Samantha and the Horrible, Awful, Very Bad Supervisor:

A Case Study in Leadership Theory

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Samantha and the Horrible, Awful, Very Bad Supervisor

Setting

Leadership PR is a public relations firm in Kansas City that creates public relations campaigns for non-profit organizations wanting to make a difference in the world. The company employs 10 executive teams, which work on two to four public relations campaigns per year. Each team has 10 members, which include a supervisor.

Characters

- Samantha – an eager new employee, ready to work
- Babs – executive team supervisor
- Executive team members – members of Samantha’s team that are supervised by Babs
- Eric Palmer – Babs’ supervisor
- Jim Day – the “brave soul” of the executive team
- Joe – project manager

Case

Samantha just got a new job as an executive team member at Leadership PR, a public relations firm in Kansas City. This job was a salaried position, so employees were not paid overtime. Samantha was a member of a 10-person team, which included a supervisor. The team worked on public relations campaigns for two to four clients per year, depending on the size of the project. Samantha was so excited for her new job that she even purchased a brand new suit! Just within two weeks of her first day, a team member resigned. Samantha didn’t understand why someone would resign from this great job.

For the first two months of her employment, Samantha and the rest of the executive team had been working on a public relations campaign for an anti-smoking advocacy group, and
things had been going very well. The group was showing great progress and the client loved the ideas, but Babs, the team’s supervisor, was taking a lot of the credit for the group.

Babs, was a very autocratic leader. Because of her position, she monitored the team very closely. She monitored them so closely, in fact, that she would make each team member clock-in, even though all employees were on salary. If any of the team members clocked in at any time after 8 am, Babs would lecture the person about being on time; even though Babs would not come to office until around 10 am and not get started on her work until after Noon, she would still enforce this rule for the rest of the team.

Often, Eric Palmer, Bab’s supervisor, would come in the office to check on things. Babs would take all the credit and say, “Look what I have done!” In reality, however, it was the executive team that was doing all of the work.

One day, Samantha was feeling groggy and ill. She wanted to go home and sleep it off; even though Samantha had sick-time/PTO available, Babs refused to let Samantha leave the office. A month after this incident, the team lost two more members. This time, Samantha wasn’t curious as to why; she blamed Babs.

The second public relations campaign of the year, an anti-littering campaign, was not going well. On a day-to-day basis, the group members are not always sure what they are supposed to be doing. At first, Samantha thought this was just because the public relations campaign was new and exciting and everyone was just getting settled down. She thought it would take only a week or two for everyone to settle into their roles and the project would be smooth sailing for the rest of the year. However, despite the campaign checklist of tasks which listed each team members’ assignment, Babs’s expectations were still ambiguous.
It soon became a common occurrence for Samantha to be working on the deadlines according to the checklist, and Babs would come into the office to announce that a new task needed to take priority over the checklist. Samantha and the team would then switch gears to work on the new task for the rest of the day. The following day, Babs would then ask why the tasks from the checklist were not complete yesterday. One brave soul, Jim Day, would step-up and say, “We were under the impression that the new task you assigned was priority.” At that point, it appears Babs had changed her mind, and that the new task was not supposed to be priority. This left the team feeling lost and confused as to what they were supposed to be working on, the expectations of deadlines and tasks, and the flow of their workday.

Babs even began to threaten the team members with not approving vacation time if work was not accomplished by a certain date. To top it all off, Babs would often ask Samantha for "a favor." To appease her supervisor, Samantha would generally agree to the "favor" before she even knew what it was. The most common favor was to get Babs some coffee from the cafe down the street. After getting coffee, though, Babs would generally scold Samantha for taking 15 minutes away from her campaign project. Most of the time, Babs would giggle as Samantha left her office. Samantha was beginning to wonder if she would be able to work for the company much longer. She started to worry about the implications this would have on her performance review and the reputation for the quality of her work since she was constantly forced to switch gears. Overall, she was unsure what her focus should be on.

After three months of hard work, the client for the anti-littering campaign did not like the direction the team was taking, and decided to work with another public relations firm. After hearing the client’s negative reaction to the campaign ideas, Babs called a meeting to blame the team for failing.
Babs scolded the team, “I work hard to make sure everything is in order and everyone takes it for granted. Without me, this organization would be failing. Look at my track record and you will see that I am very successful. The one time I allow the team to take over the campaign, we fail.” As a result, three more team members resigned. While Samantha was disappointed with the failure of the campaign, she could tell that Babs was sincerely upset and saddened by the loss of the client. It appeared Babs felt just as defeated as the rest of the team.

Samantha started to think her disdain and her views of Babs may have been skewed and unwarranted. Samantha regained her focus toward the company and decided to give it her all once again. A third project was to be created for a new client. Because of the importance of the client, a project manager was to be appointed under direct supervision of Babs. Samantha knew this would be her time to shine and the public relations opportunity she had been waiting for. Babs posted the requirements for the position and stated what she was looking for in the new project manager. Samantha felt she had this “locked-up,” for she possessed all of the requirements including a graduate degree, which no one else on the team had. One month after the initial posting Babs held closed-door interviews with all the candidates, including Samantha and the only two men of the executive team.

Full of confidence, Samantha gleefully went into Babs’ office. Samantha was still under the impression she would get the position since the important client was a strong, locally-known woman who ran a multi-million dollar non-profit organization, which provided scholarships to collegiate female athletes. This was a topic Samantha was passionate about.

Babs explained to Samantha that she did not get the job because she believed that men are better prepared for jobs like this. “It’s not just a behind the scenes part, but more of a take-action role where you will be in the spotlight,” said Babs. Babs went on to say that her decision
will be between the two men because men possess characteristics that will enable them to succeed with the client.

In a condescending voice Babs said, “Samantha, while you do have a place in the office, it will be better for you to focus on being a follower, and put all of your attention on making the men in the office, along with me, look good.”

Perplexed, Samantha argued the reasons she was better prepared for this opportunity—the client’s organization was geared toward females, she had a graduate degree in communication and marketing, and she was familiar with the client’s background. What Samantha said did not matter. Babs said she utilized a trait theory test on each of the candidates. Based of those results, Babs felt she had made the correct decision by offering the project manager position to a man.

In the days to come it was apparent Babs favored the men in the office, continually calling on them to achieve important tasks while giving the trivial jobs to the women. Brainstorming for campaign ideas would normally be done during a poker game at one of the men’s houses. Babs had even gone as far as to play favoritism toward the men. One incident in particular took place when Joe, the recently promoted project manager, showed up to work late after a hard night of drinking, and Babs looked the other way. The dyadic group comprised of the men in the office and Babs left Samantha with no job satisfaction, and opened the door to a plethora of unethical behavior.

After a total of 13 months with Leadership PR, Samantha chose to resign. The overwhelming amount of favoritism toward men, the autocratic style of leadership, and the ridiculous expectations was finally too much, and Samantha decided she deserved better. She got
CASE STUDY IN LEADERSHIP THEORY

it, too, as she was offered a position with Public Relations Notes, a firm that developed public relations campaigns for big businesses in the Kansas City area; it even came with a pay raise.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Social Identity Theory apply to this case? If present, explain group prototypicallity and the benchmarks being used to judge the members.

2. What behaviors would have to change in order for the team to be more effective followers?

3. What sources of power and influence tactics is Babs utilizing? What sources of power does the team possess, if any?

4. LMX theorizes when leaders and members have good exchanges, performance within the organization is enhanced due to more trust and mutual respect. Utilizing what has been learned from the article do you feel Babs would score low or high on the LMX7 survey (Refer to section 9. Teaching Materials and Tips)? Do you feel the LMX variability (the extent to which LMX relationships vary within the team constructs) will have an effect on the outcome? Explain.

5. How does destructive leadership theory apply to this case?
Teaching Notes

1. Objectives of the case

Type of Case

The case utilized here is a descriptive dialogue that demonstrates a multitude of leadership theories projected in a real-life setting; students will be able to connect theories and leadership concepts taught in the classroom setting and apply them to this story.

Learning Objectives

Students will:
1. Explain group prototypicality benchmarks
2. Accurately identify power and influence tactics
3. Accurately identify follower behaviors for effective followership
4. Create a deeper understanding of the Leader-Member Exchange Theory
5. Accurately identify destructive leadership behavior
6. Apply real life situations to the theories learned

Case Description

Samantha is an executive team member at Leadership PR, a public relations firm in Kansas City. Throughout her time at the firm Samantha is barraged with a plethora of negative behaviors coming from her autocratic boss. It is further understood that Babs, the supervisor, has created a dyad with the men in the office and Samantha is unable to move from the out-group to the in-group.

Authors’ Objective

The situation of a poor supervisor is an occurrence that all students may experience in their professional lives. In fact, each of the authors have based various pieces of this case on personal experiences. The authors wanted to demonstrate how destructive leadership behavior could affect followers, group prototypicality, and leader-member relationships. We want students to be able to identify how destructive leadership behavior can affect work experiences related to not only themselves, but also to others and the organization as a whole. In addition, this case provides the opportunity for students to be able to identify strategies to respond to destructive leadership behavior.

2. Course Information

Intended Course

Introduction to Leadership Theory
Course Level

Undergraduate, year two; 300 level course

Position in Course

Mid-term; students have now had time to adjust to theory and have a practical (or maybe exaggerated, depending on imagination) example of how to apply theory to practice. The information presented in this case is considered primarily a review of knowledge previously learned in this course and the prerequisite course. The students, however, will be presented with a new theory and concept—destructive leadership behavior—that will tie previously learned behaviors together.

Prerequisite

Students should take an introductory, or 100-level, leadership class that gives a broad aspect of leadership theory on a basic level (theory, application, execution).

Timeframe

Approximately 75 minutes, which is slightly over an hour in order to account for setting the scene with the severity of the scenario, discuss all of the questions, and apply the various theories and concepts to the scenario and allow time for class discussion/additional questions and comments. Below is a recommended timeline for the class period.

| Minutes 0-5: | Introduction of case |
| Minutes 5-15: | Read the case |
| Minutes 15-25: | First discussion question |
| Minutes 25-30: | Second discussion question |
| Minutes 30-40: | Third discussion question |
| Minutes 40-50: | Fourth discussion question |
| Minutes 50-65: | Fifth discussion question |
| Minutes 65-75: | Concluding thoughts and wrap-up |

3. Case Summary

Samantha is a hardworking professional currently employed at a public relations firm in Kansas City. She is eager to take on big projects and succeed not only to further her own career, but to also enhance the firm she is serving; however, Samantha’s supervisor proves to be a challenge and is constantly putting forth negative behavior. The time comes when a new position is available for promotion, Samantha possesses all the requirements needed and has shown an enthusiasm second to none. In Samantha’s eyes she feels she is the best person for the job, hands down. To her dismay she is not hired for the promotion. Her thoughts are that the in-group is impenetrable, regardless of what she does or how she acts there is no room for movement with a destructive supervisor.
4. Key issues

1. Low group prototypicality
2. Follower expectations
3. Use of authority, power, and influence
4. Existence of in-group out-group dyads, as well as low and high-quality leader-subordinate relationships.
5. Inability to move from the out-group to the in-group
6. Autocratic, indecisive, unfair, and manipulative supervisor behavior

5. Key Theories & Concepts

1. Social Identity Theory
2. Followership
3. Power and Influence Behavior
4. Leader-Member Exchange Theory
5. Destructive Leadership Theory

6. Theoretical Links

Issue 1: Samantha began to notice that Babs would take a lot of credit for the group’s work on the first public relations campaign the team did. Because of this, Eric, Babs’ supervisor, would consider Babs effective; however the group did not believe Babs lead them effectively at all. After losing an account, however, the team began to come together to accomplish an even bigger project.

- **Social Identity Theory**
  - [van Knippenberg (2011)]
    - According to van Knippenberg, “Core to social identity theory of leadership is the proposition that leaders are more effective in mobilizing followers the more they are seen as group prototypical.” This concept is based on the idea that the role of group membership and the leader group prototypicality directly relate to the effectiveness of leadership.
    - Group membership reflect on how we see ourselves and others
      - Individuals begin to identify themselves as part of the group and focus on “we”. They begin to see themselves as part of the group and the group as part of them. The membership in the group becomes part of their identity and who they are, how they function, and demonstrates their own views, values, and beliefs.
      - Individuals see themselves through the group and thus take decisions that affect the group personally. Viewing the group as one’s self causes the individual to take the group’s interest as self-interest.
It is important to understand that the influence of the leader group prototypicality is tied to group identification. The more that a group identifies with the leader and sees them as part of the group, the stronger the influence of the leader will be. Thus, the leader is judged by perceived benchmarks that the members in the group possess. The perceived ideology of what is leadership is then used to determine if the leader meets the criteria of what is good leadership.

**BACK TO THE CASE:** Babs, the team’s supervisor, was taking a lot of the credit for the group during her first two months of employment. Often, Eric Palmer, Bab’s supervisor, would come in the office to check on things. Babs would take all the credit and say, “Look what I have done!” In reality, however, it was the executive team that was doing all of the work, but Eric saw Babs as effective regardless. Babs does this continuously throughout the case, which does not provide a positive group prototypicality; however, after Babs seemed genuinely upset about losing an account, just like the rest of the team, Samantha began to take more of an interest in the work and applied for a new job that would oversee a large account.

**Issue 2:** On a day-to-day basis, the group members aren’t always sure what they are supposed to be doing. Despite the campaign checklist of tasks, which listed each team members' assignment, Babs’s expectations were still ambiguous. It was a common occurrence that Samantha would be working on the deadlines according to the checklist and Babs would come into the office and announce that something else took priority over the checklist. Samantha and the team would then switch gears to the new task for the rest of the day; however, Babs would often change her mind about prioritizing projects the next day.

- **Followership**
  - Uhl-Bien (2014)
    - "If leadership involves actively influencing others, then followership involves allowing oneself to be influenced” (p. 83)
    - Uhl-Bien discusses Fredrick Winslow Taylor's views, which are that managers are superior and employees are inferior. According to this view, followers need their behavior dictated in order to achieve desired outcomes. The leaders exercise direction and control (p. 84).

**BACK TO THE CASE:** Babs' behavior indicated that she believed her followers needed this kind of interaction, in order to produce a product she deemed acceptable.

- What is a follower?
  - It is discussed in contingency theories that followers are more of a situational factor and the leader doesn't need to include the follower in the decision-making (p. 86).
CASE STUDY IN LEADERSHIP THEORY

• "The relationship of the leader and the followers is essential to team success, not the leaders' ability to dominate followers" (p. 88).
• Leader-membership exchange (LMX) views followers as trusted associates of leaders and they help to achieve goals (p. 88).
• There is a "toxic triangle" that occurs when there are followers that conform to the destructive leadership pattern. This kind of leadership can produce damaging effects (p. 88).
• The word “follower” has a negative connotation because it implies that the followers are passive and bend to the leaders’ ways (p. 89).
• Effective followers are self-motivated, independent, problem-solvers, and committed to the task (p. 90).
• Courageous followers stand up to and for their leaders (p. 90).

BACK TO THE CASE: After being told that new tasks would take priority over the check list, Babs would often come into the office the next day and ask why the tasks from the day before on the checklist weren't complete. One brave soul would step up and say that they were under the impression that the new task discussed was priority. Babs would explain the checklist was always priority. This left the team feeling lost and confused as to what they were supposed to be working on, the expectations of deadlines and tasks, and the flow of their workday. The brave soul who confronted Babs showed not only courage, but demonstrates how to be an effective follower by standing up to the leader and showing he is committed to the successful completion of the task by attempting to establish understanding.

Issue 3: Because of her position, Babs would instill rules on the team such as clocking-in before 8 am in spite of the fact the employees were on salary and weren’t required to clock-in by the company. Babs also threatened the team with not approving their vacation time on the grounds of not completing work by a specific date.

• Power and Influence Behaviors
  o Yukl (2013)
    ▪ The use of power and influence in leadership is undeniable. “Influence is the essence of leadership” (p. 185). These behaviors can either motivate or bring discontent over a group of followers.
    ▪ The effectiveness of an authority figure, such as a manager, is determined by how well he/she can influence their superiors, peers, or subordinates.
    ▪ Power “involves the capacity of one party (the agent) to influence another party (the target)” (p. 186). The amount of influence, however, is measured in different ways, as there are different types of power that utilize different influence tactics.
      • There are two categories of power - position and personal.
      • Position power is directly related to the position the person holds within the organization. Two types of position power include legitimate power and coercive power.
Legitimate power is “power stemming from formal authority over work activities” (p. 188);

The amount of legitimate power is “related to one’s scope of authority” (p. 189). One’s scope of authority may include control over punishments.

According to Yukl, coercive power is “power over subordinates that is based on authority over punishments” (p. 190); “likely to elicit retaliation and escalate into a conflict that benefits neither party” (p. 190).

When a person of authority wishes to influence employees, there are several tactics to choose from using; choosing the tactic is often based on the intended outcome.

Influence outcomes are how the target reacts to the influence attempt; there are three forms

- Commitment - “the target makes a great effort to carry out the request or implement the decision effectively” (p. 188).
- Compliance - “when the target person is willing to carry out a request but is apathetic rather than enthusiastic about it and will make only a minimal effort” (p. 188).
- Resistance - “when the target person is opposed to the proposal or request rather than merely indifferent about it” (refuse to do it, explain why it is impossible to do it, try to persuade agent to withdraw it, ask higher authorities to overrule it, try to sabotage it) (p. 188).

While all leaders generally aim to the influence outcome of commitment, leaders will cater a particular influence tactic to achieve his/her desired outcome. These tactics are known as proactive influence tactics and when used “have an immediate task objective, such as getting the target person to carry out a new task, change the procedures used for a current task, provide assistance on a project, or support a proposed change” (p. 187).

- There are several proactive influence tactics such as rational persuasion, apprising, inspirational appeals, consultation, collaboration, ingratiation, personal appeals, exchange, coalition tactics, legitimating tactics, and pressure.
- Personal appeals are used when the leader “asks the target to carry out a request or support a proposal out of friendship, or asks for a personal favor before saying what it is” (p. 202).
- The final tactic, pressure, is when the leader chooses to use “demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the target to carry out a request” (p. 202). Although it may be effective in some situations, it can lead to a low morale in the organization.
**Issue 4:** When Samantha first starts at this firm she makes an attempt to help and lead in any way possible, it is shown in the story in the first few months they kick off an anti-smoking campaign that has great success. But as time progressed she realized she was not the go to person, in fact due to her gender she was anything but. Although Babs made it clear everyone had a place on the team she also showed preferential treatment toward the men while displaying an unethical gender bias. This was predicated when Babs stated she did not receive the promotion due to the fact it was better suited for a man.

- **Leader-Member-Exchange-Theory**
  - *Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995)*
  - The centroid concept of the theory is that it describes how effective leadership relationships develop between dyadic “partners” in and between organizations, (e.g. leaders and followers, team members and teammates).
  - The quality of the dyadic relationship is based in part on the formation of the two main groups
  - **Out-group:** The out-group is made up of followers who are not called upon from the leader of the group to perform higher tasks. Their range of responsibility is left to a status quo position. A multitude of reasons may be prevalent as to why people remain on the out-group, less vested in the organization, simply uninvolved in what is going on, or they do not get along with the boss.
  - **In-group:** The in-group is comprised of followers that are held in a different respect then those of the out-group. The in-group will receive more tasks and develop stronger bonds. An important characteristic of the out-group dichotomy is that the feeling of self-worth deteriorates thus leading to poor work results, conversely those of the in-group will have the opposite effect. Work will continue to be given to those in the in-group, resulting in good outcomes, and enhancing the mutual trust and respect. This perpetuates a cycle that will survive, as long as the cyclical dyad between the leader and the followers remains.
It is important for organizations to have high quality leader-member exchanges. In-groups are important because as the theory states followers who wish to join in-groups can continue to work toward this goal and achieve it by improving their dyadic relationship with the leader.

BACK TO THE CASE: Samantha continued to work hard and try to change her role from the out-group to the in-group but the work was to no avail. As more important tasks continued to arise Babs would give them to the men in the office. Preferential treatment for those in the in-group continued as was shown when a male counterpart showed up to work late and Babs looked the other the way. As time progressed Samantha continued to do her job, however not feeling any fulfillment eventually took its toll and led to unethical behavior. In this scenario she continued to try to move from the out to the in-group, however she failed and eventually quit trying. It is undetermined if the process failed or if her grit and fervor was not up for the task.

Issue 5: Babs is an autocratic leader who is constantly changing her mind on project prioritization and deadlines. She provides little direction to her team, and has condemned the team for doing tasks at her request, such as getting her coffee. She micro-manages the team’s output, and utilizes pressure as a form of influence.

- **Destructive Leadership Theory and Outcomes**
  - Schyns and Schilling (2013)
    - Destructive leadership is defined as, “a process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive” (p. 141).
    - There are five components to the definition:
      1. Influence - “the leader uses destructive leadership to achieve a certain aim and at least unintentionally influences the activities and relationships within the group” (p. 141)
      2. Supervisor - destructive leader behavior includes the abuse of formal power as a means to intimidate and punish followers
      3. Repetition over a long period of time - the negative influence on an individual or the group is employed repeatedly over a long period of time
      4. Perceived hostility and/or obstructiveness - “involves hostile behavior (like public ridiculing, taking credit for subordinates’ successes, and scapegoating subordinates; Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994) as well as impeding cooperative work in the team (like giving someone the silent treatment and prohibiting interaction with coworkers; Tepper, 2000)” (p. 141)
      5. Individual or group - “leaders might target only one or a few members of their group...or they are generally destructive towards all of their followers” (p. 141)
    - There are four outcomes associated with destructive leadership:
1. Leader-related - dyadic concepts such as follower resistance and leader identification (e.g. lowers follower trust in leader)
2. Job-related - job satisfaction among followers as a result of the destructive leader putting forward unreasonable demands or ridiculing followers
3. Organization-related - things that directly affect the organization as a whole (e.g. organizational commitment or employee turnover)
4. Individual follower-related - consequences of destructive leadership that relate directly to the individual follower (e.g. stress, well-being, and performance; p. 143)

**BACK TO THE CASE:** The workload for the executive team became overwhelming when Babs would often reprioritize the work checklist for other projects, to only change her mind on their level of priority later. While one team member, Jim Day, would refute the reprioritization, it was done all too often and constantly confused the team what they should be working on. They were never given a clear direction for any project. This happens repeatedly, and obstructs the team’s ability to complete their work efficiently.

On almost a daily basis, Babs would ask Samantha for “a favor.” Because Samantha wanted to appease her supervisor she would agree to do it without even knowing what that “favor” was going to be. Most of the time, Babs wanted Samantha to get her some coffee from the shop down the street; however, when Samantha would return with Babs’s coffee, Babs would condemn her for missing 15 minutes of work time. Sending Samantha for coffee come with the notion of her missing work-time, something Babs is well aware, so for Babs to condemn Samantha for appeasing the “favor” is an intentional act of hostility, especially since it is being done repeatedly.

7. Discussion Questions

1. How does Social Identity Theory apply to this case? If present, explain group prototypicallity and the benchmarks being used to judge the members.
2. What behaviors would have to change in order for the team to be more effective followers?
3. What sources of power and influence tactics is Babs utilizing? What sources of power does the team possess, if any?
4. LMX theorizes when leaders and members have good exchanges, performance within the organization is enhanced due to more trust and mutual respect. Utilizing what has been learned from the article do you feel Babs would score low or high on the LMX7 survey (Refer to section 9. Teaching Materials and Tips)? Do you feel the LMX variability (the extent to which LMX relationships vary within the team constructs) will have an effect on the outcome? Explain.
5. How does destructive leadership theory apply to this case?

8. Responses to Questions
**Question 1: How does Social Identity Theory apply to this case? If present, explain group prototypicality and the benchmarks being used to judge the members.**

Relevant Theories/Concepts: Social Identity Theory and Group Prototypicality

Note to instructor: Students can interpret social identity theory in a variety of ways. The question is designed to allow the students the opportunity to connect social identity theory appropriately, benchmarks used to judge leaders, as well as identify group prototypicality through in-groups and out-groups of the organization.

Possible Answers (students answers may vary):

- **Social Identity Theory**
  - Social Identity is defined as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Hogg, 2001, p.186). The in-group, would be defined in this situation as the workers of the agency. The out-group is defined as Babs. It is obvious that Babs is setting herself apart from the group as she holds herself accountable differently than the rest of the group. For example, Babs requires everyone else to show up on time while she does not show up until later in the day. These actions are setting herself apart from the group. Since Social Identity Theory is based on evaluation from the individuals based on the norms of the group. When the group norm is to show up at 8 AM every day, it would be difficult for Babs to fit into the group norms as she shows up at 10 AM.

- **Group Prototypicality**
  - Group prototypicality is based on the concepts of “we” versus “I.” The group sees themselves working autonomously together and actions of one become the actions of the group. Babs sets herself apart from the group prototypicality when she takes credit for success and blames the group for failures. When Babs states “I work hard to make sure everything is in order and everyone takes it for granted. Without me, this organization would be failing. Look at my track record and you will see that I am very successful. The one time I allow the team to take over the campaign, we fail." The only use of “we” in that entire statement is when discussing failure. This shows that Babs does see herself as part of the group but is not doing a good job of portraying the group over her.

- **Benchmarks**
  - The group is using benchmarks of what they believe good leadership is. The group is seeking direction from Babs but do not receive the direction. The group believes that leadership should provide the direction for the group. The group and Samantha, in particular, are seeking fair treatment from the supervisor.

**Question 2: What behaviors would have to change in order for the team to be more effective followers?**

Relevant Theories/Concepts: Followership
Note to instructor: This is a somewhat broad question and leaves room for the student's interpretation. It would be better utilized as an in-class discussion question rather than an essay/assignment question, so there can be instructor moderation to ensure that all points are accounted for. Make sure the students hit on all possibilities of the question. The off-the-cuff answer would be for Babs to change her glaringly bad behavior, but the instructor should probe for answers on how the followers can change their behavior to adapt to the situation, or even Babs as a follower/Babs' supervisor.

Possible Answers (students answers may vary):

- Pulling from Uhl-Bien's comments there are a number of things that would have to change on both Babs and the follower's parts in order for Babs' followers to be more effective. As the first quote in the notes asserts, Babs needs to allow herself to be influenced. Even though she is the leader there are still going to be things she can learn from her followers. Again, on Babs’ part, the people working on the project are not included in the decision making whatsoever, as the leader we can assume that Babs has the ultimate say - but the team members (followers) should at the very least have their opinions solicited in order for an informed decision to be made.

- There is a toxic triangle in this scenario as Babs continues to dominate her employees and fosters this hostile environment. As a follower, one should buy into their leadership and stick up for and to the leaders. Babs’ followers do not do this, and it is likely do to the ever-changing expectations of which tasks are supposed to be priority. Sticking up to Babs doesn't do the team any good. Ultimately, the followers on this team cannot be self-motivated, independent, or problem solvers because they have unclear expectations and guidelines for the work they are producing.

- Babs, as a leader, is further contributing to the “toxic triangle” by creating high turnover within her team for the company, and this is a damaging effect costing unnecessary time and money in training.

*Question 3: What sources of power and influence tactics is Babs utilizing? What sources of power does the team possess, if any?*

Relevant Theories/Concepts: Power and Influence Behavior

Note to instructor: Students can interpret Babs’s behavior in a variety of ways. The question is designed to allow the students the opportunity to connect sources of power and influence tactics appropriately, as well as identify any possibility of power among the executive team in the case.

Possible Answers (student’s answers may vary, but should fall along these assumptions):

- Babs’s Sources of Power
  - It is obvious that Babs holds a position power, which includes a legitimate power and coercive power. Both of which are dependent upon her position as the executive team’s supervisor. It is evident throughout the case that she is the person in charge of handling disciplinary action toward any of the members on her team.
• Babs’s chosen type(s) of Influence
  o Because Babs holds a legitimate and coercive power source, she relies on the pressure influence tactic to achieve her outcomes. The pressure influence tactic is evident as she threatens the employees and also constantly checks-in on their work.
  o It also appears that Babs utilized personal appeals with Samantha as she would always ask her for “favors;” whether they were client-related or not, Samantha would agree to them before even knowing what the “favor” was.
  o Regardless of the tactic, we can understand, from the reactions of Samantha and her colleagues to Babs’s influence, that the influence outcome achieved is simply compliance, not necessarily commitment, considering the employees are overworked, confused, and distraught throughout the case. However, it can be argued that there is an existing level of commitment among the team members as they do their best to create a good campaign for their clients.

• The Team’s Potential Power
  o The team does have the opportunity to cease a position power of coercive power over Babs, but does not take the opportunity in the case. The team is able to damage Babs’s reputation should it refuse to comply with her requests or purposefully sabotage a project. Because there is no evidence that the team actually did either of those things, the team did not use this source of power to affect Babs’s reputation in a negative way. Although the team was dropped from a client at one point in the case, it was not a result of sabotage operations against the campaign.

Question 4: LMX theorizes when leaders and members have good exchanges, performance within the organization is enhanced due to more trust and mutual respect. Utilizing what has been learned from the article do you feel Babs would score low or high on the LMX-7 survey (Refer to Section 9. Materials & Tips for a copy of the LMX-7)? Do you feel the LMX variability (the extent to which LMX relationships vary within the team constructs) will have an effect on the outcome? Explain.

Relevant Theories/Concepts: Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Note to instructor: This question may take some time to answer based on the fact there are multiple variables. The fact the two different groups represented here would answer the survey differently presents a problem, in that the group which holds the most players will indeed provide the numerical bases to sway in one direction or the other. For instance, if only one worker was in the out-group and one bad evaluation was given in contrast to many positive surveys given, then the average would be nil. It is the author’s belief that the students will pick up on this fact, and realize there is no black or white answer to this question.

Possible Answers (students answers may vary):

• LMX-7 Questionnaire
  o Babs had a good working relation with many people form the organization. There was a degree of trust and mutual respect from many different dyads. Although the
story shows us there was a falling out with one, it is still plausible to think Babs would score high on the LMX survey. Once again this is dependent on a variable or unknown, for we know not how many people in the entire organization felt like Samantha.

- LMX Variability
  - The outcome of the score is dependent on the survey average. The average is dependent on who takes it and what scores they give. The thought process of the person taking it is based on experiences with Babs. If we look at the negative, the experience between Samantha and Babs will score low. On the other hand, if we look at those in the in-group the answer gets more complex.
  - Not everyone in the in-group is treated the same, some will still receive more preferential treatment over others even though they are all in the in-group or team construct. Human nature tells us this wouldn’t sit well. If the survey taker’s anonymity was protected, it is believed the scores will be different; this is not only from the out-group compared to the in-group, but from everyone, regardless of what group they are in. Therefore, the variability will indeed have an effect on the outcome.

Question 5: How does destructive leadership theory apply to this case?

Relevant Theories/Concepts: Destructive Leadership Theory, Power and Influence Behavior

Note to instructor: This is a very broad question as there are many components to destructive leadership behavior. The question is designed to help the students connect the variety of theories and concepts addressed in this case to the overall outcomes of destructive leadership (leader-related, job-related, organization-related, individual follower-related), and how Babs’s behavior plays a role in each of those outcomes.

Possible Answers (student’s answers may vary, but should fall along these guidelines):

- Destructive leadership is exemplified throughout the case in the way Babs chooses to use her position as a power of authority. She threatens and controls her employees’ punishments for the entire duration of Samantha’s employment with the company. She also belittles her team’s work by taking credit for what they’ve done. Her requested favors from Samantha also come with a punishment as she takes time away from her project to do the favors for Babs. Although the case has a focus on Samantha, it appears that Babs applies the same destructive behavior toward all women on her executive team.
- Outcomes of Babs’s behavior
  - Leader-related outcome
    - The executive team has a disdain for Babs throughout the case because of her unrealistic deadlines and demands, and it is very likely they do not trust her judgment on many occasions.
  - Job-related outcome
    - Samantha is very unhappy in her position for most of the 13 months she works for the company. Although she does not retaliate against Babs, it is evident throughout the case that her job satisfaction is low.
o Organization-related outcome
  ▪ There is extensive employee turnover on Babs’s executive team. In just the 13 months that Samantha worked for the company, six team members resigned. It is implied that it was Babs’s behavior that drove them to the decision.

o Individual follower-related outcome
  ▪ It is evident throughout the case that Babs’s leadership is taking a toll on Samantha’s well-being. On a day she was ill, she was refused the opportunity to go home; it is also mentioned several times that she is very confused, stressed, and worried about the future of her job.

9. Teaching Materials and Tips

- The Toxic Triangle
  o For more information, see (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007, p. 179) and Figure 1.
    ▪ The Toxic Triangle, described in Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007), is a compilation of three elements that created a destructive leadership environment. One of those elements is susceptible followers, which is discussed through Issue 2: Followership. The discussion of the Toxic Triangle and how followers play a role may assist students in the understanding of destructive leadership.

![TOXIC TRIANGLE](image)

*Figure 1. The Toxic Triangle*
CASE STUDY IN LEADERSHIP THEORY


- **Power and Influence Tactics**
  - For more information, see (Yukl, 2013, pp. 85-120) and Figure 2.
  - For further understanding of proactive influence tactics, this listing of the eleven tactics defined by Yukl (2013) may assist students in differentiating the tactics utilized by Babs throughout the case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8-7</th>
<th>Definition of the 11 Proactive Influence Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rational Persuasion:</strong></td>
<td>The agent uses logical arguments and factual evidence to show a proposal or request is feasible and relevant for attaining important task objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apprising:</strong></td>
<td>The agent explains how carrying out a request or supporting a proposal will benefit the target personally or help advance the target person's career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspirational Appeals:</strong></td>
<td>The agent makes an appeal to values and ideals or seeks to arouse the target person's emotions to gain commitment for a request or proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation:</strong></td>
<td>The agent encourages the target to suggest improvements in a proposal or to help plan an activity or change for which the target person's support and assistance are desired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration:</strong></td>
<td>The agent offers to provide relevant resources and assistance if the target will carry out a request or approve a proposed change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ingratiation:</strong></td>
<td>The agent uses praise and flattery before or during an influence attempt, or expresses confidence in the target's ability to carry out a difficult request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Appeals:</strong></td>
<td>The agent asks the target to carry out a request or support a proposal out of friendship, or asks for a personal favor before saying what it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exchange:</strong></td>
<td>The agent offers an incentive, suggests an exchange of favors, or indicates willingness to reciprocate at a later time if the target will do what the agent requests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coalition Tactics:</strong></td>
<td>The agent seeks the aid of others to persuade the target to do something, or uses the support of others as a reason for the target to agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimizing Tactics:</strong></td>
<td>The agent seeks to establish the legitimacy of a request or to verify authority to make it by referring to rules, policies, contracts, or precedent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pressure:</strong></td>
<td>The agent uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the target to carry out a request.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Proactive Influence Tactics*


- **Leader-Member Exchange Theory**
  - For more information, see (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995, pp. 219-247).
For a copy of the LMX-7 Questionnaire, see Figure 3 and Figure 4.

- Students should answer this questionnaire from the point of view of Babs when attempting to answer discussion question four.

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**LMX 7 QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Instructions:* This questionnaire contains items that ask you to describe your relationship with either your leader or one of your subordinates. For each of the items, indicate the degree to which you think the item is true for you by circling one of the responses that appear below the item.

1. Do you know where you stand with your leader (follower) …[and] do you usually know how satisfied your leader (follower) is with what you do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How well does your leader (follower) understand your job problems and needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a bit</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A fair amount</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How well does your leader (follower) recognize your potential?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Fully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Regardless of how much formal authority your leader (follower) has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader (follower) would use his or her power to help you solve problems in your work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader (follower) has, what are the chances that he or she would “bail you out” at his or her expense?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I have enough confidence in my leader (follower) that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader (follower)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely ineffective</th>
<th>Worse than average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Better than average</th>
<th>Extremely effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By completing the LMX 7, you can gain a fuller understanding of how LMX theory works. The score you obtain on the questionnaire reflects the quality of your leader-member relationships, and indicates the degree to which your relationships are characteristic of partnerships, as described in the LMX model.

You can complete the questionnaire both as a leader and as a subordinate. In the leader role, you would complete the questionnaire multiple times, assessing the quality of the relationships you have with each of your subordinates. In the subordinate role, you would complete the questionnaire based on the leaders to whom you report.

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**Figure 3. LMX-7 Questionnaire**

**Scoring Interpretation**

Although the LMX 7 is most commonly used by researchers to explore theoretical questions, you can also use it to analyze your own leadership style. You can interpret your LMX 7 scores using the following guidelines: very high = 30–35, high = 25–29, moderate = 20–24, low = 15–19, and very low = 7–14. Scores in the upper ranges indicate stronger, higher-quality leader-member exchanges (e.g., in-group members), whereas scores in the lower ranges indicate exchanges of lesser quality (e.g., out-group members).
10. Epilogue

After spending thirteen months in a presumed visceral situation with no silver lining anywhere in sight, Samantha realized it was time to move on. As was stated in the case, she took a position with Public Relations Notes, another PR firm in Kansas City. At first she felt she was met with some animosity from the others in the new surroundings. Cultivating what she had learned from her previous employer in regard to in-group and out-group situations, she vowed to not put herself through the same turmoil again. However, being of good stock and having a “never say die” attitude, she felt compelled to at least try; plus, the pay raise was nice.

Samantha knew the trials and tribulations she encountered in her last position could easily follow her into this new setting. So after her first week in her new job she decided to take the weekend to truly assess the situation. She pondered the two groups from her last job, Babs’s autocratic leadership style, and then she spent an exorbitant amount of time on self-reflection. This self-reflection enabled her to realize she may be jumping to conclusions in regard to her new co-workers. She also realized this is what she wanted to devote her time to for a career, and felt she may be conditioned from her old employment to think all situations are bad.

The experience, albeit negative, of her last position was truly going to pay dividends in her new one. Samantha went to work fresh and bright-eyed early Monday morning. She cultivated the lessons learned and turned them into fuel by realizing the last job was just a bad situation and was not related to the new one. Overall, it taught her how not to act in a professional setting. With her newfound vigor and dedication, Samantha found herself in many roles and dyads throughout the organization. She quickly became a go to person and her reputation preceded her.

11. Annotated Bibliography


This article gives us insight into the Leader-Member exchange theory. The inception of the LMX theory was over twenty-five years ago. Since its inception it has undergone many changes. This article provides a nice explanation of why the theory exists and why it is important. A multitude of studies have been done investigating many aspects of LMX in organizations. Theoretical development in this area has undergone much refinement, and the current LMX theory is quite different than that of the early Vertical Dyad Linkage. Throughout the article, LMX goes through four stages of theorizing and investigation. The applicable teachings are such that the article shows the current theory as well as its roots. Another helpful and necessary component is table three on page 237, which shows the question makeup of the survey itself.

This article explains the social identity theory of leadership. It provides a thorough definition of the theory, and discusses how group prototypicality is formed. It includes discussion of how influence plays a role in the creation of a group prototype, and it provides a review of empirical evidence in support of the theory. The understanding of how group prototypicality is formed with assist the students in understanding how the group prototype is created in the case presented.


This article defines the components of destructive leadership behavior and provides examples of those behaviors. The components include influence from the supervisor, repetition of the influence, and hostility or obstructiveness—all of which are placed upon an individual or group of followers. The article addresses the outcomes of destructive leadership behavior and categorizes the outcomes into four types, which are related the leader, organization, job, and individual follower. This article truly differentiates the destructive leadership behavior from acceptable behavior and will assist the students in understanding how to identify the behavior of a destructive leader.


This article addresses some of the principals of followers and followership. It notes that leadership studies often overlook the aspect of the follower. This article defines followership as a follower being an agent, and a leader moderating the outcome of followers. It is a synthesis of previous research on followership. The article’s review of various views of followership will allow the students to gain a broad understanding of how followership is viewed within a variety of leadership theory.


This article describes the evolving perspectives of the social identity theory of leadership. It discusses the relationships between social identity and group prototypicality, and how a leader comes to embody a group prototype. It discusses the idea of benchmarks between leader and group prototypes. In addition, it focuses on empirical studies that have created a foundation for the social identity theory of leadership. The article’s focus on group prototypes will assist the students in identifying the benchmarks and prototypicality within the case presented.

This chapter clearly defines several forms of power and influence tactics associated with leadership. It compares power and influence and how the two components interact to achieve follower outcomes. It also defines follower outcomes for the reader, and how a leader may come to gain the power they hold, as well as how it can be lost. The clear definitions provided by Yukl are straightforward and should allow the students to create direct connections between the definitions and the behavior in the case presented.