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WORK ETHIC AND PRODUCTIVITY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

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WORK ETHIC AND PRODUCTIVITY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

by

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Abstract

Employee work ethic and workplace productivity are vital for organizational success. Past research has shown leadership style to be influential on both, with the manager-employee relationship impacting employee's attitude and output in the workplace. This study investigated the relationship between employee work ethic and workplace productivity, while also examining the impact of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles on agriculture equipment dealership employees. The leadership style of service managers, as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (5x-Short), was compared to the workplace productivity and work ethic scores of the service technicians they manage. Service technician workplace productivity data was obtained directly from their employer, while work ethic scores were obtained utilizing the Multi-dimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP). Service managers were classified as "high" or "low" in transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership to establish two independent groups of the independent variable. Utilizing the "high" and "low" groups for each leadership style, three independent-samples t tests were ran against each of the dependent variables of employee workplace productivity and work ethic. A Pearson r correlation was also ran to determine if a relationship exists between employee work ethic and workplace productivity. The results of the statistical analysis found no significance and failed to reject the null hypotheses. Conclusions, implications, and practical significance of the study results are discussed along with study limitations and calls for future research.

Keywords: leadership style, MLQ, MWEP, productivity, work ethic

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

  The social and economic demands of the past coincided with hard work and diligence, but as society has evolved so have the work values and work ethic of the American people. Although work ethic has been evolving for centuries, the rate at which it has changed in the last century is alarming. More change has occurred since the early 1900's than was seen in the previous 300 to 400 years. The changes that have occurred over the last century have had enormous influence on people's lives but has also had a significant impact on business and industry's ability to operate (Cherrington, 1980). The virtues from which work ethic is comprised were instrumental in building this country, and examining such values possessed by an individual can bring to light their attitudes and beliefs concerning work (Velasco & Chavez, 2018; Miller, 1997). A person's work ethic has been shown to be an excellent predictor of work behavior which has enormous value when selecting individuals for employment (Miller, 1997).

  Highly productive work behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors (Anjum et al., 2018). Productivity is more than an impersonal relationship between inputs and outputs, as it has a human dimension (Pascarella,1984). An individual's productivity at work is influenced by workplace environment, individual ability, supervisors support (Anjum et al., 2018), as well as internal values (Cherrington, 1980). Productivity in the workplace stems from a person possessing self-control, self-discipline, and personal initiative. Although preferably learned during the developmental years, the values of adults that influence behavior and performance at work can be changed. Such values are altered and acquired overtime through the patient and persistent efforts of good leaders (Cherrington, 1980).

Leadership has shown to provide a critical link between organizational success and individual worker performance. Over the past half century, leadership styles have become of great interest due to their propensity to influence employee productivity and organizational performance (Jing & Avery, 2008). The style of leadership utilized is considered by some researchers to be a key factor in evoking subordinate performance and achieving organizational goals (Barling et al., 1996; Berson et al., 2001; Zacharatos et al., 2000), as employee motivation has been shown to be directly influenced by the values, behaviors, and leadership methods used by managers (Zareen et al., 2014).

Overtime, research has identified specific behaviors and attitudes of a leader that have the greatest impact on employee impetus (Zareen et al., 2014). Through the collective works of many, including Downton (1973), Burns (1978), Bass (1985), and Bass and Avolio (2004), leader-follower relationships have been categorized as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. These leadership styles are differentiated by specific attitudes and behaviors of leaders as well as by the way they interact with and motivate subordinates (Zareen et al., 2014).

Transformational leadership focuses on the creation of a harmonious working relationship between leaders and followers (Louw et al., 2017). This style of leadership is considered an active form of leadership (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019), with transformational leaders being confident and articulate. Transformational leaders express strong ideals yet remain tolerant of opposing views. They work to create a vision and establish a culture in which they involve themselves (Northouse, 2010). Transformational leaders strive to develop followers to their fullest potential and motivate them according to their own interests for the betterment of all involved (Zareen et al., 2014).

Transactional leadership is centered around the leader follower exchange, with followers performing according to the direction of the leader. A transactional leader rewards followers for their desired efforts and reprimands them for undesirous behavior (Zareen et al., 2014). Transactional leaders provide subordinates things of value in exchange for their efforts which serves as the primary source of the leader's influence. Transactional leaders do not individualize the needs of subordinates, nor do they focus on their development, as it is not an important component of the transactional exchange that occurs between them (Northouse, 2010).

Laissez-faire leadership is a form of passive leadership that is often referred to as non-leadership (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a leader who delegates most of the responsibility to their followers, providing them necessary tools and resources, but very little guidance. Although often not thought of as a positive leadership style, laissez-faire leadership can be beneficial in specific situations. The value of the leadership style can be witnessed when followers are highly skilled and self-motivated, or when there are relatively easy decisions to be made with few complexities or demanding criteria involved (Zareen et al., 2014).

Ghazzawi et al. (2017) study suggests employee productivity is influenced by the leadership behavior of managers. Zareen et al., (2014) supported and added to Ghazzawi et al. (2017) findings by concluding transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles yield varying levels of employee motivation, thereby impacting overall job performance. Work ethic has been found to be instrumental in employee productivity as well, with the outcome of Huang and Cappelli's (2007) study suggesting individuals with stronger work ethics yield higher overall productivity in the workplace.

When studying the literature, it is inherently clear there is widespread acknowledgement of the value and importance of leadership (Jing & Avery, 2008), and that leadership behavior is viewed as a principal factor in employee productivity (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Despite such recognition, much of the research concerning leadership lacks coherence and fails to agree (Jing & Avery, 2008). Existing research on the leadership-performance relationship has many unsolved issues and limitations, with selected performance measurements often restricting the outcomes of studies.

Statement of the Problem

Business leaders of today are faced with the challenge of adapting to an evolving workforce. The virtues from which work ethic is comprised were instrumental in building this country but have slowly been pushed to the wayside. The work ethic of the American people has been on the decline for nearly a century, with today's up and coming workforce being comprised of Millennials and Generation X individuals who do not identify with work the way previous generations have (Chester, 2015). This trend can be seen clearly throughout the agriculture industry, as the new generation of farmer, landowner, seedsman, equipment salesman, and equipment service technician often lack the level of dedication exhibited by their predecessors.

Healthy ambition and the pursuit of the American dream has evolved overtime as work has lost centrality in people's lives. With dwindling numbers of up-and-coming generations learning about and possessing a healthy attitude toward work (Chester, 2015), leaders are faced with the challenge of ensuring their actions maximize the potential of their workforce. Managers of agriculture equipment dealerships are no different, as they struggle to hire, retain, and motivate knowledgeable trained employees who are essential to providing customers the high level of service required to retain their business. The global agriculture equipment industry was

over 139 billion dollars in 2018 and is expected to grow to approximately 156 billion by 2021,

increasing the demand for qualified employees even more (Grandview Research, 2019).

The shortage of service technicians, and the cruciality of the department to the success of

the dealership (Erwin, 2005), magnifies the importance of providing leadership that promotes a

culture of high work ethic and productivity. The profitability of the service department is tied

directly to the productivity of service technicians, lending to its importance. Every minute of a

service technicians' workday is tracked, with paid available hours vs. billable hours generating

their profitability percentage. Work ethic and leadership have both shown to influence individual

and organizational productivity, but there is little to no research concerning leadership within

agriculture equipment dealership service departments. To better understand to what extent work

ethic and leadership influence workplace productivity, research must be conducted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine to what extent leadership style of managers

impacts the work ethic and workplace productivity of employees in an agriculture organization

setting. The extent to which employee work ethic impacts workplace productivity was also

analyzed.

Theoretical Framework

Burns (1978) shed light on the fact that leadership was inseparable from the needs and

goals of followers. Burns recognized that leadership did not simply entail the power wielding

actions of a leader but was instead intertwined in the relationship that existed between leaders

and followers. Burns (1978) outlined the influence leader's actions have on those of a follower

and established the underlying differences between transactional and transforming leadership.

According to Zareen et al. (2014), the leader-follower relationship recognized by Burns (1978) has great importance regarding the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Zareen et al. showed the substantial influence of leadership style on employee motivation which was supported by Ghazzawi et al. (2017) findings that illustrated how effective leadership can improve employee motivation and workplace productivity. According to Pascarella (1984), leadership also plays a vital role in the development and sustainment of employee work ethic which has also proved to be an instrumental player in employee productivity.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Questions that guided the research:

Research Question 1. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the workplace productivity of employees?

H$_0$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_1$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_2$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

Research Question 2. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the work ethic of employees as measured by the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP)?

H_3. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H_4. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H_5. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

Research Question 3. Does a relationship exist between employee work ethic, as measured by the MWEP, and workplace productivity level?

H_6. There will be no significant difference between the work ethic of employees and their workplace productivity level.

Significance of Study

Leadership styles have been a topic of interest over the past several decades due to the predominate belief that leadership impacts organizational performance (Jing & Avery, 2008). This move toward understanding leadership styles coincides with dramatic changes that have

occurred with work. Consistent evidence has supported superiority of some leadership behaviors over others as being linked to positive workplace performance (Avolio & Bass,2004). Much of the previous research has ignored context and management levels which has resulted in gaps and limitations in the literature creating the need to re-examine leader-follower interactions and their influence on employee work ethic and workplace productivity (Jing & Avery, 2008). A study conducted to determine the impact of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership on employee work ethic and workplace productivity will provide insight concerning management selection and development that promotes both individual and organizational success. Investigating to what extend work ethic impacts productivity will also help determined its significance as a predictor of employee workplace success.

Definitions

Leadership style: is the behavior of a person who attempts to influence the actions and beliefs of others. Leadership style includes both directive (task) and supportive (relationship) behaviors (Northouse, 2010).

Transformational Leadership: involves inspiring followers to believe in and identify with a leader's vision beyond their own self-interest (Ng, 2017). Transformational leaders are attentive to followers and support their growth and development, helping them to reach their full potential and nurturing them in change (Northouse, 2010).

Pseudo-transformational Leadership: involves a leader promoting their own interests through the domination and control of followers (Barling et al., 2008). Psuedo-transformational leaders are self-consumed and tyrannical, with warped moral values (Northouse, 2010).

Transactional Leadership: focuses on exchanges that occur between leaders and followers (Northouse,2010). Transactional leaders communicate 'what followers should do' and 'how they should do it,' monitoring them closely to ensure their satisfactory performance (Zareen et al., 2014).

Laissez-faire Leadership: is a form of passive leadership. Laissez- faire leaders delegating decision making powers to followers, providing them necessary tools and resources, but limited support (Zareen et al., 2014).

Situational Leadership: requires a leader to change the degree of supportiveness and directness provided to their followers according to the given situation. Situational leadership demands a leader alter their behavior according to the needs and commitment of their subordinates (Ghazzawi, 2017).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (5x-Short): The MLQ (5x-Short) is a widely used instrument developed by B.M. Bass and B.J. Avolio that measures the perceptions of leadership behavior (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Work ethic: is a cultural norm that advocates being personally accountable and responsible for the work one does and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value (Hill & Petty, 1995).

Productivity: involves the measuring of the efforts of an individual required to convert input resources into output (Anjum et al., 2018).

Summary

Leadership has the propensity to influence multiple aspects of an organization, providing a link between the organization itself and the performance of its employees. Many organizations struggle to provide effective leadership that enables them to achieve a desired level of success.

Multiple leadership styles have been established, with research indicating some being more effective than others at promoting positive workplace performance. The leadership style of service department management in agriculture equipment dealerships has the propensity to influence technician work ethic and workplace productivity making it a vital component of their organizational management. There is limited research analyzing the leadership style of managers and its impact on employee work ethic and workplace productivity of direct reports within an agriculture organization.

Chapter two provides an in-depth literature review covering the primary constructs of the study. Work ethic, leadership, and productivity are discussed with each concept being examined in detail. Chapter two also provides a link between the constructs being analyzed, with the primary focus being the impact of leadership style and work ethic on positive performance in the workplace.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Determining the relationship between employee work ethic and workplace productivity, while investigating the potential influence of management's leadership style, will require an in-depth analyzation of all associated concepts. The following review of the literature provides background information on each topic and aids in establishing a foundation of associated research and facts. The literature has been organized in a manner that recognizes the primary topics of work ethic, workplace productivity, and leadership individually, while also providing information concerning the relationship between them.

Work Ethic

Work ethic is the term coined to describe a combination of values associated with an individuals' character (Chașovschi, 2016). Miller et al., (2002) defined work ethic as a set of beliefs and attitudes that reflect the indispensable value of work. Throughout history, people have worked under varying moral justifications for their efforts, with a person's concept of what and who they are determining what they expect from work. An individual's obligations are attached to work according to how they see themselves and view their purpose. When work becomes a matter of 'ought to' for an individual, a work ethic arises (Pascarella, 1984).

Origination

In 1904 and 1905 Max Weber developed the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) (McHoskey, 1994), and wrote the now two-part article titled, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (Miller, 1997). Weber, a sociologist and respected scholar, was motivated to study the differing developments of capitalism in both Western and Eastern civilizations (Lessnoff, 1994). Weber thought capitalism to be influenced by metaphysical beliefs (Weber, 1958), and

strove to understand and explain its' expansion in Western Europe and North America (Lessnoff, 1994).

Weber's use of religion as the foundation of support for his ideology that metaphysical beliefs influenced the development and sustainment of capitalism was instrumental in the development of the PWE. Weber found the Puritan practice of Asceticism to coincide with the development of characteristics he believed were the foundation for the advancement of capitalism. Ascetism focused on the efficient use of time and was centered around depriving oneself of luxury and worldly pleasures to achieve personal discipline (Miller, 1997).

Ascetics believed their economic role on Earth was determined by God (Gilbert, 1977). They stood strong in the ideology that a person's calling was a sign to perform good works while on Earth (Furnham, 1990) which established a link between God and economic success. The Ascetics belief in such a relationship led to the display of occupational success being viewed as a sign a person had been chosen to receive salvation. This correlation led work to be seen as a means to obtain salvation, with laborers often considering their work a calling from God (Miller, 1997).

Through his research, Weber isolated what he believed to be the true driving force behind capitalism. He recognized economic development was not determined so much by the upper-class entrepreneurs, but instead by tireless efforts of the hard-working middle class. These individuals believed in hard work, lived modestly, found joy in work for work's sake, and were often the members of society that viewed work as a road to salvation (Weber, 1958). Although he recognized the impact other factors such as bureaucratic nations, credit institutions, the organization of free labor, and the development of legal systems had on capitalism (Charlton et al., 1986; Furnham, 1990; Lessnoff, 1994; Schluchter, 1981; Weber, 1961), Weber held fast in

his theory that aligned religion and the development of specific societal characteristics as the predominate influence of a society's success or failure (Giddens, 1995).

Weber's desire to understand capitalism ultimately led to the evaluation and reasoning behind peoples' perception of work, as well as how and why they developed it. Weber recognized people's relationship to work was multidimensional and although he used the fundamentals of Asceticism as the primary support for his theory (Miller, 1997), maintained other Protestant faiths shared common ideologies that lent them to have similar influence (Bouma, 1973; Nelson, 1973). Although the PWE has been defined in various ways since first presented, all descriptions have commonalities and build off fundamentals established in Weber's original work (Miller, 1997).

The fundamentals of the PWE were centered around hard work, and placed work at the center of a person's life. The PWE was thought to be indicative of a person's view of work in its totality, and not related to feelings associated with one specific job or position. High levels of PWE beliefs led an individual to have an engagement with work which they viewed as a meaningful activity. With the influence of PWE values, work itself would have value to a person and be more than merely a means to monetary or material wealth (Lenski, 1961). Weber believed an individual who possessed PWE beliefs would have a complete devotion to one's economic role on earth, and the application of such values would lead to what is now referred to as "work ethic" (Lessnoff, 1994).

Values and Dimensions

Work ethic is displayed in an employee's behavior which originates from an individual's personal values and morals (Hill, 1992; Hill, 1997; Kazanas, 1978; Petty, 1995). According to Van Ness et al. (2010), work ethic is associated with ideals such as integrity, sense of

responsibility, emphasis on quality, discipline, and a sense of cooperation. Additional values intertwined with work ethic include hard work, diligence, reliability, and self-motivation which, along with others, are obtained from family and formal education at an early age. As a person matures, these values evolve into principles and assumptions that ultimately shape a person and influence their actions and beliefs (Chașovschi, 2016).

One of the primary reasons a range of opinions concerning work ethic exist is the fact that overtime, it has been defined in a multitude of ways. There is not one single 'work ethic' that people either possess or reject, but instead several values that dictate how a person views and perceives work (Cherrington, 1980). Miller et al. (2002) drew on extensive literature originating from Max Weber's original work and came to the same conclusion as others before. Miller et al. construed work ethic is not merely one concept, but instead a collaboration of attitudes and beliefs pertaining to work behavior. A person may reject some values associated with justifications for work while embracing and accepting others (Cherrington, 1980).

Miller et al. (2002) interpreted work ethic to be both secular and learned and surmised it to be multi-dimensional. Miller et al. stated work ethic pertains not only to work, but work-related activities in general. They found work-ethic fundamentals were not tied to any one job, and could be generalized across domains such as school, extracurricular activities, and personal hobbies. Although work ethic is a motivational construct represented by a person's behaviors, Miller et al. characterized work ethic as linked to an individual's attitudes and beliefs and not necessarily their conduct.

Miller et al. (2002) presented a review of work ethic where seven dimensions deemed dominate were isolated. The first dimension was centrality of work which is the belief in work for work's sake. Individuals who possess this trait have the mindset they would work even if

they were monetarily wealthy and did not have to (Woehr et al., 2007). Self-reliance is the second dimension recognized by Miller et al. (2002) and is defined as striving for independence in daily work. Possessing this characteristic leads people to strive to reduce their dependence on others and have the outlook that self-reliance is the gateway to success (Woehr et al., 2007). Hard work is the third dimension recognized by Miller et al. (2002) and is rooted in the beliefs of the virtues associated with such. The belief that success comes through hard work, frugality, and perseverance is associated with this dimension of work ethic (Cherrington, 1980). Miller et al.'s (2002) fourth dimension of leisure recognizes the importance of employees having time off to enjoy other aspects of life to maintain a healthy work to life ratio. Although often overlooked, this dimension of work ethic plays an important role in ensuring a person feels satisfied, accomplished, and finds happiness during their life. The fifth dimension identified by Miller et al. (2002) is morality/ethics. This dimension is based around believing in a just and moral existence and having the mindset people should be fair in their dealings with others. The sixth dimension recognized by Miller et al. (2002) is delay of gratification and is used to define a person's orientation toward the future. A person possessing this characteristic will understand it takes time for hard work to pay off and will live by the adage "the best things in life are those you have to wait for" (Woehr et al., 2007, p. 156). The seventh and final dimension of work ethic acknowledged by Miller et al. (2002) is wasted time. A person embracing this dimension will have the attitude that time should be used productively and never treated frivolously (Woehr et al., 2007).

Development

The present conceptualization of work ethic has been linked to a person's attitudes and beliefs associated with industriousness, self-reliance, religion, leisure, self-discipline, the delay

of gratification, and importance of work (Miller, 1997). A person's development of such

attitudes and beliefs have been strongly linked to experiences and expectations early in life, with

values of adults having shown to be largely shaped during childhood. Experiences throughout

this developmental time influence not just work ethic, but values associated with honesty and

compassion, as well as countless others (Cherrington,1980).

Positive family values, structure, and practices have been connected to the development

of beliefs associated with a strong work ethic and becoming a contributing member of society

(Cherrington, 1980). Children with a positive relationship with either parent often adopt their

parents' ethics which influence and guide their behaviors (Leenders, 2017). Children have shown

to develop a strong work ethic later in life when they have experienced firm discipline during

childhood and been taught both obedience and personal accountability by their parents. Familial

expectations, exposure to work early in life, and discipline are vital factors that influence the

development of strong beliefs about the importance of hard work and the dignity associated with

labor (Cherrington, 1980).

The moral development that enables work to become an intrinsic reward for a person is

crucial to the internalization of values that lead to pride in one's work and the development of a

healthy positive attitude toward labor. People are not born with the need to work (Cherrington,

1980), and parents are instrumental in the moral development of their children (Moscolo, 2015).

The principles they teach, or neglect to teach, have enormous impact on their children's view and

mindset toward work and have the propensity to impact them for the rest of their life

(Cherrington, 1980).

The two techniques that promote the establishment of work as an intrinsic reward are

induction and modeling. Induction refers to all forms of verbal explanation such as reasoning and

teaching, while modeling refers to examples set for children by influential adults. Induction includes cognitive material that both defines and justifies appropriate behavior with studies indicating it to be an effective and essential technique in moral development. Induction includes all verbal reinforcements for positive behaviors and is a strong contributor to the internalization of moral standards (Cherrington,1980).

Modeling has enormous impact on the development of behaviors, values, and attitudes. What children visually see their parents do becomes the standard with which they compare all else (Cherrington, 1980). Children pattern their behavior after both the positive and negative actions of their parents (Mascolo, 2015), with emulations ranging from the way they respond to insult to the way they hold their cigarette and structure their sentences. Modeling is teaching by example, and when related to work ethic the parent's actions and behaviors at and toward work will often become that of their children (Cherrington, 1980).

Dynamics of Work Ethic

Bandura's (1989, 2005) social cognitive theory provides a framework for analyzing the dynamic of work ethic, the core of which is responsibility and accountability for one's work behaviors (Hill & Petty, 1995; Petty & Hill, 2005). The social cognitive theory is based on the fact humans are social beings, influenced by those with whom they come in contact. The theory states people learn by observing influential adults, such as friends and family members, and exude learned knowledge through actions and internal beliefs (Bandura, 1989, 2005).

Bandura's (1989, 2005) social cognitive theory recognized the relationship between the environment and an individual. The theory identified the association as bidirectional with an individual impacting the environment and vise-versa. Bandura (2005) recognized people not only contribute to their environment, but are products of it, with the environment, personal factors,

and behaviors being identified as being reciprocally influenced by one another. A person's actions are influenced by their knowledge and beliefs, with societal reactions serving as feedback. A person's behaviors are influenced by reinforcement or punishment under social cognitive theory, leading a person's emotions and future actions to be shaped by the positive or negative feedback received from society (Bandura, 1989, 2005).

Individuals are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting as contributors to and products of their environment (Bandura, 2005). Under Bandura's (1989, 2005) social-cognitive theory, the principles of self-efficacy and self-regulation hold great importance. Self-efficacy is a person's beliefs concerning capabilities that enable specific behaviors, while self-regulation is the mechanism people enact to exercise control over their motivation, thinking, and emotions (Bandura, 1985, 2005). These concepts give reason to how different behaviors can be expressed due to a person's level of self-efficacy and self-regulatory abilities (Bandura, 2005), and help explain how a person's work ethic is both developed and expressed (Hill, 1992; see also Hill & Petty, 1995; Kim, 2007).

Evolution

There was no doubt in early America about the importance of work ethic. Early American's viewed work as a necessary and important part of life. Dignity and honor were associated with all honest work, no matter the wage paid. Young people were taught that success was achieved through hard work, diligence, perseverance, honesty, and frugality. They were schooled on the importance and value of high morals and character and were taught to always be honest, dedicated to their work, and careful with their time (Cherrington, 1980). A person seeking to be successful and placing value on a job well done was the cultural norm (Park & Hill, 2016). Acquiring a new skill, learning a trade, obtaining an education, or advancing within

one's occupation were looked upon with high regard, not because it meant greater personal success, but because it meant the individual could then make a greater contribution to society (Cherrington, 1980).

Concern is rising among today's business leaders as the work force's commitment to and value for hard work is slowly dwindling (Allerton, 1994; see also Corbo, 1997). Many believe America, as well as other industrialized countries, have and are continuing to experience a decline in work ethic (Ali & Azim, 1995; Eisenberger, 1989; Sacks, 1998). Although some argue that work ethic is not on the decline, but merely expressed differently by those generationally classified as Millennials and Generation X (Allerton, 1994; Corbo,1997), there is no denying the values on which work ethic is built influence an employee's workplace behaviors (Sheehy,1990).

Hard work and diligence have always been demanded by the social and economic constraints of the past, but as society has evolved, so have work values. The work ethic of American workers has changed along with jobs themselves. The nature of work is not the same as it was 100 years ago as industrialization and technological advancements have improved efficiencies leading to less effort often producing significantly greater rewards. Federal laws have also influenced aspects of work as job security has increased, unsafe working conditions have become unlawful, and employees have gained considerable power over employers. The ideology of having the 'privilege' to have a job has shifted and evolved into the 'right' to have job as society has succumb to the mentality of entitlement (Cherrington, 1980).

Changes in the dynamic of the workplace and society have challenged the traditional work ethic. Work weeks have shortened, hazardous and repetitive jobs are often automated, unemployment benefits and welfare reward individuals for not working, and employees are often incentivized to take retirement at an early age (Cherrington, 1980). The last two generations and

counting have been raised in a culture that promotes self-esteem to help everyone feel valued and see themselves as the best of the best. The side effect of such an overdose of self-esteem is the creation of a self-focused, entitled mentality where the message to 'esteem the self' overtakes an individual (Chester, 2015).

The negative implications of such a mentality are numerous and can be witnessed in today's up and coming workforce (Chester, 2015). The decline in the values that correspond to a strong work ethic leads employers to see a decrease in employee job performance (Yandle, 1992), higher turnover rates, increased absenteeism (Klebnikov, 1993; Shimko, 1992), and increased incidences of counterproductive behavior such as unauthorized breaks and stealing (Sheehy, 1990). Up and coming generations don't identify with work as previous generations have, often viewing it as something to avoid or endure prior to a windfall coming their way (Chester, 2015). Attitudes come before actions, and if attitudes toward work are adverse, they will have a negative impact on outcomes (Brown, 1983).

Impact in the Workplace

Good work attitudes, values, and habits are important to both workers and employers. Research indicates when people lose their job or fail to obtain a promotion, it is commonly due to a poor attitude and work ethic and not their lack of true technical ability (Brauchle & Shafiqul, 2004). Leaders value workers who possess a strong work ethic (Petty & Hill, 2005), due to their propensity to enable higher productivity and enhance profitability (Huang & Capelli, 2007, as cited in Park & Hill, 2016). Work ethic has been isolated as one of the top required soft skills due to it having substantial influence on a person's attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Miller, et al. 2002), which impact work quality, productivity, and organizational citizenship (Park & Hill, 2017). An individual's work ethic will often be indicative of their attitudes and

beliefs with respect to the value they place on work (Miller, 1997), which are likely to impact the contextual aspects of an employee's performance in the workplace (Miller, et al., 2002).

The framework developed by Rojewski and Hill (2014) lists work ethic as an essential component all people must develop to find success in the workplace. Flynn (1994) states over 50 percent of hiring managers are more concerned with an applicant's attitude than aptitude and found nearly 60 percent ranked work ethic as the most important factor when looking to hire new employees. Assuming individuals had the necessary skills to perform the tasks of the position, work ethic was considered an essential quality and often ranked higher than characteristics such as intelligence, enthusiasm, and education (Flynn, 1994).

Today, more than ever, workers who possess a strong work ethic are valued by employers and customers alike. Teaching such values to today's workforce is essential to the success of not only America's companies and workforce, but the country itself, as these individuals go above and beyond to add value and do more than is required. They have proven too often be positive and enthusiastic people that show up on time prepared and appropriately dressed. A person with a strong work ethic will be honest and always play by the rules, making them every employer's dream employee. The instilment of a traditional work ethic into the up-and-coming workforce should be a priority for every society as it has the ability to produce economic and cultural shifts of enormous magnitude (Chester, 2015).

Productivity

Employees are one of an organizations most important and valuable assets. Employees can help an organization and increase output or be unsuitable and detract from it. Measuring a person's ability to convert available input resources to a desired output or product is termed productivity. Many factors have been shown to influence employee and job productivity

including a person's values and beliefs, individual ability, work environment, supervisor support, and organizational standards and policies (Anjum et al., 2018). Merrens and Garrett (1975) concluded higher work ethic beliefs caused workers to work longer on monotonous tasks and be significantly more productive than individuals possessing low work ethic beliefs. Employers look for clues of a strong work ethic when making hiring decisions due to individuals possessing a strong work ethic enabling higher productivity and enhanced organizational profitability (Park & Hill, 2016).

Productivity does not have one single operational definition as it varies according to context, culture, organization, and task at hand. When measured, productivity is essentially the time spent on an activity or job an employee is expected to complete utilizing specific limited resources. Employees who enjoy their job and possess a high level of job satisfaction have shown to be more engaged, productive, happier, and healthier. Organizational productivity is provisional on the level of employee productivity, making it imperative organizations establish a workplace environment conducive to the wellbeing of their workforce (Anjum et al., 2018).

Leadership

Leaders lead others, not things. Leadership is exercised in conflict and competition when leaders appeal to the motive basis of their potential followers. A leader is only able to lead to the degree they recognize the motivations of others with the genius, and often success of a leader, lying in their ability to recognize and react to not only their personal values and motivations, but to those of their followers (Burns, 1978).

Leadership theory is undoubtably a hazy and perplexing area of social psychology that when investigated often leads to more questions than answers (Bennis, 1959). Like power, leadership has the central function of achieving a purpose but adding to its' complexity are its'

relational and collective characteristics. Leadership occurs when followers join suit with their leader to pursue a common purpose that represents the standards, motivations, aspirations, and expectations of all involved (Burns, 1978).

Leadership, like the words love and peace, vary in meaning from person to person and across circumstances. Leadership produces change and creates movement by establishing direction and aligning, motivating, and inspiring people. Leadership is complex, involves multiple dimensions, and overtime has been defined countless ways. Although one defining definition has not been established, components central to leadership theory have been identified and widely recognized across the field of social psychology (Northouse, 2010).

The components identified with leadership establish it as a process with an individual influencing the actions of a group to achieve a common goal. This identification labels leadership as an event between a leader and follower, establishing it is not a trait or characteristic a person possesses. The components used to identify leadership emphasize it is not linear, but instead an interactive event available to everyone and not limited to one specified specific individual in a group (Northouse, 2010).

Ethics

Ethics originates from the Greek word ethos, meaning customs, conduct, or character. Ethics are central to leadership, and leaders are key to establishing organizational values and cultures. When ethics are applied to leadership, they become about the actions of leaders as well as who they are as a person (Northouse, 2010).

The influence a leader has impacts people, bringing about the burden of ethical responsibility. All individuals have ethical responsibilities, but leaders have greater ethical obligations due to their position enabling them to influence others in momentous ways.

(Northouse, 2010). Northouse (2010) discusses five principals that provide a foundation for ethical leadership across varying disciplines and domains. Although not entirely comprehensive the five principals of respect, service, justice, honesty, and community are longstanding, dating as far back as Aristotle.

Respect is a complex ethic. Leaders who show respect approach others with a since of worth and value them for their individual differences (Kitchener, 1984). They show empathy to others and tolerate oppositional views. Leaders who show respect give credence and overall treat others as worthy human beings. These actions build rapport with subordinates and allows them to feel confident about their work (Northouse, 2010).

Leaders who *serve* put their followers needs ahead of their own. They focus on the development of their followers instead of their own advancement (Northouse, 2010). They are altruistic, mentor others, and exhibit behavior that promotes empowerment and team building (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996).

A leader who is ethical is *just* and is concerned with fairness. Equality is of the upmost priority to a just leader, and no one shall be treated differently except in the instance where their situation demands it. Should the situation arise for an individual to need to be treated differently, then grounds for different treatment are clear, reasonable, and moral (Northouse, 2010).

Honesty is an essential component of leadership that involves a broad spectrum of behaviors. Being honest means being open with others and representing reality in a straightforward manner. An honest leader must find balance between what they can appropriately share with others and being candid (Northouse, 2010).

An ethical leader builds *community* by working for the common good. They strive to establish goals that are well-suited for and compatible with everyone. An ethical leader considers the purpose of everyone involved as well as the interests of the community (Northouse, 2010).

Theories

Situational Leadership. Situational leadership is one of the more widely accepted approaches to leadership and is commonly used in organizational leadership training and development. Situational leadership has stood the test of time and has been reported to be used in over 400 of the Fortune 500 companies. As the name implies, situational leadership focuses on leadership in varying circumstances and is based on the premise that different situations call for different leadership (Northouse, 2010). Developed by Hersey and Blanchard in 1969, situational leadership was based on W.J. Reddin's 3-D management style theory. Situational leadership requires a leader to be adaptable in order to be successful (Ghazzawi et al., 2017), and stresses there is both a directive and supportive dimension to leader/follower interactions (Northouse, 2010).

The success of situational leadership rests on the directive and supportive dimensions of leadership being applied appropriately. A successful situational leader must possess the ability to evaluate their followers in a specific situation and assess how competent and committed they are to perform a specific task. Employee's skills, motivation, and dedication evolve over time requiring situational leaders to alter the degree they are directive or supportive. A successful effective leader is one who can evaluate and recognize the needs of their followers and then adapt to accommodate those needs (Northouse, 2010).

Authentic Leadership. Authentic leadership focuses on the genuineness of leadership. The emphasis of the theory is on the authenticity of a leader and their leadership. Authentic

leadership is relatively new and should be considered cautiously as thoughts and ideas surrounding it will inevitably change as new research findings are published (Northouse, 2010).

Turmoil in a society emphasizes the demand for authentic leadership. Corporate scandals, 9/11, political upsets, and other such factors lead to apprehension and uncertainty, driving people to search for honest genuine leaders they can trust. Peoples demand for credible leaders has sparked interest in authentic leadership, making research into the theory appropriate and worthwhile (Northouse, 2010).

Although strait forward sounding, authentic leadership has proven to be difficult to define. Due to its complex nature, three different perspectives have been used to characterize and define authentic leadership. The first perspective derived to define the theory is intrapersonal. Intrapersonal focuses on the leader and their internal processes and thoughts. Self-concepts and their influence on a leader's actions lie at the root of this perspective. Under the intrapersonal perspective, authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, are original, and base their actions on their own morals and values (Northouse, 2010).

The second perspective used to define authentic leadership is developmental. This perspective views authentic leadership as something that people develop overtime as they move through life. The developmental perspective bases authentic leadership on a leader's positive psychologic qualities and ethics, and suggests it is composed of self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Northouse, 2010).

The third means by which authentic leadership has been defined is through the interpersonal perspective. This perspective views the theory as relational, recognizing the followers' contribution to leader/follower interactions. Under this definition, leaders must not only be unselfish and concerned with others but obtain their followers commitment to achieve

desirous outcomes. The effectiveness of an authentic leader under this perspective rests on their ability to obtain "buy in" from followers with whom they can identify (Northouse, 2010).

Authentic leadership, unlike other types of leadership, does not have traits and behaviors that can be emulated to produce a certain style of leadership (Northouse, 2010). Bird and Wang (2011) indicated the value of authentic leaders resides in the fact they have a strong passion for their purpose but build relationships and relate well to others. Authentic leaders earn credibility and trust by acting in accordance with how they truly feel. They encourage input from team members, creating collaborative relationships that contribute to their perceived authenticity (Avolio et al., 2004).

Styles

To be effective, the influence of a leader must make a positive impact not only on direct reports, but throughout an organization (Louw et al., 2017). Studies have shown that leadership is directly tied to personal characteristics such as charisma, personality traits, and behaviors (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Leaders have varying values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and personalities that impact the way they interact with and lead followers (Zareen et al., 2015). According to Bass (1985), leaders implement a range of behaviors while leading followers, with some being more effective than others.

Leadership theories have evolved overtime and given rise to varying leadership styles. Leadership styles are characterized by distinct leader behaviors and are commonly deliberated and researched in the field of management due to their ability to impact employee productivity and subordinate performance (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Leadership paradigms have shown to impact organizational performance in multiple ways (Jing & Avery, 2008), with the style of leadership being viewed by some researchers as particularly important to inducing the

performance of subordinates and achieving organizational goals (Barling et al., 1996; Berson et al., 2001; Zacharatos et al., 2000). The three leadership styles of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire comprise a paradigm used today to understand both the lower and higher order impacts of leadership style within organizations (Nickels & Ford, 2017).

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership influences the attitudes and beliefs of followers (Burns, 1998). Transformational leaders create visions and emphasize goals and objectives that align with those of their followers. They promote the interests of the group ahead of their own and work for the collective good. Transformational leaders act on strong ethical values and moral standards and through self-sacrificing behaviors earn the respect and trust of their followers (Barling et al., 2008).

The basis of transformational leadership style rests on a leader's ability to motivate followers to achieve more than they originally planned (Krishnan, 2005). Transformational leadership considers the charismatic and affective elements of leadership and is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. Transformational leaders play an important role in bringing about change, but followers and leaders are bound together in the transformation process under this style of leadership (Northouse, 2010). Follower satisfaction and job performance are increased under transformational leadership through inspiration, support, and intellectual challenge. This style of leadership is an example of active leadership and has proven to have positive outcomes for both employees and organizations alike (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019).

Transformational leaders focus on the development of followers and motivate them to reach their full potential through influence and engagement (Bass,1985). Transformational leadership, also coined charismatic leadership (Zareen et al., 2015), has four main sub-variables

with which it is associated (Louw et al., 2017). Bass and Avolio (1990, 1994) isolated the sub-variables and label them inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence attributes and behaviors.

Inspirational motivation is a leader's ability to mentor and provide inspiration to others (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Good communication skills, visioning, corrective action, and risk taking are all essential for such a leader and set the stage for encouraging individual championship and team spirit. Inspirational motivation also requires a leader be a hard-worker and possess confidence and optimism that inspires others, especially during bleak times (Hebert, 2011).

The intellectual stimulation sub-variable of transformational leadership emphasizes a leader's ability to encourage followers to think outside the box, be creative, and express ideas. (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This sub-variable deals with how leaders establish an inviting environment that welcomes follower input and provides a platform to express and develop new ideas. This is a crucial element of transformational leadership as it enables employees to think independently and provides them a means by which to express their thoughts on improving not only their performance, but also organizational operations (Bass, 1990; Herbert, 2011).

When a leader possesses individual consideration, they evaluate, and address employees needs individually (Bass & Avolio, 1994). They recognize the differences in people, their desires, wants, motives, and needs, addressing them separately instead of collectively as a group. Without individual consideration, the positive effects of a transformational leader are diluted leading to reduced employee support (Louw et al., 2017).

Idealized influence focuses on a leader's ability to establish a mission and demonstrate behavior that helps an organization, and its' members achieve the desired level of performance (Hayward, 2005). Divided into attributes and behaviors, idealized influence deals with both the

personal qualities and actions of a transformational leader. A leader who possesses idealized influence attributes will capture and communicate an established mission while building confidence and trust among followers. They will install pride in others, act in ways that build others respect for them, and display a sense of power and confidence (Avolio & Bass, 2004). A transformational leader who exhibits behaviors associated with idealized influence will encourage followers to pursue individual and collective goals, be inspirational, considerate, and stimulate creativity and innovation in both self and others (Hebert, 2011). They will speak openly of important values and beliefs, specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose, utilize ethics and morals to make decisions, and emphasize having and pursing a collective mission (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Transformational leadership is more often seen at higher levels of management than at lower levels (Tichy & Uhich, 1984), although Bass and Avolio (1990) suggested it could be taught to all people within an organization. Transformational leadership can be utilized to improve team development, group decision-making, quality initiatives, as well as for reorganization (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The implementation of transformational leadership has shown to positively affect organizational performance (Northouse, 2010) through its' focus of creating a symbiotic working relationship between leaders and followers (Edward & Gill, 2012).

Pseudo- transformational Leadership. Leaders who are transforming, but in a negative way, are deemed pseudo-transformational leaders. The factor, concern for others, is the delineating feature between true transformational leadership and pseudo-transformational leadership (Northouse, 2010). Bass (1998) coined the term pseudo-transformational leadership to deal with the problem of power wielding, self-absorbed, and oppressive leaders who possess warped moral values. Transformational leadership involves high moral standards, and the rising

of such in others, which made it unfit to describe unethical leaders. Leaders such as Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein fall under this category, as they were extremely transforming, but not in a positive manner (Northouse, 2010).

A pseudo-transformational leader is not simply an individual lacking prosocial values but is instead a person lacking such values while possessing specific others. A pseudo-transformational leader will lack prosocial values but will also possess egotistical values as well as characteristics that enable them to be highly motivating to others. Motivating and inspiring others based on egotistical and self-serving values has the propensity to yield unethical pseudo-transformational leadership with pervasive undesirable effects (Barling et al., 2008).

Pseudo-transformational leaders utilize their influence for self-serving purposes (Barling et al., 2008). Pseudo-transformational leadership is considered personalized leadership due to the focus being on the leaders' own interests instead of on the interests of others (Northouse, 2010). Price (2003) theorized two types of such leaders with one submitting to their own egotistical and self-interested ideals while the other acts inconsistently, straying often from their altruistic values.

Pseudo-transformational leaders' behaviors are often very similar to those of transformational leaders due to pseudo-transformational leaders using components of transformational leadership to promote their own self-interested agendas (Barling et al., 2008). Idealized influence is the first component of transformational leadership utilized by pseudo-transformational leaders. Through idealized influence, pseudo-transformational leaders control their followers and work to become personal idols. Unlike transformational leaders, pseudo-transformational leaders neglect the collective ideals of their followers and as a result often fail to earn their true respect (Barling et al., 2008).

Inspirational motivation is the second transformational leadership component utilized by pseudo-transformational leaders. Used in a positive manner by transformational leaders to instill a mission, motivate, and increase follower awareness, inspirational motivation is used by pseudo-transformational leaders in a much different manner. Pseudo-transformational leaders replace the logic of transformational leadership with self -indulgence. They promote their missions using bombast and pomposity which aids them in increasing the extent others view their vision as realistic and compelling. They often offer little more than deception and false promises, but inspirational motivation is one of the primary elements that makes pseudo-transformational leaders appear transformational, compelling people to follow them (Barling et al., 2008).

Transactional Leadership. The fundamentals behind transactional leadership are centered around followers performing according to the leader's direction. Under transactional leadership, leaders communicate to followers *what they should do* and *how they should do it*. The exchange dimension of transactional leadership is very common and can be observed throughout multiple levels of leadership and across many types of organizational structures (Northouse, 2010). Transactional leaders monitor followers closely and provide reward or punishment for satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance (Zareen et al., 2015). This reward/corrective action relationship between leader and follower establishes a rapport for continuous learning that has shown to increase employee's commitment to organizational goals (Zhu et al., 2011), and lead to a somewhat higher follower skill-based knowledge than other leadership styles (Avery, 2004).

Transactional leadership is characterized as supporting the status quo through leader-follower mutual self-interests across the three dimensions of contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive management by exception (Zareen et al., 2015).

Contingent reward is the degree to which the leader sets up constructive interactions with followers. The leader states follower expectations, establishing and providing recognition and rewards when they are met (Jing & Avery, 2008). The transactional leadership dimensions of active management by exception and passive management by exception are similar, with their difference lying in the reaction time of the leader (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Active management leaders monitor follower actions, anticipate problems, and implement corrective action prior to serious issues arising. Passive management leaders on the other hand do not pro-actively punish non-compliance, but instead react after behaviors have created disruption (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Groves and LaRocca (2011) states that transactional leadership uses reciprocity and mutual altruism as primary modes of influence. They indicate transactional leaders rely on the dynamic of the power/reward leader-follower relationship to influence followers to demonstrate desired performance. Groves and LaRocca also noted transactional leaders are concerned with managing outcomes and seeking the behavioral compliance of followers to maximize mutual interests of both parties. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) similarly states transactional leadership is founded on an individualist's philosophy in which leaders and followers rationally pursue their own self-interests.

According to Avery (2004), under transactional leadership, leaders adopt a consultative style of decision making. Transactional leaders engage in varying degrees of consultation with followers, but always get the final say. This style of leader rarely empowers followers, limiting follower influence in an organization to that of their personal labor efforts. Under transactional leadership a follower's commitment comes from previously negotiated rewards, agreements, and

expectations leading to a technical system with a high degree of regulation as well as routine and predictable operations mainly controlled by leaders (Jing & Avery, 2008).

Laissez-Faire Leadership. Laissez- faire leadership is also known as passive/avoidant leadership. On the leadership continuum, laissez-faire lies to the far-right which represents the absenteeism associated with the style. A laissez-faire leader takes a very inactive approach to leadership, delaying decisions, providing little feedback, and relinquishing responsibilities (Northouse, 2010). Leaders with this style often disregard supervisory duties, delegating the responsibility of decision making to their followers (Zareen et al., 2015). Laissez-faire leaders offer their followers limited support and are not driven to maximize productivity or complete tasks (Lewin et al., 1939 as cited in Zareen et. al, 2015).

Followers are granted more independence under laissez-faire leadership than with other styles, but with increased freedom comes greater expectation. Leaders provide followers needed tools and resources but have the expectation followers will remedy their own problems (Zareen et al., 2015). Feedback and/or support for followers is limited under laissez-faire leadership, leaving followers to work within their own means. According to Skogstad et al. (2007), this alienation can leave followers to deal with higher levels of stress and increased conflict with colleagues.

Many of today's employees are keenly aware of their capabilities and search for opportunities to develop in their roles. Laissez-faire leadership provides these employees the ideal opportunity, as the style empowers followers through involvement. Laissez-faire leaders provide followers the opportunity to utilize their capabilities to understand organizational issues while under their guidance, but then provide them the liberty to make decisions as they see fit.

Modern employees feel motivated when allowed to make decisions and get great satisfaction out of seeing the positive outcomes that are the result of their choices (Zareen et al., 2015).

The laissez-faire leadership style provides the opportunity for followers to be directly involved with organizational success (Zareen et al., 2015), and has shown to be most effective when followers are highly skilled, self-motivated, and work well independently (Eagly et al., 2003). According to Werbel and Gilliland (1999), follower involvement often leads to the alignment of employee and organizational values which have also shown to be strengthened through leader-follower relationships. Laissez-faire leadership is often found useful when large numbers of relatively easy decisions are needed, or followers must perform fairly simple tasks that have predetermined specifications and regulations. People have varying natures, and for individuals with limited knowledge, experience, problem solving skills, or desire to make decisions, the laissez-faire leadership style is not appropriate. These individuals will require a more involved leader-follower relationship which laissez-faire leadership does not provide (Zareen et al., 2015).

Impact of Leadership

A leader's influence denotes their ability to alter follower behavior to achieve desired results (Louw et al., 2017). A leader is a key component of any organization as they choose the means and methods by which the company's goals and policies are communicated, expressed, achieved, and upheld. Different leadership practices have shown to foster varying organizational climates and cultures which in turn lead to different follower behaviors and attitudes. Leaders have the power to create a context that is beneficial, promoting desired follower behavior and attitudes, or develop an environment that is conducive to the opposite (Pereira & Gomes, 2012).

Research has shown characteristics related to specific leadership styles impact follower job performance and organizational success (Ng, 2017). Positive leadership behavior lends followers to have a more optimistic assessment of their job's effort-performance and performance-outcome links, motivating them to perform at a higher level. This increase in positivity concerning the relationship between follower input and outputs leads to more engaged and committed employees who are willing to participate above and beyond their required duties (Judge & Piccolo, 2001).

Donnelly et al. (1992) states when people have an overall positivity toward work, trust their leaders, and know what is expected of them they are more committed, dedicated, and engaged in the workplace. Leadership has the propensity to impact each one of these factors as the leader-follower relationship has immense influence. An organization is only as good as the people who embody its mission, and cultivating a culture of trust, mutual respect, and empowerment through leadership is a sure way to help ensure success for all involved (Walter, 2013).

Summary

A person's work ethic is displayed through their work behavior and is based on personal values, beliefs, and morals (Petty & Hill, 2005). The term work ethic sums up a combination of qualities that translate to specific behaviors, and is often associated with hard work, diligence, being reliable, and having initiative to improve oneself. Work values are learned and interiorized during interactions throughout one's developmental years and are exhibited through beliefs and actions as a person matures (Chașovschi, 2016).

Since the writings of Max Weber in the early 1900's, society has evolved in ways that has led the Western culture to lose sight of many virtues that comprise work ethic. This country

was built on values associated with a strong work ethic, but as younger generations enter the workforce their presence is continually threatened (Chester, 2015). The workplace is becoming increasingly dynamic as multiple generations of workers with varying attitudes towards work are included in the workforce (Zemke et al., 2013).

Business and industry demand at the very least that employees remember the values they learned as kids and adhere to them in the workplace. These "sandbox values" include punctuality, working hard, doing your best, showing gratitude, and obeying the rules (Chester, 2015, p.33). These universal values have shown to comprise the foundation of a solid work ethic required to sustain employment, but all too often members of today's workforce report to work without them (Chester, 2015).

The evolution seen in today's workforce is not only a concern for today's leaders, but one of their biggest trials (Chester, 2015). Leaders are faced with the challenge of managing a dynamic labor force and must strive to comprehend the wave of changing values in order to be successful in the years ahead. As the values that lead personal growth are the very ones that generate economic development, leadership in the workplace will inevitably evolve and become less about molding people to fit organizations and more about personnel development and growth (Pascarella, 1984).

A leader is often thought of as a person with vision. An individual who can sell their own vison to others, and them blindly follow. In the past this may have been the case, but not in today's workplace. The effectiveness of leadership in today's workplace rests on a leader's ability to bring people together for a common purpose when they recognize the fact they can choose not to commit. Today's leaders must appeal to individual followers' aspirations and

values, articulate a vision or purpose in a manner that enables everyone to see and aspire towards it, and aid people in seeing what can be instead of what is (Pascarella, 1984).

Leaders must strive to bridge the gap between today's industry needs and the current state of America's workforce. Our declining work ethic has become systemic and has developed into a defining quality of our culture that must now be overcome. The evolution of society has led to an entitled mindset and a predilection for avoiding work, leaving the responsibility of developing a workforce with at least basic work-related values on employers (Chester, 2015). Gardner (1995) reiterated the importance of a strong work ethic when he stated, "society cannot achieve greatness unless individuals at many levels of ability accept the need for high standards of performance and strive to achieve those standards within the limits possible to them" (p. 267). Work ethic is a key component of success no matter the profession and establishing it in America's young employees is crucial to sustaining our companies and country alike (Chester, 2015).

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter outlines the design and methodology used to complete the quantitative study. The study gathered leadership style data from agriculture equipment dealership service department managers along with their employees work ethic and workplace productivity data. The objective of the study was to determine if the leadership style possessed by managers impacted employee work ethic and workplace productivity. The study also sought to determine if a relationship existed between employee work ethic and workplace productivity in the agriculture organization setting being investigated.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to establish if the leadership style of managers influenced the work ethic and workplace productivity of employees. The study also sought to determine if a relationship existed between employee work ethic and workplace productivity. The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) (5x-Short) leader form was used to obtain the leadership characteristics of service department managers while the *Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile* (MWEP) was utilized to score the work ethic of their employees with required productivity data being obtained directly from the employer. Statistical analysis using SPSS software was performed to determine if statistically significant relationships existed between the manager's leadership style scores, employee MWEP scores, and productivity data.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the workplace productivity of employees?

H$_0$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to

normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_1$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_2$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

Research Question 2. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the work ethic of employees as measured by the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP)?

H$_3$. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_4$. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

H$_5$. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees

whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

Research Question 3. Does a relationship exist between employee work ethic, as measured by the MWEP, and workplace productivity level?

H6. There will be no significant difference between the work ethic of employees and their workplace productivity level.

Population

The study focused on the relationship between service department manager's leadership style and subordinate employee work ethic and workplace productivity in agriculture equipment dealerships. The study was conducted using service department employees of a privately owned agriculture equipment dealership. The agriculture equipment dealership utilized for the study consisted of 17 store locations located across the southeastern United States. The dealership locations each had one service manager who oversaw the service department. Each dealership location varied concerning the number of service technicians managed by the service manager.

The service manager and service technician group's target populations for the study were 17 and 168, respectively. The dealership locations each had one service manager, comprising the target population of 17 for the group. Service technicians who had a productivity rating and billed dollars reported by the company's asset manager for the month of December 2020 comprised the target population of 168 for the study's service technician group.

Sampling Procedures

Convenience sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling, was used to select study participants. Also known as incidental sampling, convenience sampling can yield results that

may not be indicative across a broader scale. Consideration should always be given when generalizing study results from convenience sampling across a larger population (Ravid, 2015).

The study criterion required both service managers and service technicians to have been employed in their current positions and locations for at least one year as of December 31, 2020 to be included in the study. Establishing this criterion helped ensure an adequate amount of time had lapsed to accurately record any influence leadership style may have had on employee work ethic and workplace productivity. Only 16 of the 17 members comprising the target population of the service management group were determined to meet the time requirements of the study, resulting in a sample size of 16 for the respective group. The sample size of the service technician group was 90, which included all technicians available and present at the meetings when data collection took place at each location.

Study Participants

The 16 individuals that comprised the service manager study sample were all invited and provided the opportunity to participate in the study. All 16 service managers accepted the invitation and completed the MLQ(5x-Short) in its entirety, allowing all 16 service managers to be utilized in the study. The 16 responses included in the study represented 94% percent of the target population for the service manager group.

The 90 individuals in the service technician study sample were all invited to partake in the study. One technician opted not to participate, with 89 beginning the MWEP instrument and 86 completing it in its entirety. The three participants not completing the MWEP instrument were excluded from the study along with 19 that did not meet the requirement of holding their position for one year prior to December 31, 2020, leaving 67 remaining service technicians to comprise the study sample.

Demographics. Fifteen males and one female comprised the study sample for the service manager group. The study sample for the group ranged in age from 27 to 62 with the median and mean ages being 44 and 45, respectively. The sixteen-service manager group study sample participants all responded "white" or "Caucasian" to the question concerning race.

The participants that comprised the study sample for the service technician group were all male. Their ages ranged from 19 to 62 with the median and mean ages being 35 and 37, respectively. When responding to the demographic question concerning race, 63 participants comprising the service technician study sample identified as "white" or "Caucasian," accounting for 94% of the group. One participant responded as "American," while one other participant responded as "human," each comprising one- and one-half percent of the groups study sample. Two participants neglected to respond to the question, making up the remaining three percent of the service technician study sample.

Voluntary Participation

Participants were informed study participation was entirely voluntary prior to data collection and were made aware there was no personal gain to be had by participating. They were informed that should they chose to participate; they could withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions. Everyone who chose to begin the study was provided and asked to sign a Murray State University Institutional Review Board approved informed consent document (see Appendix A). The document stated the purpose of the study, that participation was strictly voluntary, and that individual responses would not be shared although they may be combined with answers/data from others and reported collectively in presentations, publications, or scholarly journals.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality of data was maintained by storing documents with identifying information in a locked filing cabinet at the researchers place of residence. The documents included completed MLQ(5x-Short) and MWEP instruments, signed consent forms, and workplace productivity information obtained directly from the employer. Data transferred to software applications for analyzation were stored on a password protected computer.

Anonymity was ensured by using identifiers which were assigned to each completed instrument. Once identifiers were assigned, participant names and other identifying information were no longer associated with the data. Assigned identifiers allowed grouping of participants by dealership location, with no other distinctions being discernable.

Instrumentation

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from Murray State University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B). The instrumentation used to conduct the study included the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) (5x-Short) (see Appendix C), the *Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile* (MWEP) (see Appendix D), and productivity data obtained directly from the agriculture equipment dealership participating in the study. Permission to obtain and reproduce the MLQ(5x-Short) was obtained from Mind Garden (see Appendix E), with authorization to utilize the MWEP being granted by one of its creators, David Woher (see Appendix F). The MLQ(5x-Short) was used to discern the agriculture equipment dealership's service managers reliance on behaviors associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, while the MWEP and productivity data were utilized to rate the work ethic and corresponding workplace productivity of the service technicians they manage.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was created by Bruce J. Avolio and

Bernard M. Bass. The content of the instrument was based on Bass's (1985) theory of

transactional and transformational leadership (Tepper & Percy, 1994). The major leadership

constructs that underly the MLQ are transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant or

laissez-faire (Nickels & Ford, 2017). Bass and Avolio (1990) developed scales to assess these

constructs and produced the original 73- item MLQ. The MLQ has been validated through its use

in past research, and through the assessment of its psychometric properties (Tepper & Percy,

1994).

The MLQ has been refined since its development, with the only available version being

the shorter 45- item MLQ(5x-Short) (Nickels & Ford, 2017). The MLQ(5x-Short) comes in two

forms, the leader form and the rater form. The leader form measures self-perceptions of

leadership behaviors, while the rater form enables followers to rate their leaders (Avolio & Bass,

2004). The MLQ (5x- Short) uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from zero to four with "*0 =*

not at all" and "*4 = frequently, if not always*." The lower scores indicate the ineffective end of

the range and coincides with the laissez-faire leadership style, while the higher scores lie at the

most effective end of the range and correlate with characteristics associated with

transformational leadership (Nickels & Ford, 2017).

The 45-questions that comprise the MLQ (5x- Short) allows for the analyzation of

behaviors associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, as well as

providing insight into their influence on three leadership outcomes. The MLQ defines nine

leadership dimensions associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire

leadership and utilizes four questions to provide scores for each factor. The remaining nine

questions comprising the instrument are utilized to provide scoring for the three leadership outcomes of extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Five of the nine factors identified by the MLQ are dimensions of transformational leadership and include idealized influence attributes, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Three additional dimensions of contingent reward, management by exception active, and management by exception passive are also identified by the MLQ(5x-Short) and are characterizations of transactional leadership. The final and last dimension identified by the MLQ (5x-Short) is non-leadership which is associated with laissez-faire leadership (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008).

Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile

The Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP) was developed by David J. Miller, David J. Woehr, and Natasha Hudspeth in 2002. The purpose of developing the instrument was to offer a means by which to identify the structure of work ethic and provide a practical, relevant, and current means of measurement applicable across religious orientations (Velasco & Chavez, 2018). Early instruments created to examine work ethic were developed around the Protestant ethic and had varying constructs depending on the context with which they were to be used. As the Protestant ethic evolved overtime to become known as work ethic in Western countries, the need for instruments identifying skills essential to the contemporary work ethic evolved (Park & Hill, 2017).

According to Miller et al., (2002), the MWEP is based on Weber's original ideologies concerning work ethic but is suitable to study the work ethic of individuals in today's society. The MWEP is more comprehensive than any work ethic instrument preceding it, analyzing several dimensions that have not been studied by previously developed scales. The deminsions

analyzed by the MWEP include hard work, self-reliance, centrality of work, morality/ethics, delay of gratification, wasted time, and leisure (Miller et al., 2002). Meriac et al. (2013) defined the dimensions of work ethic analyzed by the MWEP as shown in Table 1.

The MWEP is comprised of 65 items and uses a five-point Likert scale with participants having the ability to select *strongly agree (SA)*, *agree (A)*, *neither agree nor disagree (N)*, *disagree (D)*, or *strongly disagree (SD)* as a response to each statement. Select items on the instrument are reverse scored to minimize response bias. The instrument provides scores for each individual dimension which may be analyzed separately or combined for an overall composite score (Miller et al., 2002).

Table 1

MWEP Dimensions and Definitions

Dimension	Definition
Centrality of Work	Belief in work for work's sake and the importance of work
Self-Reliance	Striving for independence in one's daily work
Hard-Work	Belief in the virtues of hard work
Leisure	Proleisure attitudes and beliefs in the importance of non-work activities
Morality/Ethics	Believing in a just and moral existence
Delay of Gratification	Oriented toward the future; the postponement of rewards
Wasted Time	Attitudes and beliefs reflecting active and productive use of time

Productivity Data

The service technician productivity data used for this study was calculated by the participating dealerships asset manager and included the 12-months of 2020. Individual technician's productivity percentages were present on the instrument and were calculated by

dividing each service technician's actual hours billed for the year 2020 by their hours paid that were available for billing during that time. Hours paid to technicians for training, vacations, holiday's, and other excused unbillable time were not considered hours available to bill and were not used to calculate productivity. Paid sick time however was not considered excused unbillable time and was used to calculate their productivity percentage for 2020.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study took place between January 19th and February 23rd, 2021. Data was collected from each of the 16 agriculture equipment dealership locations individually. The researcher made an appointment with the service manager of each location to ensure disruption to the dealerships daily operations was kept to a minimum. Meetings were scheduled during normal business hours with participants remaining on the clock for the duration of their participation in the study. Meetings were scheduled for times when each service manager and most technicians were expected to be present. Individuals not present for any reason at the time of the meeting did not have the opportunity to participate in the study due to not being available to complete the required instruments.

The researcher traveled to each location and assembled study participants in an adequately sized area as to maintain social distancing. The researcher verbally explained the purpose of the study, thoughts behind the research, and that participation was strictly voluntary. Individuals agreeing to participate were provided, and asked to read and sign, the Murray State University Institutional Review Board approved informed consent document. Following signing the informed consent document, study participants in both the service manager and service technician groups completed a document requesting demographic data and commenced to complete their groups required questionnaire.

Participants in the service manager group were provided a document requesting their age, gender, race, and time holding current position, which was attached to a "pen and paper" version of the MLQ(5x-Short). Participants in the service technician group were provided a document requesting their name, age, gender, race, and time holding current position, which was attached to a "pen and paper" version of the MWEP. When providing study participants with the data collection documents the researcher verbally informed them to answer all questions to the best of their ability and to place completed documents in a specified location. The researcher also reiterated to participants that participation was voluntary, and they could cease their involvement at any time by simply discarding their documents and leaving the area.

The researcher left the area where participants were assembled following verbal explanation of the study and participant instructions. When all participants had finished answering the questionnaires, the researcher retrieved the completed documents and placed them in a sealed envelope. The envelope was marked with the dealership location and placed in a locked filing cabinet until data collection had been completed at all 16 locations.

Data Analysis

Instrument Scoring

Data from each dealership location was assessed individually to ensure co-mingling did not occur. The MLQ(5x-Short) from each location were immediately assigned an identifier. The completed MWEP instruments were paired with the individual technicians corresponding productivity percentage obtained from the productivity instrument. Once pairing was completed, an identifier was assigned to each MWEP that allowed the researcher to associate it with the corresponding service manager's MLQ(5x-Short). Following the assignment of identifiers,

names and other identifying information were no longer used as a means of differentiating between documents.

A scoring sheet was created in Microsoft Excel to analyze each of the completed MLQ(5x-Short)'s included in the study. Categories for the nine dimensions and three leadership outcomes were created, with the associated questions grouped below each dimension. The instruments were scored individually with numerical responses to each question being transferred to the scoring sheet. Any question left blank was discarded per the scoring instructions obtained from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual. Once all responses were transferred, a score for that dimension was obtained by calculating the average of the respective responses.

The 67 MWEP documents included in the study were scored by entering each service technicians 65 individual question responses into Microsoft Access. A table was configured in Microsoft Access to allow for productivity comparison and grouping of service technicians by the corresponding service manager's MLQ(5x-Short). The scoring instructions of the MWEP were then followed to obtain a composite work ethic score for each study participant.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from study participants during the data collection period provided the complete data set needed for statistical analysis. IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data and evaluate if there were statistically significant differences between the analyzed groups and variables. Six independent sample *t* tests were used to analyze the data for research questions one and two, while a Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between employee work ethic and workplace productivity for research question three.

The *t* test compares two means to ascertain which is significantly higher. The test can be utilized to compare means from two paired samples, a sample and a population, or as in the case of this study two independent groups (Ravid, 2015). The independent-samples *t* test is suitable for statistical analysis when the means of two independent groups are being compared on a continuous dependent variable (Yockey, 2018). The independent sample *t* test analysis yields a *t* value indicating whether differences between two groups are the result of statistical probability or random occurrence (Kim, 2015).

The independent sample *t* test requires an independent variable consisting of two independent groups and one continuous dependent variable of interest (Yockey, 2018). The two independent variable groups needed to utilize the *t* test for research questions one and two were created by using the MLQ(5x-Short) data and classifying service managers as either "high" or "low" for each leadership style. The "high" or "low" classification for each leadership style was based on where each service manger's nine leadership dimension scores fell in relation to scores of the normed population which were provided in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual.

The normed population percentiles for the nine leadership dimension scores were pulled from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual for each of the service managers MLQ(5x-Short). These percentiles indicated where in relation to the normed population the respondent scores fell for each of the nine leadership dimensions. The percentiles of the dimensions associated with each leadership style were averaged, resulting in each service manager having one percentage score for each of the three leadership styles. Service managers with averages falling at or below the 50th percentile for a given leadership style were classified as "low", with all others being classified as "high" for the given style.

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leaders to establish the two independent groups of the independent variable, three independent sample *t* tests were ran to analyze research question one. The two independent variable groups utilized for the first test were "low" and "high" transformational, for the second test were "low" and "high" transactional, and for the third test were "low" and "high" laissez-faire. The continuous dependent variable of interest for all three *t* tests was the productivity scores of each service manager's subordinate service technicians. The *t* tests evaluated differences in service technician productivity between "low" and "high" transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership groups.

The analyzation of research question two also utilized the classifications of "low" and "high" transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leaders to establish the two independent groups of the independent variable, leadership style. Three independent-samples *t* tests were ran, with the two dependent variable groups for the first being "low" and "high" transformational, for the second being "low" and "high" transactional, and for the third test being "low" and "high" laissez-faire. The composite MWEP scores of each service manager's subordinate service technicians served as the continuous dependent variable of interest for all three of the *t* tests used to analyze research question two. The independent sample *t* tests evaluated differences in service technician work ethic between "low" and "high" transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership groups.

Research question three investigated the relationship between the work ethic and workplace productivity of service technicians. The work ethic and workplace productivity scores utilized to investigate research question three were both measured on an interval scale and correlated to have a linear relationship. This allowed the data to meet the requirements of the

Person *r* correlation coefficient which was used to measure the degree of linear relationship between the two variables.

Correlation investigates the relationship or association between two or more variables and can be used for prediction when statistical tests of regression are utilized. Correlation simply investigates the association between two variables and does not imply causality as there is often a third variable that lends both variables to correlate. Correlation requires variables to be numerical, and related or paired. A correlation coefficient allows a relationship to be quantified and tells whether variables have a positive or negative correlation, and if the correlation is low, moderate, or high. (Ravid, 2015).

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

This study investigated the impact of leadership style on, and the relationship between, employee work ethic and workplace productivity. The design of the study was implemented to assess factors viewed as influential to employee productivity in agriculture equipment dealerships. This chapter presents a breakdown of the data along with the results of the study.

Data

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Study participants in the service manager group completed the 45-item leader form of the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) (5x-Short). This version of the MLQ(5x-Short) allowed leaders to rate their behavior, with results determining their reliance on measures associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. The MLQ(5x-Short) assesses individuals in each of the nine leadership dimensions with five being associated with transformational, three with transactional, and one with laissez-faire.

Responses to the 45 items of the MLQ(5x-Short) were recorded individually, with answers to items ranking respondents in each of the nine leadership dimensions being grouped and averaged. These means served as the respondents scores for the nine leadership dimensions identified by the MLQ(5x-Short) which were compared to normed population score data provided by Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual. This comparison provided a percentile for each leader in each of the nine leadership dimensions in relation to the normed population. The percentiles of the dimensions used to assess each leadership style were averaged to determine if the respondent ranked "low" or "high" in transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership.

Transformational Leadership. Five of the nine leadership dimensions assessed by the MLQ(5x-Short) were associated with transformational leadership. These dimensions include idealized influence attributes, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Four questions on the MLQ(5x-Short) were allocated to assessing each of the five dimensions associated with transformational leadership. The average of the four responses for each dimension was calculated resulting in one overall score for that dimension. The respondents overall score for each of the five dimensions was then compared to the normed population scores to obtain a normed percentile for each.

*Idealized Influence Attributes***.** Idealized influence attributes are associated with a leader's ability to instill pride in their followers (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 10, 18, 21, and 25 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute, with the "low" and "high" transformational leaders' idealized influence attribute percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Idealized Influence Attribute Percentiles

											M	*SD*
Low Transformational Leaders	60	40	20	40	10	20	40	60	40	40	37	16.36
High Transformational Leaders	60	20	90	40	70	10					48	30.61

Idealized Influence Behaviors. Idealized influence behaviors are associated with the actions of a leader that emphasize the importance of a strong sense of purpose and provide followers a collective sense of mission (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 6, 14, 23, and 34 of the

MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and "high" transformational leaders'

idealized influence behavior percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

Idealized Influence Behavior Percentiles

											M	*SD*
Low Transformational Leaders	50	20	30	20	5	80	30	30	30	20	31.5	20.56
High Transformational Leaders	80	90	30	70	90	50					68.3	24.01

Inspirational Motivation. Inspirational motivation allows leaders to provide meaning to

work and motivate those around them. Enthusiasm and optimism are components of inspirational

motivation which aids a leader in portraying a positive and compelling vision for the future

(Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 9, 13, 26, and 36 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this

attribute with the "low" and "high" transformational leaders' inspirational motivation percentiles

and their means being depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

Inspirational Motivation Percentiles

											M	*SD*
Low Transformational Leaders	60	30	30	30	5	30	50	60	80	50	42.5	21.51
High Transformational Leaders	80	95	90	50	60	50					70.8	20.10

Intellectual Stimulation. Intellectual stimulation is associated with a leader's ability to innovate and develop new ideas and creative solutions by soliciting input from followers. Intellectual stimulation is the dimension of transformational leadership that enables leaders to include followers and address problems and issues through creativity and inclusion of varying perspectives (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 2, 8, 30, and 32 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and "high" transformational leaders' intellectual stimulation percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 5.

Table 5

Intellectual Stimulation Percentiles

											M	*SD*
Low Transformational Leaders	60	20	80	30	80	95	60	20	40	40	52.5	26.59
High Transformational Leaders	95	95	80	80	70	80					83.3	9.83

Individual Consideration. Individual consideration is associated with a leader's ability to individually promote their followers. Individual needs, desires, and differences are recognized under this dimension of transformational leadership with leaders treating followers as people rather than members of a collective group (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 15, 19, 29, and 31 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and "high" transformational leaders' individual consideration percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 6.

Table 6

Individual Consideration Percentiles

											M	*SD*
Low Transformational Leaders	20	5	80	20	5	20	40	60	5	20	27.5	25.19
High Transformational Leaders	90	95	40	70	60	90					74.2	21.55

Transactional Leadership. Three of the nine leadership dimensions assessed by the MLQ(5x-Short) were associated with transactional leadership. These dimensions include contingent reward, management by exception active, and management by exception passive. Four questions on the MLQ(5x-Short) are allocated to assessing each of the three dimensions associated with transactional leadership. The average of the four responses for each dimension was calculated resulting in one overall score for that dimension. The respondents overall score for each of the three dimensions was then compared to the normed population scores to obtain a normed percentile for each.

Contingent Reward. Contingent reward allows for the clarification of goals and provides acknowledgment for goal obtainment which helps maintain desired performance on both the individual and group level (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Contingent reward is an exchange process where follower output is rewarded with specified payoffs (Northouse, 2010). Questions 1, 11, 16, and 35 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and "high" transactional leaders' contingent reward percentiles and their means being depicted in Tables 7.

Table 7

Contingent Reward Percentiles

												M	*SD*
Low Transactional Leaders	20	50	80	50								50	24.5
High Transactional Leaders	30	70	5	50	80	30	70	80	70	70	95	62.1	27.8

Management by Exception Active. Management by exception active is leadership that involves closely monitoring follower performance and taking prompt corrective action when needed. Under this dimension, standards are stated, and punishment is incurred when the conditions are not met (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 4, 22, 24, and 27 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and "high" transactional leaders' management by exception active percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 8.

Table 8

Management by Exception Active Percentiles

												M	*SD*
Low Transactional Leaders	95	30	30	80								58.8	33.76
High Transactional Leaders	85	90	60	60	90	60	70	85	80	95	95	95	80.4	14.22

Management by Exception Passive. Management by exception passive is a reactive form of leadership with often no action being taken until a problem has arose (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 3, 12, 17, and 20 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measured this attribute with the "low" and

"high" transactional leaders' management by exception passive percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 9.

Table 9

Management by Exception Passive Percentiles

													M	*SD*
Low Transactional Leaders	10	50	10	15									21.3	19.31
High Transactional Leaders	85	90	95	60	30	95	85	30	80	50	30	25	62.9	24.48

Laissez-Faire Leadership. The remaining dimension assessed by the MLQ(5x-Short) is associated with laissez-faire leadership. The dimension is non-leadership and represents the absence of leadership (Northouse, 2010). Unlike transformational and transactional leadership, laissez-faire does not have multiple dimensions associated with it. Four questions on the MLQ(5x-Short) are allocated to assessing non-leadership, with their average serving as the respondents score for the dimension. The respondent's non-leadership dimension score was compared to the normed population scores to obtain a normed percentile.

    Non-leadership. Non- leadership involves leaders avoiding leadership, being absent when needed, and delaying responses to urgent questions and decisions (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions 5, 8, 27, and 33 of the MLQ(5x-Short) measure non-leadership with the "low" and "high" laissez-faire leaders' non-leadership percentiles and their means being depicted in Table 10.

Table 10

Non-leadership Percentiles

										M	*SD*
Low Laissez-faire Leaders	10	30	30	10	50	50	40	10	10	26.7	17.32
High Laissez-faire Leaders	70	80	95	90	95	95	70			33.3	21.21

Multi-dimensional Work Ethic Profile

The *Multi-dimensional Work Ethic Profile* (MWEP) is a multidimensional inventory that assesses seven distinct dimensions of work ethic (Woehr et al., 2007). The individuals that comprised the service technician group each completed the 65-item instrument which was scored to obtain a composite MWEP score for each study participant. The MWEP scores ranged from 232 to 331 with a mean score of 276. The median MWEP score was 273, with the mode scores of 250 and 254 each occurring four times.

Productivity

The productivity data used for the study was obtained directly from the asset manager of the study participants' employer. The productivity ratings for each technician were calculated by dividing their billed hours by their hours paid that were available for billing. Individuals comprising the service technician group study sample had productivity scores ranging from 50 to 102, with a median score of 90. The mean productivity score was 85.34 with the mode being 97 and occurring eight times.

Analysis

Addressing research question one and two required the study participants of the service manager group to be categorized as either "high" or "low" transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leaders. The "high" or "low" classification for each leadership style was based on where each service manger's nine leadership dimension scores fell in relation to the scores of the normed population provided in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual. Each service manager's nine leadership dimension scores were compared to those of the normed population which allowed a percentage to be obtained that showed where in relation to the normed population each respondents' scores ranked. The percentiles of the dimensions associated with each individual leadership style were averaged, resulting in each service manager having one percentage score for each of the three leadership styles. Service managers with averages falling at or below the 50$^{\text{th}}$ percentile for a given leadership style were classified as "low", with all others being classified as "high" for the given style.

The data gathered during the study was analyzed using SPSS software. The results of the analysis were used to determine if the null hypotheses of each research question were accepted or rejected. The data analysis conducted to address the research questions presented in the study is depicted below.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the workplace productivity of employees?

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" transformational leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample *t* test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H₀. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

The results of the independent-samples *t* test yielded no significance. The service technician workplace productivity levels of "low" transformational leaders (*M*= 84.8, *SD*=13.5) were not significantly different than those of "high" transformational leaders (*M*= 86.5, *SD*= 13.1), $t(65)=0.469$, $p > .05$, *d*= 0.124, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" transactional leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample *t* test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H₁. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

The results of the independent-samples *t* test yielded no significance. The service technician workplace productivity levels of "low" transactional leaders (*M*= 86.7, *SD*=12.8) were not significantly different than those of "high" transactional leaders (*M*= 84.7, *SD*= 13.6), $t(65)= -0.593$, $p > .05$, *d*= -0.15, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" laissez-faire leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample *t* test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H$_2$. There will be no significant difference between workplace productivity levels of employees whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile. The results of the independent-samples *t* test yielded no significance. The service technician workplace productivity levels of "low" laissez-faire leaders (*M*= 85.1, *SD*=13.8) were not significantly different than those of "high" laissez-faire leaders (*M*= 85.6, *SD*= 12.7), *t*(65)= 0.155, *p* > .05, *d*=0.384, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

The results of the three independent-samples *t* tests conducted to analyze the data to address research question one is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Results of Leadership Style Analysis Examining Employee Workplace Productivity

Leadership Style	Low			High			*t*(65)	*p*	95% CI of Mean Difference
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*			
Transformational	46	84.8	13.5	21	86.5	13.1	0.47	.84	[-5.38, 8.68]
Transactional	22	86.7	12.8	45	84.7	13.6	0.593	.18	[-9.0, 4.79]
Laissez-faire	39	85.1	13.8	28	85.6	12.7	0.155	.90	[-6.11, 7.06]

Research Question 2. Does leadership style according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have significant influence on the work ethic of employees as measured by the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP)?

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" transformational leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample t test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H3. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transformational leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

The results of the independent-samples t test yielded no significance. The service technician work ethic scores of "low" transformational leaders ($M= 279$, $SD=20.7$) were not significantly different than those of "high" transformational leaders ($M= 270.8$, $SD= 25$), $t(65)= -1.41$, $p > .05$, $d= -0.371$, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" transactional leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample t test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H4. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's transactional leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

The results of the independent-samples t test yielded no significance. The service technician work ethic scores of "low" transactional leaders ($M= 273.5$, $SD=19.5$) were not significantly different than those of "high" transactional leaders ($M= 277.8$, $SD= 23.6$), $t(65)= 0.751$, $p > .05$, $d= 0.195$, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Utilizing the classifications of "low" and "high" laissez-faire leaders to establish two independent groups of the independent variable, an independent-sample t test was ran to test the following hypothesis:

H5. There will be no significant difference between work ethic scores of employees whose manager's laissez-faire leadership dimension scores, when compared to normed population percentiles and averaged, were less than or equal to the 50th percentile compared to managers who scored greater than the 50th percentile.

The results of the independent-samples t test yielded no significance. The service technician work ethic scores of "low" laissez-faire leaders ($M= 275.6$, $SD=22.5$) were not significantly different than those of "high" laissez-faire leaders ($M= 277.5$, $SD= 22.31$), $t(65)= 0.33$, $p > .05$, $d= 0.082$, and the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

The results of the three independent-samples t tests conducted to analyze data to address research question two is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Results of Leadership Style Analysis Examining Employee Work Ethic

Leadership Style	Low			High			$t(65)$	p	95% CI of Mean Difference
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Transformational	46	279	20.7	21	270.8	25	-1.41	.47	[-19.82, 3.43]
Transactional	22	273.5	19.5	45	277.8	23.6	0.751	.58	[-7.24, 15.98]
Laissez-faire	39	275.6	22.5	28	277.5	22.3	0.33	.55	[-9.24, 12.94]

Research Question 3. Does a relationship exist between employee work ethic, as measured by the MWEP, and workplace productivity level?

Research question three required the use of a Pearson r correlation. The composite work ethic scores of service technicians were correlated against their workplace productivity scores to test the following hypothesis:

H6. There will be no significant difference between the work ethic of employees and their workplace productivity level.

The results of the Pearson r correlation yielded no significance between the work ethic of employees and their workplace productivity level, $r(65) = 0.04$, $p > .05$. The study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussion

Members of the business community express a growing concern about the evolution of the work force as they recognize employees today have a different commitment to the value and importance of work than their predecessors. These beliefs concerning work influence a person's work ethic which has been shown to affect workplace behavior (Miller et al., 2002). A person's work ethic, although primarily established during early family and school education, has shown to be influenced by organizational culture and leadership. Leaderships influence on work ethic is of great interest as organizations work to improve employee workplace productivity (Chașovschi, 2016).

Leadership has shown to influence individual and group behaviors and substantially impact the performance of employees inside organizations. Leadership style is often studied in the field of management due to its role in influencing employee productivity with many theories having evolved that assert the importance of leadership in employee management (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Understanding the role of leadership on employee performance is crucial, as leadership is regarded by some researchers as one of the primary driving forces behind an organization's success (Jing & Avery, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to establish if the leadership style of managers influenced the work ethic and workplace productivity of employees. The study also sought to determine if a relationship existed between employee work ethic and workplace productivity. Study participants were employees of a multi-location agriculture equipment dealership, with the leadership style of service managers being equated against the work ethic and workplace productivity of their direct reports, service technicians. Service technician work ethic and

workplace productivity were also compared to determine if there was a relationship between them.

Summary of Findings

Research Question One

Research question one guided the study concerning the influence of leadership style, as measured by the *Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) (5x-Short), on employee workplace productivity. Using employee productivity data obtained directly from the employer, three null hypotheses were formulated to address the leadership styles measured by the MLQ(5x-Short). The null hypotheses addressed the impact of transformational leadership (H_0), transactional leadership (H_1), and laissez-faire leadership (H_2) on employee workplace productivity.

Independent-sample *t* tests were performed for each of the hypotheses. The three *t* tests were ran to determine if there were significant differences in employee workplace productivity between "low" and "high" transformational, "low" and "high" transactional, and "low" and "high" laissez-fair leaders. Analysis of the three *t* test results revealed no significance, and the study failed to reject the null hypotheses H_0, H_1, and H_2.

Research Question Two

Research question two guided the study concerning the influence of leadership style, as measured by the (MLQ) (5x-Short), on employee work ethic as measured by the *Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile* (MWEP). Using service technician MWEP scores, three null hypotheses were formulated to address the leadership styles measured by the MLQ(5x-Short). The null hypotheses addressed the impact of transformational leadership (H_3), transactional leadership (H_4), and laissez-faire leadership (H_5) on employee work ethic.

Independent-sample *t* tests were performed for each of the hypotheses. Three *t* tests were ran to determine if there were significant differences in employee work ethic between "low" and "high" transformational, "low" and "high" transactional, and "low" and "high" laissez-fair leaders. Analysis of the three *t* test results revealed no significance, and the study failed to reject the null hypotheses H_3, H_4, and H_5.

Research Question Three

Research question three posed whether a relationship existed between employee work ethic and employee workplace productivity. Using service technician MWEP scores and individual workplace productivity data, null hypothesis H_6 was formulated to address the relationship between the two factors. A Pearson *r* correlation was ran to analyze the data. There was not a statistically significant relationship found between work ethic and workplace productivity, and the study failed to reject null hypothesis H_6.

Interpretations

The facilitating role leadership plays in promoting work ethic and workplace productivity in employees has been one of great interest over the past few decades. Literature resulting from past research acknowledges the importance and value of leadership and recognizes it as a critical link between employee performance and organizational success (Jing & Avery, 2008). Leaders have the power to create a framework that supports desired behaviors and attitudes through practice and the leader-follower relationship (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). Although the results of the study did not find leadership to have a statistically significant impact on employee work ethic or workplace productivity, the proven and profound influence leadership has on employees cannot be underestimated.

The study analyzed the influence of leadership style on employee work ethic and workplace productivity by utilizing the MLQ(5x-Short) to discern service managers reliance on behaviors associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. No leader relies only on behaviors associated with one leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2004), and circumstances and situations have shown to influence a leader's behavior (Northouse, 2010). This theory concerning leadership causes the lines between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, as determined by the leader form of the MLQ(5x-Short), to blur due to the impact of external forces and the environment being recognized. Restructuring how leadership was analyzed may have led to service managers being categorized differently and yielded statistically significant findings when looking at leaderships influence on employee work ethic and workplace productivity. Investigating the leadership style of upper management and taking into account its influence on employee work ethic and workplace productivity may also have yielded alternate findings.

Although literature indicates the importance of leadership style and its effect on organizational success, it also recognizes that multiple factors impact the performance of individuals inside an organization (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Isolating such variables is difficult, and although leadership style is influential, it may not have been the dominate independent factor influencing employee work ethic and workplace productivity resulting in non-statistically significant study results. Organizational culture has also been shown to influence organizational outcomes, with toxic workplace environments leading to decreased workplace productivity and diminished organizational success (Anjum et al., 2018). While leadership style influences workplace culture, equating the culture and climate of the individual dealership locations against

its employees' work ethic and workplace productivity may have yielded statistically significant results.

Measuring performance outcomes within an organization is difficult (Jing & Avery, 2008). The workplace productivity data used during the study, although meticulously calculated, did not consider influencing circumstances such as sickness, technician skill level, or job assignment. Restructuring the study and utilizing the service departments overall productivity rating to determine the influence of the service manager's leadership style would have reduced variability experienced with individual service technician workplace productivity data and possibly yielded statistically significant findings.

Although the results of the study indicated a non-statistically significant relationship between work ethic and workplace productivity, review of the literature reveals a strong association between the two factors. Work ethic has been shown to influence workplace behavior with a favorable work ethic leading to increased productivity (Velasco & Chavez, 2018). The work ethic scores of service technicians were obtained by using the MWEP with individual service technician workplace productivity data being obtained directly from the employer. The utilization of an alternative work ethic instrument to obtain work ethic scores for service technicians could have yielded study results that coincide with the literature. Using an alternative performance measure in place of employee workplace productivity could have also influenced study results.

Discussion

The results of the study indicated the leadership style of service managers did not have a statistically significant impact on service technician work ethic or workplace productivity. Although the results do not coincide with the literature on the influence of leadership style, they

do concur with the multifaceted nature and volatility of leadership. Leadership is not a science but an art, and according to Northouse (2010), has a situational component with outcomes being influenced by the leader, the follower, their interactions, their relationship, and many other factors dictated by the work environment.

The data suggests that factors other than the leadership style of service managers had a predominate influence on service technician workplace productivity. With no significance being found, it is likely other influences overshadowed the impact of the leadership style of service managers. Past research into workplace experiences, processes, and environments that influence organizational outcomes has shed light on their mediating role between organizational climates and employee behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). Considering the influence of work environment on employee and organizational productivity that studies such as Anjum et al. (2018) have found, it would have been applicable to assess the leadership style of each store manager along with that of the service manager. The store manager has as a substantial impact on the culture and climate of each location which could easily domineer the influence of the leadership style of the service manager.

Past research indicates the leadership style implemented by a leader influences employees' attitudes towards and engagement at work (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). Although the results of the study failed to find a statistically significant relationship between leadership style and employee work ethic, or work ethic and workplace productivity, the data did reveal relatively high work ethic scores. The mean *Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile* (MWEP) score for the service technician group was 276.6 which was 18 points higher than the mean score obtained in the Woehr et al. (2007) study which examined work ethic across cultures. The Woehr

et al. study utilized the MWEP to assess work ethic across the diverse cultures of Korea, Mexico, and the United States, providing MWEP scores from varied populations.

The higher MWEP scores of the service technician study group lead to reduced variation between individual results, with scores ranging from 232 to 331. This contributed to the study's lack of statistically significant findings when analyzing the impact of leadership style on work ethic as the differences between individuals were minimized, thereby reducing the differences associated with the leadership style of service managers. Although the cause of the higher MWEP scores has not been researched, it is plausible it is a result of the study being conducted in an isolated setting with individuals from a similar geographical area, background, and industry.

The reduced spread of MWEP scores also contributed to the study's lack of statistically significant findings when analyzing the relationship between work ethic and workplace productivity. With the scores only varying by 99 points, the influence of work ethic on workplace productivity was minimized as the spread of the MWEP scores was reduced. There is substantial literature indicating work ethic impacts employee output, and the circumstances contributing to the study results should be considered.

A leader's reliance on behaviors associated with varying leadership styles could be seen in the study data. When classified as "high" or "low" in the three leadership styles of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, multiple service managers scored "high" in the same styles. Five of the six service managers who scored "high" transformational also scored "high" transactional, while eight of the nine scoring "high" laissez-faire also scored "high" transactional. This data agrees with the literature reintegrating the fact that leaders do not only

implement one leadership style, but instead overtime as situations change utilize behaviors associated with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership.

Practical Significance

When investigating avenues to increase the profitability of a service department, service technician workplace productivity is always center focus with the leadership of the service manager often being viewed as a primary vector for improvement. However, the overall results of the study indicate differently and show that service managers may not be as influential as originally believed. The study results suggest the leadership style of service managers may not have an overarching impact, and that a service technician's work ethic and achievement of a high level of workplace productivity may perhaps be impacted by other factors.

Although the results of the study yielded no significant findings concerning the influence of leadership style on, or relationship between, employee work ethic and workplace productivity significant knowledge can still be obtained from the results and analyzation of the literature. The knowledge gained emphasizes that service technician's achievement of a high level of workplace productivity is not strongly influenced by the leadership style of the service manager, with other factors most likely having a more significant impact. This information allows service managers to concentrate on aspects of their position that have a greater impact on the profitability of the department instead of on ones that offer nominal returns. Service managers can devote their time to scheduling, job preparation, marketing, resource procurement, and customer relations which will support service technician efficiency and workplace productivity and in turn positively impact the department.

Understanding the limitations of the leadership style of service managers on service technician workplace productivity allows company managers to better select employees for the

position. Emphasis on leadership style can be minimized, as it is now understood that other characteristics will most likely have a greater influence on department profitability. Although there is no all-inclusive list of specific skills and qualities of a successful service manager, heightened importance can be placed on qualities associated with department management instead of employee leadership. Individuals who possess good communication and interpersonal skills, excel at time and project management, and recognize, understand, and implement good business practices will be sought to fill future available service manager positions as the results of the study showed the leadership style of service managers having minimal impact on service technician workplace productivity.

The literature indicates that an individual's beliefs and values associated with work influence one's work behavior (Woehr et al., 2007). Although the results of the study do not indicate a statistically significant relationship between the work ethic and workplace productivity of service technicians, a strong work ethic has been associated with positive outcomes in the workplace and its importance should not be overlooked. According to Chașovschi (2016), a person's work ethic sums up a conglomeration of values associated with their character that translates to specific behaviors that are beneficial to them as an employee and the organization.

Understanding a service technician's work ethic is not directly linked to their workplace productivity allows managers to search for other factors that influence productivity in the workplace. If a person's internalized values, characteristics, and attitude toward work is not the predominate determining factor of workplace productivity, then external influences must be examined. Identifying the impact of external factors such as work environment/culture, resource availability, training, and experience can help determine where consideration should be given, and change implemented, to yield the greatest improvement. Unlike internal characteristics,

values, and morals individuals possesses that affect workplace performance, external factors can be changed to achieve desired outcomes thereby emphasizing the importance of determining their impact.

P-20 Implications

The basic values associated with work ethic are shown to be learned early in life. These values are interiorized during early family and school education and evolve into beliefs and intrinsic assumptions as one ages (Chașovschi, 2016). The work ethic that was once a prominent social philosophy in America has lost its place at the expense of individuals, organizations, and society. A belief in work and recognizing the dignity of labor contributes to job satisfaction, a better quality of life and the material well-being of society (Cherrington, 1980). Individuals who possess a positive work ethic are valued by employers (Petty & Hill, 2005), and installing a positive attitude toward work should be a focus of today's educational system.

A primary component of P-20 education is workforce and career readiness. Work ethic lies at the core of success in the workplace and promotes employee and organizational productivity. This study focused on factors influencing employee work ethic and workplace productivity as the literature reiterates multiple times the important role each play in organizational and individual success. By promoting the value in, and attributing to the development of, a positive work ethic the educational system can aid in cultivating strong work values in the up-and-coming workforce and help students understand the positive impact a good work ethic can have on their educational and work careers.

Limitations

The study was limited by the use of convenience sampling. Study participants were selected due to their availability, and the researcher's access to individual workplace productivity

data. The utilization of this non-probability sampling method did not allow for random selection which reduced the generalizability of study results.

Restricting the study to service department employees of one agriculture equipment dealership led to further study limitations. This constraint greatly reduced the scope of the study as participants were all employed in the same industry, lived in a specific geographical area, and operated under the same corporate management structure. This constraint also led to relatively small sample sizes.

The service technician workplace productivity data obtained directly from the employer was also a limiting factor in the study. Service technician workplace productivity was calculated by dividing each individuals' billed hours by their hours available to bill. Although this performance measure reduced personal biases, the workplace productivity data used for the study did not take into account technician skill level, variables associated with job assignment, or other factors influencing a service technician's billed hours which affected their individual workplace productivity scores.

The MLQ(5x-Short) used to determine the leadership style of service managers was also a limiting factor in the study. The instrument, although well validated, does have limitations (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008). The leader form of the MLQ(5x-Short) was the sole method used to determine leadership style, with service managers scoring their own leadership behaviors. It is possible the ratings service managers applied to their own leadership behaviors were not indicative of their true leadership style. Human nature lends individuals to think positive concerning one's own behaviors, and ratings obtained from their employees may have provided better insight into the true leadership style utilized by the service managers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the study revealed no statistically significant findings, understanding how leadership impacts work ethic and employee productivity in the workplace can help improve organizational performance (Jing & Avery, 2008), especially in high demand industries such as agriculture. The study evaluated the influence of service management's leadership style on employee workplace productivity and work ethic but neglected to assess the potential impact of leadership style of higher management or its influence on other dealership department employees. Additional research with an expanded range of management and employees being evaluated would provide further information concerning the impact of store managers leadership style in agriculture equipment dealerships.

Leadership is multifaceted with its foundations residing on relationships between leaders and followers (Zareen et al., 2014). The nature of a relationship between a leader and follower has shown to influence productivity and performance (Ghazzawi et al., 2017), but this dimension of leadership is often not captured or evaluated by standardized questionaries. A qualitative study evaluating employees' perspectives and opinions of direct managements leadership styles and methods would provide insight into how such dimensions influence workplace productivity and employee work ethic. A qualitative study would assess how interpersonal aspects of the leader follower relationship impact the situational component of leadership.

Interest in how to utilize leadership paradigms to improve organizational performance has been on the rise over recent decades. Previous research has revealed intangibles such as leadership style, culture, and motivation as positive assets, and instrumental to an organization's ability to combine people and processes to maximize performance (Jing & Avery, 2008). A study evaluating the impact of leadership style on workplace culture and climates could be conducted

to evaluate its influence on employee morale, satisfaction, and retention which according to Zareen et al. (2014), has shown to influence customer satisfaction and overall organizational success.

Investigation into the association between leadership style and behavior could also add to the literature concerning the impact of leadership on organizational success. Previous studies have revealed a relationship exists between leadership style and behavior, but none have explained the nature of the relationship and therefore neglected how and why leadership influences performance (Jing & Avery, 2008). Understanding the how and why behind leadership's influence can aid in contextualizing its effects on followers (Zareen et al., 2014).

Conclusion

This study provides insight into the impact of leadership style on, and the relationship between, employee work ethic and workplace productivity. Although the results of the study did not yield statistically significant results, the importance of leadership and work ethic on workplace productivity in an agriculture equipment dealership were analyzed extensively. The study results emphasize how a leader, no matter their style and effectiveness, cannot completely control an employee's work ethic or output in the workplace. The study highlights multiple organizational and job-related factors that influence employees in the workplace with continued research into such being warranted. Contributions from additional research would be valuable to managers and leaders across all industries as they work to navigate the human dimension of business that is vital to organizational success.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

Study Title: Work Ethic and Productivity: The Mediating Role of Leadership
Investigator: Everly Tapp
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Randal Wilson; Educational Studies, Leadership, and Counseling
    Contact information: (270) 809- 3168 or rwilson6@murraystate.edu

You are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted through Murray State University. The following information is being provided to assist you with making an informed decision on whether you would like to participate.

The purpose of this study is to identify relationships between leadership behaviors of managers and the work ethic and productivity of their direct reports as well as the connection between work ethic and productivity in the workplace. Participating in the study will simply require you to provide brief demographic data and complete a "pen and paper" survey that will take approximately 15 minutes.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. You are free to withdraw/stop at any time and may do so by simply leaving the area where the study is being conducted.

Only the researcher will know your responses to the survey questions. Your answers will not be shared individually with anyone, although they may be combined with the data/answers of others and used collectively for presentations or publications in scholarly journals. All data will be stored in a locked safe or on a password protected computer.

The researcher and all participants will be required to wear a mask during the study and maintain the CDC social distancing guidelines of at least 6'. Hand sanitizer and masks will be provided to study participants by the researcher. The researcher and participants presenting potential symptoms of COVID-19 will NOT be allowed to participate in the study.

_____   _____

Participants Signature   Date

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the MSU IRB Coordinator at (270) 809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.

Appendix B

IRB Approval Letter

MURRAY STATE
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

328 Wells Hall
Murray, KY 42071-3318
270-809-2916 • msu.irb@murraystate.edu

TO: Randal Wilson, English and Philosophy

FROM: Jonathan Baskin, IRB Coordinator

DATE: 1/11/2021

RE: Human Subjects Protocol I.D. – IRB # 21-085

The IRB has completed its review of your student's Level 1 protocol entitled *Work Ethic & Productivity: The Mediating Role of Leadership*. After review and consideration, the IRB has determined that the research, as described in the protocol form, will be conducted in compliance with Murray State University guidelines for the protection of human participants.

The forms and materials that have been approved for use in this research study are attached to the email containing this letter. These are the forms and materials that must be presented to the subjects. Use of any process or forms other than those approved by the IRB will be considered misconduct in research as stated in the MSU IRB Procedures and Guidelines section 20.3.

Your stated data collection period is from 12/5/2020 to 3/1/2021.

If data collection extends beyond this period, please submit an Amendment to an Approved Protocol form detailing the new data collection period and the reason for the change.

This Level 1 approval is valid until 1/10/2022.

If data collection and analysis extends beyond this date, the research project must be reviewed as a continuation project by the IRB prior to the end of the approval period, 1/10/2022. You must reapply for IRB approval by submitting a Project Update and Closure form (available at murraystate.edu/irb). You must allow ample time for IRB processing and decision prior to your expiration date, or your research must stop until such time that IRB approval is received. If the research project is completed by the end of the approval period, then a Project Update and Closure form must be submitted for IRB review so that your protocol may be closed. It is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner.

The protocol is approved. You may begin data collection now.

Opportunity
afforded

murraystate.edu

Equal educational and employment opportunities M/F/D. All employer. Murray State University supports a diverse faculty campus. Please refrain from personal tobacco use.

Appendix C

Sample Questions from MLQ (5x-Short)

MLQ   Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire™
Leader Form (5x-Short)

My Name: _____   Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____   Leader ID #: _____

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. **If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.**

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts 0 1 2 3 4
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate 0 1 2 3 4
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious 0 1 2 3 4

Appendix D

Sample questions from Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP)

Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile

Name: _____   ID#: _____

Instructions: Rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements. Please circle your answers on this sheet and fill in the appropriate circles on the scan form.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is important to stay busy at work and not waste time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If I want to buy something, I always wait until I can afford it.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel content when I have spent the day working.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.	1	2	3	4	5
6. To be truly successful, a person should be self-reliant.	1	2	3	4	5
7. One should always take responsibility for one's actions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would prefer a job that allowed me to have more leisure time.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Time should not be wasted. It should be used efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Even if I were financially able, I would not stop working.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I get more fulfillment from items I had to wait for.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E

MLQ(5x-Short) Permission to Reproduce

mind garden

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below. Sample Items:

As a leader ....
> I talk optimistically about the future.
> I spend time teaching and coaching.
> I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating.....
> Talks optimistically about the future.
> Spends time teaching and coaching.
> Avoids making decisions

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Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Appendix F

Permission to utilize MWEP

David Woehr
to me ▾

Tue, Sep 15, 10:26 AM ☆ ↩

Everly,

   We designed the MWEP to be freely available for research purposes. Thus you have permission to use it for your research. I've attached some files that may be helpful. Good luck with your research.

Dave Woehr

⋯

--

David J. Woehr | Belk Distinguished Professor of Business Administration

Chair, Department of Management

UNC Charlotte | The Belk College of Business

9201 University City Blvd. | Charlotte, NC 28223

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