingness to help that person. Findings suggest that low status individuals, where status is perceived expertise, are more likely to help high-status individuals than their low-status counterparts. This stems in part from the assumption that

experts possess resources of knowledge and skills desired by others, and are thus listened to and voluntarily accorded influence by lower status members (Ridgeway & Walker, 1995).

It is important to note that these ratings and measures of status rely heavily on one's *perceptions* of another. These studies highlight the fact that status is a subjective measure of influence compared to power, and relies heavily on perceptions of altruism, respect, and expertise. These same factors affect other perceptions, such as trustworthiness of an individual. Overall, research has shown that high-status individuals are more likely to be referred to and granted resources by their lower status counterparts. Low status individuals are more generous, charitable, and helpful. This research shows a clear difference in behaviors of those with and without status that are notably different from behaviors that social power induces.

Power and status

The last two sections reviewed the effects of power and status individually, however, it is important to note that whereas power and status are distinct constructs, they often overlap. Leaders use both status and power as sources of potential influence over others (French & Raven, 1959). Leaders can use power, and by extension the resources they control, as leverage to influence others' behavior. For example, leaders can provide resources as a reward for specific behaviors or withhold resources as a punishment for specific behaviors. Leaders can use status to influence in a different way, such as leveraging the respect given to them in a call to action. Additionally, perceptions of individuals with power and status are similar, such that individuals with either power or status are also viewed as having higher levels of perceived dominance (Fragale, Overbeck, & Neal, 2011).

Despite these similarities, power and status are distinct in several important ways. First, the influence of power tends to be more limited in scope than influence based on status (Fragale

et al., 2011). That is, power holders, by definition, gain their influence by their ability to withhold or grant resources; therefore, their influence reaches only as far as they control the resources. Status, by contrast, can apply to limited domains (e.g., an information technician may hold status when your computer isn't working); but, it can also generalize more broadly (e.g., an information technician may be perceived as generally "smart"). Second, power and status differ in the way they are conferred upon an individual. Status is granted by other individuals and is therefore more subjective and susceptible to other's opinions. On the other hand, power is tied to objective control over resources, making it easier for an individual to possess power despite other's perceptions.

Despite of these important conceptual differences, prior research has largely treated power and status as the same construct, or alternatively has confounded the constructs, comparing targets who are high in power and status to those who are low in both (Fragale et al., 2011). Recently, however, there has been a limited shift to try to distinguish between power and status. For example, Blader and Chen (2012) highlighted the importance of examining the differing impact of power and status on the relational dynamics between interacting parties. They conducted five studies to test the prediction that status and power would have opposing effects on justice enacted toward others.

The first three studies directly compared the effects of status and power on people's enactment of distributive and procedural justice. Study one utilized a dictator paradigm where each participant was asked to divide $10 between himself or herself and someone else. Results showed that on average those primed with status allocated significantly greater amounts than those primed with power. Study two extended the first study by looking at the likelihood of the participant making the first offer in a negotiation, an important index of approach-oriented

behavior. Results supported those in study one but found no significant effect on the amount of first offers made. Study 3 focused on the effects status and power have on communicating negative news. Findings of this study indicate that those with status were more concerned about fairness and attentiveness toward the affected group member than their high power counterparts.

The last two studies orthogonally manipulated status and power and examined their effects on people's enactment of distributive and procedural justice. Study four found that those with power and those with status gave out bonuses in a wider range than their lower power and status counterparts, pointing to a higher sensitivity to equity. When they looked at the interaction between status and power, they found that power weakened the positive justice-enhancing effects of status. Study five extended these findings by examining an integrative, more complex negotiation process. Results from study five support the theory that status and power impact justice in different ways. The participants' perception of the status of the character they played in a negotiation was positively associated with procedural fairness behavior (e.g. empathetic concern and other orientation), as rated by their interaction partner. In contrast, the participants' perception of the power of the character they were played in a negotiation was negatively associated with their procedural fairness behavior. Throughout all five studies we can see that that positive effects of status on justice emerge only among those low in power, suggesting that, when both power and status are present, power may be a more dominating force than status.

Fragale et al. (2011) also found support for the proposed conceptual differences, such that those with power were perceived as cold, whereas those with power with status were perceived as warm. That is, even though perceived dominance is the same for status and power, perceptions of warmth are only given to those who have status in the eyes of the observer. A similar theme appears in the research done by Blader and Chen (2012) and Fragale et al. (2011) mentioned

above, in which status appears to bear more positive side effects on behavior and perceptions of others than power.

Overall, the past research demonstrates that power and status have conceptual similarities; both can be utilized as a potential influence over others, and those high in either power or status have higher levels of perceived dominance than their low-power or status counterparts. However, power and status have many important differences. The first is that the scope of their influence and the way in which they are conferred upon an individual are different. Power can be summed up as a more limited influence based in one's control of resources; those with power are often seen as colder and more likely to break social norms. On the other hand, we often describe status as a subjective form of influence and ascribe characteristics such as warmth, competence, and empathy to those who wield status. Teasing apart the differences between status and power allows us to delve deeper into the factors that may impact leadership effectiveness. One such factor that may be influenced by status and power is perceived trustworthiness of a leader.

Trustworthiness

To fully understand the implications of power and status on an individual's ability to lead effectively, it is important that we also understand how these different types of influence affect perceptions of others. Research has shown that trustworthiness influences important behavioral outcomes, marking it as an important perception to investigation. The literature on trust and trustworthiness is vast, and in some cases the two terms have been used interchangeably despite important differences. Trust is based on a willingness to be vulnerable (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), and reflects an individual's intent to act based on the words, actions and decisions of another person (McAllister, 1995). Contrastingly trustworthiness is defined as the

perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity of the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995; Caldwell & Hayes, 2007), where ability is a measure of "competence" (Kee & Knox, 1970) or "expertness" (McNeil & Giffen, 1967); whereas, benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995), and integrity is the perception that the trustee adheres to acceptable set of moral principles (Mayer et al., 1995). In other words, one person trusts another when the second person is perceived as trustworthy.

Over the past four decades there has been a rising interest in leaders' perceived trustworthiness and its effects on a team. Unsurprisingly, past research demonstrates that trust in a leader is vital to team performance. For example, Dirks (2000) shows that when leaders are trusted by subordinates, teams outperform comparable teams where trust in leadership is lower. Trust influences team performance by mediating the relationship between past team performance and future team performance. In other words, if a team leader has had positive performance in the past, their opinions and decisions will be trusted more, and ultimately lead to positive future performance. Colquitt, Scott, and LePine's (2007) meta-analysis highlighted the effects of trust and trustworthiness, and on different organizational outcomes (e.g., risk taking and job performance). Higher levels of trust in leadership lead to increased task performance, risk taking, and citizenship behaviors, as well as decreasing counterproductive behaviors of employees. Importantly, the three aspects of trustworthiness (ability, benevolence, and integrity) were antecedents of trust, with each predicting better task performance, more citizenship behaviors, affective commitment to the group, and fewer instances of counterproductive behaviors.

The results of this analysis exemplify the dual importance of trustworthiness on behavioral outcomes in teams. Perceptions of leadership trustworthiness uniquely increase positive outcomes while decreasing negative outcomes, in addition to acting as an antecedent of

trust and affective commitment. The large influence that perceptions of trustworthiness have on behavioral outcomes, coupled with trustworthiness being highly and consistently desiring across leaders when other traits are differentially desired based on level of leadership (Nichols & Cottrell, 2014), highlight why it is important to study what could affect perceptions of trustworthiness.

Power, status, and trustworthiness

The current study seeks to understand how perceptions of trustworthiness are affected by the type of influence wielded by a leader (power vs. status). As noted above, existing research attempting to disentangle power and status is limited, and trustworthiness is a critical input to group performance. Research by Fragale et al. (2011) demonstrates that interactions with high-status individuals are expected to be positive, while interactions with high power, low status individuals are expected to be negative. These expectations provide a base for how we believe power and status influence perceptions of trustworthiness.

As discussed in previous sections, past work shows that those with power control valuable resources, and can choose when and how to hand out these resources to others; because of this, others often attend to those who have power. Despite the fact that those with power are attended to by others, we propose that power, on its own, has a negative effect on perceived trustworthiness. This stems in part from those with power being more likely to view others as a means to an end (Keltner et al., 2003), possibly leading to negative perceptions of benevolence and integrity, two key factors of trustworthiness. Research has also shown that those with power are rated as cold in comparison to those with power and status (Fragale et al., 2011); these lower ratings of warmth in turn could also lower perceptions of benevolence.

Status, on the other hand, is based on individual positive perceptions of the status holder. Importantly, perceptions of trustworthiness are based on similar positive perceptions. Specifically, research done by Magee and Galinsky (2008) found that high-status individuals are often viewed as having higher levels of competence, an important aspect of ability (Savolainen & Hakkinen, 2011), and by extension trustworthiness. Another similar aspect of trustworthiness is integrity, where integrity is an individual's perception that another individual adheres to a set acceptable moral principles. These perceptions of shared or admired principles could influence lead to a feeling of respect, which is an important element of status. For these reasons, we propose that status has a positive effect on perceived trustworthiness.

Current study

The present study examines the effect of power and status on people's behavior and their perceptions of leader's trustworthiness. The status and power continuum can be separated into four distinct power-status combinations: high power-high-status, high-power, low-status, low-power, high-status, and low-power, low status. The main goal of this study is to understand whether differences in having power versus having status impact behavior and perceived trustworthiness, we focus on two conditions where the effects of power and status are most clearly contrasted: high-power, low-status vs. low-power, high-status.

We refer to the high-power, low-status individuals as the "official leader." These leaders have the ability to control resources and administer punishment, but do not necessarily possess the respect or esteem of their followers. This condition would capture the everyday cases of new junior managers leading a team or junior commissioned officers in the U.S. military (e.g., 1st Lieutenant straight out of college). Structurally, the individual has institutional power over the subordinates, but they may or may hold him/her in high esteem. By contrast, we refer to low-

power, high-status individuals as the “unofficial leader.” These individuals are respected and admired by their peers, but they do not occupy any structural positions of power. An example of this would be a project team member that everyone relies on for advice, assistance, and encouragement, but this individual has no control over others evaluations, rewards, or demerits.

The current study’s purpose is to investigate how perceptions and behaviors of followers are affected when there is more than one leader present. The current study suggests that, because of key differences in power and status, the type of influence a leader possess will differentially affect perceptions and behaviors of followers. Since status is more subjective and relies on perceptions of expertise and respect, and perceptions of trustworthiness rely in part on perceptions of ability, benevolence, and integrity, I predict that participants will rate the unofficial leader as more trustworthy than the official leader (Hypothesis 1). This is in line with research done by Bruins, Ellemers, and De Gilder (1999), which found that subordinates saw supervisors as less cooperative and likeable when the supervisor used power over them.

Whereas it may appear intuitively true that people listen to those they perceive as trustworthy, the current study proposes that power may supersede perceptions of trustworthiness. Research has shown that people deferred to the confident powerful individuals opinions, even when that individual was wrong (Locke & Anderson, 2015). This could stem from the fact that power holders are in control of valuable resources, and followers’ behavior is incentivized by these valuable resources despite of perceptions of trustworthiness. Because of this, I predict that participants will follow the directions given by the official leader more often than those given by the unofficial leader (Hypothesis 2).

These two core hypotheses focus on who participants view as trustworthy and who participants listen to, however, one potential moderator of these effects is the participant

themselves, specifically whether the participant personally values dominance (power) or status. For example, past research by Maner and colleagues demonstrates that the effects of power manipulations are strongest for people high in dominance-motivation (Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012). Due to these findings, the current study will explore the role dominance-motivation and status-aspiration may play in perceptions of trustworthiness and behaviors of team members. My a priori prediction for trustworthiness is that, when participants are high in dominance-motivation, they will view the official leader as more trustworthy. Meanwhile, when participants are high in status-aspiration, they will view the unofficial leader as more trustworthy (Hypothesis 3a). For behaviors, I predict that participants high in dominance-motivation will listen to the official leader, while those high in status-aspiration will listen to the unofficial leader (Hypothesis 3b).

Method

Participants

Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used to recruit participants over the age of 18 in the United States. See Appendix A for IRB Approval In total, responses were collected from 325 participants; this number dropped to 297 after removing incomplete responses. Men made up the majority of the sample (*n* = 180, 60.6%), followed by women (*n* = 115, 38.7%); three participants did not identify their sex. The majority of the sample identified as White (*n* = 208, 70.0%), with smaller numbers of participants identifying as African American (n =30, 10.1%), Native American (*n* =11, 3.7%), Latino (*n* = 12, 4.0%), Middle Eastern (*n* = 19, 6.4%), multi-ethnic (*n* = 16, 5.4%), or "other" (*n* = 1, 0.04%).

Design & Materials

The study used a within-subjects design. All participants read a vignette that described an interaction between an employee (Jessie), their official leader (Taylor, high-power, low-status), and their unofficial leader (Riley, low-power, high-status) in a workplace setting. Instructions read: “On the next screen you are going to read about an interaction within a real team. Following the vignette, we will ask you what you would have done in this scenario, and to provide ratings for some of the team members.”

Participants were given one of two vignettes that counterbalance the directions given by the official and unofficial leaders. Counterbalancing reduces any order effects that may appear, especially since one set of directions is supported by a user guide. An example of one of the vignettes can be found in Appendix B. Consistent with the definition of power used in this study, the manipulation for power level grants the official leader the capacity to modify others states (e.g. having the ability to make employment decisions, such as hiring). The manipulation used for status stems from inferred competence of individuals being linked to perceptions of ability (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Savolainen & Hakkinen, 2011).

Participants were asked to rate each leader on several different criteria. A modified version of Mayer and Davis’ (1999) measure of trust and trustworthiness was used to measure perceived trustworthiness (Appendix C). The modification consisted of using only the trustworthiness (i.e., integrity, benevolence, and ability) related items. Additionally, we changed the language for each item from “top management,” to the name of the leader being evaluated. Three items were used to assess perceived ability, three items were used to assess perceived benevolence, and two items were used to assess perceived integrity. Each item was formatted using a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The score from the ability, benevolence, and integrity subscales were aggregated to create an overall measure of trustworthiness (α = 0.91).

After completing the trustworthiness items, participants were asked: “If you were in Jessie’s [the employee] position, whose directions would you follow?” Responses to this were forced choice between the two leaders. Following this item we assessed dominance-motivation and status-aspiration (Appendix D) using Cassidy and Lynn’s (1989) achievement motivation scale (AMS). Seven items measured dominance (α = 0.91) and seven items measured status-aspiration (α = 0.90). Each item was formatted using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Procedure

Participants were provided with a link to complete the study via a Qualtrics survey administered on MTurk. They were first presented with an online informed consent form. After giving consent, they read the instructions. After reading the instructions participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two vignettes, which contained the same content but had counterbalanced directions. They then responded to the trustworthiness measure and indicated which leader they would listen to. Then participants responded to the dominance-motivation and status-aspiration measure, and finally, participants completed a short demographics questionnaire and were debriefed.

Results

Hypothesis 1 focused on the differences in perceptions of trustworthiness for the official and unofficial leaders. I predicted that participants would rate low-power, high-status individuals (unofficial leaders) as more trustworthy than the high-power, low-status individuals (official leaders). A within subjects t-test confirmed this prediction, revealing that participants viewed the

unofficial leader as significantly more trustworthy (M = 42.2, SD = 7.61) compared to the official leader (M = 40.2, SD = 8.01), $t(294) = –6.00$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.35$.

Hypothesis 2 focused on who participants would listen to if they were in this situation; the official or unofficial leader. I used a chi-square analysis to test whether participants significantly preferred to listen to either the official or the unofficial leader. The chi-square test showed that significantly more participants indicated that they would listen to the official leader (71.4%) compared to the unofficial leader (28.6%), χ^2 (1, N = 297) = 50.0, $p < .001$, supporting hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3a explored how dominance-motivation and status-aspiration influences perceptions of trustworthiness. I predicted that participants higher in dominance-motivation would view the official leader as more trustworthy compared to the unofficial leader. Meanwhile, I predicted that participants higher in status-aspiration would view the unofficial leader as more trustworthy than the official leader. A linear regression was initially used to test this (model 1). The outcome variable for this model (model 1) was the difference between the official and unofficial leaders' trustworthiness scores, and the predictor was the difference between dominance-motivation and status-aspiration. Results of model 1 did not find a significant effect of the difference in status-aspiration and dominance-motivation on who participants viewed as more trustworthy, $F(1, 295) = .05$, $p = .83$, $R^2_{(adj)} = 0.00$. See Table 1 for full results.

Table 1.
Regression coefficients for Model 1 testing the relationship between the difference in status-aspiration and dominance-motivation and who participants viewed as more trustworthy.

	B	*SE B*	*β*	*t-value*	*Pr*(>|*t*|)
Intercept	-3.06	0.51	0.00	-6.03	< .001
Dominance – Status aspiration	0.03	0.12	0.01	0.22	0.83

Note. $R^2(adj) = 0.00$ ($p = .83$)

To try to understand the relationship between status-aspiration, dominance-motivation, and perceptions of trustworthiness, I ran two additional multiple regression models. The outcome variables for the models were the measures of trustworthiness for the official leader (model 2) and the unofficial leader (model 3). The predictors in both models were dominance-motivation and status-aspiration. Results of model 2 indicated that there was a collective significant effect of dominance-motivation and status-aspiration on trustworthy ratings for the official leader, $F(2, 294) = 6.77$, $p < .001$, $R^2(adj) = .12$. Examining the individual predictors showed that status-aspiration ($t = 3.91$, $\beta = 0.37$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor of trust for the official leader, whereas dominance-motivation ($t = –0.04$, $\beta = –0.04$, $p = .71$) was not a significant predictor. See Table 2 for full results.

Table 2.
Regression coefficients for Model 2 testing the relationship between status-aspiration, dominance-motivation, and trustworthiness ratings for the official leader.

	B	*SE B*	*β*	*t-value*	*Pr(>|t|)*
Intercept	31.44	1.56	0.00	20.19	< .001
Dominance motivation	-0.04	0.11	-0.04	-0.38	0.71
Status aspiration	0.43	0.11	0.37	3.91	<.001

Note. $R^2(adj) = 0.11$ ($p < .001$)

Results of the model 3 indicated significant total effect of dominance-motivation and status-aspiration on trustworthy ratings for the unofficial leader, $F(2, 294) = 6.77$, $p < .01$, $R^2(adj) = .04$. Examining the individual predictors revealed that status-aspiration significantly predicted trust for the unofficial leader ($t = 3.19$, $\beta = 0.32$, $p < .01$); whereas dominance-motivation ($t = -1.54$, $\beta = -0.15$, $p = .12$) was not a significant predictor. See Table 3 for full results.

Table 3.
Regression coefficients for Model 3 testing the relationship between status-aspiration, dominance-motivation, and trustworthiness ratings for the unofficial leader

	B	*SE B*	*β*	*t-value*	*Pr*(>|*t*|)
Intercept	39.22	1.54	0.00	25.46	< .001
Dominance motivation	-0.17	0.11	-0.15	-1.54	0.12
Status aspiration	0.35	0.11	0.32	3.19	<.01

Note. $R^2(adj) = 0.11$ ($p < .001$)

Upon further investigation of the dataset, a high correlation between status-aspiration and dominance-motivation was found (see Table 4). The VIF is 3.01, indicating that there may be an issue with multicollinearity. This could explain why status-aspiration is a significant predictor of trustworthiness and dominance-motivation is not.

Table 4.
Correlations, Means, and SDs for independent measures, dependent measures, and demographics

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Behavior	--								
2. Official Leader Trustworthiness	-0.24 ***	--							
3. Unofficial Leader Trustworthiness	0.23 ***	0.38 ***	--						
4. Dominance - motivation	-0.09	0.27 ***	0.1	--					
5. Status - aspiration	-0.1	0.34 ***	0.19 ***	0.82 ***	--				
6. Difference in trustworthiness	-0.42 ***	0.59 ***	-0.53 ***	0.15 **	0.15 *	--			
7. Difference in dominance and status	0.02	-0.12 *	-0.14 *	0.32 ***	-0.29 ***	0.01	--		
8. Sex	0.03	-0.03	0.09	-0.16 **	-0.13 *	-0.11	-0.05	--	
9. Age	0.03	-0.07	0.1	0	-0.07	-0.15 **	0.12 *	0.01	--
Mean	1.29	40.2	43.2	22.5	21.8	-3.05	0.16	1.40	36
SD	0.45	8.01	7.61	6.94	6.89	0.51	4.18	0.50	20.52

Note. $N = 297$
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Sex: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
Behavior: 1 = Official Leader, 2 = Unofficial Leader

Together, these results indicate that the difference in status-aspiration and dominance motivation do not impact who the participant views as more trustworthy. However, people with higher levels of status-aspiration rate both the official and unofficial leaders as more trustworthy, while participants higher in dominance-motivation did not view either leader as more trustworthy.

Hypothesis 3b explored how dominance motivation and status-aspiration influence the behaviors of participants. I predicted that that participants higher in dominance-motivation would listen to the official leader more often than the unofficial leader, while those higher in status-aspiration would listen to the unofficial leader more often than then official leader. To test this, a logistic multiple regression was utilized. The outcome was whether or not the participant listened to the official leader, and the difference between dominance-motivation and status-aspiration was the predictor. Results of the logistic regression indicated that while the model itself was significant, $\chi^2(2) = 50.7$, $p < .001$), the difference in status-aspiration and dominance-motivation was not a significant predictor of whose directions participants would follow, $B = 0.01$, $p = .72$. See Table 5 for full results.

Table 5.
Regression coefficients for Logistic Regression testing the impact of the difference in status-aspiration and dominance-motivation on the likelihood of following the official leader's directions.

	B	*SE B*	*t-value*	*Pr*(>|*t*|)
Intercept	-0.92	0.13	-7.12	< .001
Dominance – Status aspiration	0.01	0.03	0.36	0.72

Note. $\chi^2 = 50.7$ ($p < .001$)

General Discussion

The current study examined the effect of power and status on followers' behavior and perceptions. The data show that when more than one leader is present, the type of influence the leader wields differentially impacts followers' perceptions and behaviors. Specifically, I demonstrate that although people consistently view the unofficial leader (low-power, high-status) as more trustworthy, they are nevertheless more than twice as likely to listen to the directions of the official leader (high-power, low-status). This suggests that even though individuals believe people with status are more deserving of trust, they acknowledge that individuals with power

have a greater ability to affect their wellbeing, and therefore, people tend to follow the directives of powerful individuals, despite them being less trustworthy. This contrasts with the perhaps intuitive heuristic that people listen to and follow those that they trust or view as trustworthy, and suggests that power dynamics strongly inform people's decision making in the workplace. These findings support my core hypotheses that, when more than one leader is present, the amount of power a leader possess effects follower behavior, whereas the amount of status a leader hold effects followers' perceptions.

Further, the present experiment demonstrates a relationship between a person's status-aspiration and how much they trust their leaders. Status-aspiration had a positive relationship with both the unofficial and official leader's trustworthiness ratings. One possible explanation for these findings is that individuals with higher levels of status-aspiration are more likely to engage in impression management techniques (i.e. appreciation and flattering of others), leading to higher ratings of ability, benevolence, and integrity of others. Importantly, this effect was stronger for the official leader than the unofficial leader, which suggests that the resources the official leader controls are more of an indicator of status than the respect or admiration of the unofficial leader.

One limitation of the present study is the small effect size of these relationships. These small effect sizes could be due in part to the design of the study. Specifically, asking third-party individuals to rate leaders trustworthiness from a vignette may attenuate the effect seen in real world team interactions due to lower salience. When an individual is an active participant in a situation, we may see stronger reactions than when they are viewing an interaction as a third-party due to them having more skin in the game. Future research should focus on replicating these findings in actual workplace teams, to see if these relationships hold outside of a controlled

vignette. It is also of interest to investigate if the behavioral measure used in the current study maps on to actual behavior in teams. Understanding the influence of power and status on follower decision making sets the stage for further research on leadership and group effectiveness when more than one leader is present. Specifically, future studies should start asking how these relationships impact important workplace outcomes, such as team performance. Despite these limitations of the current study, the findings may still be applied in organizations.

Organizations can utilize these findings to better develop their managers and supervisors. Human resources departments could develop trainings that teach official leaders to identify and acknowledge the perceptions their followers have of them. It is important that official leaders recognize when their followers do not view them as having status, as this affects perceptions of trustworthiness, a predictor of important organizational outcomes. While the current study shows that leaders with power can achieve compliance in the short term, the lack of perceived trustworthiness of the official leader may have long term consequences such as increased turnover and decreased organizational commitment. When official leaders are not perceived as having status, an unofficial leader that is high status may emerge within the team. Ensuring that supervisors and managers can identify an emerging leader may play a critical role in sustaining and improving positive team dynamics. If an emergent leader is acknowledged and brought in on decision making, we may see more social cohesion and trust in the official leader, leading to an increase in team performance (De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016; Castano, Watts, & Tekleab, 2013).

Overall, we know that people often deal with situation where more than one leader is present. When these circumstances occur, whom to trust and follow must be decided; however,

there are contextual factors that may cause a difference in perceptions and behaviors. The current study provides evidence that power and status of the leader are such factors. When power and status levels are at odds, people are more likely to listen to a high-power, low-status leader even though they perceive the low-power, high-status leader to be more trustworthy.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

To: Andrew Monroe
Psychology
CAMPUS EMAIL

From: Dr. Andrew Shanely, IRB Chairperson
RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)
Date:
Agrants #:
Grant Title:

STUDY #: 17-0156
STUDY TITLE: Blaming in everyday life
Submission Type: Renewal
Expedited Category: (7) Research on Group Characteristics or Behavior, or Surveys, Interviews, etc.
Renewal Date: 12/07/2018
Expiration Date of Approval: 12/06/2019

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) renewed approval for this study for the period indicated above. The IRB found that the research procedures meet the expedited category cited above. IRB approval is limited to the activities described in the IRB approved materials, and extends to the performance of the described activities in the sites identified in the IRB application. In accordance with this approval, IRB findings and approval conditions for the conduct of this research are listed below.

Appendix B

Vignette Example

Jessie works as a data entry clerk at a local insurance company. There are many clerks at this company who Jessie works with closely every day, some of which have worked for this company for years. One day Jessie was assigned a task that required using a new system by their supervisor, Taylor. Taylor is a brand-new supervisor, but is responsible for conducting performance appraisals and distributing bonuses for all data entry clerks (including Jessie), as well as nominating employees for promotion.

To help Jessie with get used to the new system, Taylor outlined how the new system functioned. Taylor pointed out that for one of the forms, the fields should be filled in before any files are attached so the form would save without glitches. Taylor mentioned that there was a manual outlining these steps, and would give it to Jessie later if they needed it. Taylor then left to go to a meeting, but told Jessie to reach out if they had any questions.

Later that day Jessie bumped into Riley, a team member who had been working for the company for the past 10 years. Jessie heard from other employees that Riley was always willing to help, even when they do not have to. Riley has won many awards for their contributions to the team and improvements to the organization's workflow. Jessie brought up that they were learning how to use the new system, and that Taylor had outlined how the system functioned. Riley recommended attaching the files to the form before filling out any fields, since that is how they had been doing it and hadn't had any trouble so far. Riley went back to their desk, but told Jessie to reach out if they had any issues with the new system.

Appendix C

Measures of Trust, Trustworthiness, and Performance Appraisal Perceptions

ITEMS

The following instructions prefaced the scales. The anchors shown below were consistent throughout. Headings of construct names are for clarity of exposition, and were not included in the surveys. Indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement by using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly

Think about Taylor, Jessie's supervisor. For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree with the statement. Please provide a rating, using the following scale:

Ability

Taylor/Riley is very capable of performing its job.
Taylor/Riley is known to be successful at what they try to do.
Taylor/Riley has much knowledge about the work that needs done.

Benevolence

Taylor/Riley is very concerned about Jessie’s welfare.
Jessie’s needs and desires are very important to Taylor/Riley.
Taylor/Riley would go out of their way to help Jessie.

Integrity

I would not wonder whether Taylor/Riley will stick to their word.
Sound principles seem to guide Taylor’s/Riley’s behavior.

Appendix D

Achievement Motivation Scale

For each of the following statements, please indicate **how much you agree with the statement**. Please provide a rating from **1 to 5**, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

_____ 1. I think I would enjoy having authority over people.

_____ 2. I try harder when I'm in competition with other people.

_____ 3. If given the chance, I would make a good leader.

_____ 4. I would really like an important job where people look up to me.

_____ 5. I think I am usually a leader in my group.

_____ 6. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.

_____ 7. I like talking to people who are important.

_____ 8. I enjoy planning things and deciding what other people should do.

_____ 9. I judge my performance on whether I do better than others rather than on just getting a good result.

_____ 10. I like to give orders and get things going.

_____ 11. I want to be an important person in the community.

_____ 12. People take notice of what I say.

_____ 13. I like to be admired for my achievements.

_____ 14. I like being the center of attention.

_____ 15. When a group I belong to plans on activity I would rather direct it myself than just have someone else organize it.

_____ 16. I would never allow others to get the credit for what I have done.

_____ 17. To be a real success I feel I have to do better than everyone I come up against.

_____ 18. I like to have people come to me for advice.

_____ 19. It is important to me to perform better than others on a task.

_____ 20. I find satisfaction in having influence over others.

_____ 21. If I get a good result, it still really matters to me if others do better.

Vita

Lauren Renae Ferber was born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, to Steve and Tammy Ferber. In December 2016, she was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Appalachian State University. In the fall of 2017, she began study toward a Master of Arts in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resources Management, as well as a Certificate in Applied Business Analytics at Appalachian State University. Her research areas of interest include social power, social status, group dynamics, and leadership development.