Followers' preference for consideration and initiating structure leadership styles:
Evidence from the laboratory

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Abstract:

Decades of leadership research have shown that the two classical leadership styles of consideration and initiating structure robustly predict positive work outcomes, such as satisfaction or performance. In contrast, relatively little is known about whether these leadership styles also predict the *emergence* of leadership, and which factors might moderate followers' preference for a particular leadership style. Across three lab experiments ($N = 567$) where participants were confronted with written or videotaped descriptions of potential group leaders, we examined followers' leadership preference and whether followers' personality and motives, or followers' or leaders' gender determine such a preference. Results showed that, although consideration leaders are liked more and initiating structure leaders are seen as more qualified, the two leadership styles are overall equally preferred. Followers' openness is related to a preference for consideration, whereas the achievement motive is related to a preference for initiating structure. Results showed no evidence for general gender-effects in leadership preferences that are predicted in the literature.

Keywords: leadership emergence, leadership preferences, followers' personality, followers' motives, gender effects

Introduction

Consideration and initiating structure belong to the most classical leadership styles in the literature. Both were described in the famous Ohio State Leadership Studies conducted by Stogdill, Shartle and Hemphill (Stogdill, 1950; Stogdill & Coons, 1957) which shifted the focus of leadership research from the universal trait approach to an observable behavioral-based view (Schriesheim & Bird, 1979). Consideration is the degree to which a leader shows concern and respect for followers, looks out for their welfare, and expresses appreciation and support (Bass, 1990). Initiating structure reflects the extent to which the leader defines and facilitates group interactions toward goal attainment (Fleishman, 1953). Numerous studies and meta-analyses showed that both leadership styles robustly predict positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance or effectiveness (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Initiating structure seems to be more predictive for effectiveness and performance whereas consideration rather impacts job and leader satisfaction (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Nonetheless, relatively little is known about whether these leadership styles are also related to the *emergence* of leadership, and which factors might moderate followers' preference for a particular leadership style (Uhl-Bien, Riggo, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). The aim of the present research is, first, to clarify whether one of these leadership styles might be generally preferred over the other, second, whether followers' personality traits and explicit motives can predict preferences for a particular leader type, and third, whether followers' or leaders' gender influence these preferences. We will address these questions by means of laboratory experiments where participants can choose between potential leaders who differ with regard to their leadership style.

Regarding the preference for leadership styles, experiments and surveys indicate that followers have preferences and do not value all styles the same. For instance, classical laboratory experiments showed that students prefer leaders who talk more compared to leaders who talk little, independent of the quality of what was said (Regula & Julian, 1973; Sorrentino & Boutillier, 1975). Survey studies in which police officers from Taiwan and New Zealand indicated their leadership preference for their supervisors showed that, in both countries, the transformational leadership style is preferred over the transactional leadership style (Singer & Singer, 1990, 2001). Results from another survey showed that subordinate nurses preferred an employee-oriented leadership style (i.e., consideration) over a change oriented leadership style, which again was preferred over an production oriented leadership style (i.e., initiating structure; Sellgren, Ekvall, & Tomson, 2006). An experimental study indicated that students rate a participative leadership style as more effective than an authoritarian leadership style (Rhee & Sigler, 2015). To the best of our knowledge, only one study was conducted which allowed subjects to choose between different leadership styles (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). In this study, 267 students filled in a questionnaire on their values and personality. One month later, students came to the lab and were asked to imagine working as an experienced store manager who has to choose a district manager. Based on text descriptions of three different leaders, they rated and chose between a charismatic leaders, a relationship-oriented (i.e. consideration) leader, and a task-oriented (i.e. initiating structure)

leader. Results showed that the majority of students chose the relationship-oriented leader (51.3%, charismatic leader: 28.8%; task-oriented leader: 19.9%) and also rated this leader as the most ideal leader. Thus, the existing evidence indicates that followers might prefer consideration to initiating structure leadership style, although it has to be emphasized that the empirical basis for such conclusions is small yet, and that the findings are not entirely consistent.

A couple of studies have investigated to what extent followers' personality traits can predict preference ratings for a leadership style. In the above-mentioned Ehrhart and Klein (2001) study, despite no coherent personality inventory was used, results showed that followers' personality characteristics are related to leadership style preferences: participation and security values predicted the preference for charismatic leadership, whereas extrinsic work motivation predicted the preference for the relationship-oriented leader. Self-esteem, desire for structure, interpersonal relations, low intrinsic motivation, and low participation values predicted the preference for the task-oriented leader (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). A longitudinal field study with 41 students showed that agreeableness and neuroticism was negatively related and openness was positively related to the preference ratings for relationship-oriented leadership, whereas conscientiousness was positively related to the preference for task-oriented leadership (Emery, Calvard, & Pierce, 2013). In another field study on 153 clerical workers, agreeableness was related to a preference for a transformational leader (Felfe & Schnyns, 2010). Finally, a survey study with 225 students found positive associations between followers' agreeableness and openness and a preference for a participating leadership style (Stevens & Ash, 2001). In sum, the overall evidence on personality predictors of preferences for leadership styles appears to be rather inconsistent, in that each study yielded a somewhat different set of predictive personality factors. If anything, agreeableness and openness seem to be related to more positive ratings of a consideration leader. For preference ratings for an initiating structure leadership style, no reliable predictors have been found so far.

In addition to personality traits, explicit motives (achievement motive, affiliation motive, and power motive; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) might also affect leadership preferences. Followers with a strong achievement motive, defined as the recurrent concern with a standard of excellence (Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012), should be expected to prefer initiating structure leaders, because this leadership style puts performance-related issues center stage. In contrast, individuals with a high affiliation motive should likely prefer a consideration to an initiating structure leader to fulfil their social need to establish and maintain friendly bonds with others (French & Chadwick, 1956; Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012). However, to the best of our knowledge, no empirical studies have addressed these questions yet.

Followers and leaders' gender is also assumed to influence the leadership preferences of followers. In the literature, it is frequently reported that female and male followers prefer different leadership styles. Some studies, for instance, showed that female followers prefer transformational leadership (Fein, Tziner, Vasiliu, 2010) or people-oriented leadership (Bellou, 2011) more than male

followers. A large literature also discusses whether male leaders are preferred to female leaders. Stereotypes about leaders (e.g., “a leader is agentic and not communal”) generally resemble stereotypes of men rather than stereotypes of women, which is argued to be one reason why men are preferred over women as leaders (Eagly, 2007; Rhee & Sigler, 2015). However, results from field studies and laboratory experiments produce mixed results (Bosak & Sczeny, 2010; Grossmann, Komai, Jensen, 2015; Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016), indicating that the context might matter such as the gender composition (Vial, Brescoll, Napier, Dovidio, & Tyler, 2018) or the competitiveness of the situation (Spisal, Homan, Grabo, & Van Vugt, 2012).

Importantly, preferences for leadership styles might interact with leaders' gender. The backlash effect suggests that women need to show dominance (i.e., initiating structure) to get into leadership positions, and then, however, are punished for their dominant behavior as it violates stereotypical expectations of female behavior (Rudman, 1998; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012). A meta-analysis on 50 studies found that women who show dominant behavior (i.e., initiating structure) are liked less, in particular when they use explicit signs of dominance (Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Recent literature also suggests that men are punished for contra-stereotypical leader behavior. For instance, men compared to women are penalized and liked less if they show too much concern for others (i.e., consideration), as this concern violates the male stereotypical behavior (Bosak, Rudman, Kulich, & Kinahan, 2018). A field study also revealed that only men but not women are seen as less competent if they ask others for help, which is related to consideration (Rosette, Mueller, Lebel, 2015). Thus, the current literature suggests that both followers' and leaders' gender interact with the preference for a consideration or initiating structure leadership style.

The present research

The aim of the present research was to examine and predict followers' preferences for consideration and initiating structure leadership, based on three general research questions, and by means of three laboratory experiments. The three research questions were: (1) Do potential leaders with a consideration leadership style versus an initiating structure leadership style differ in liking ratings, qualification ratings, and choice frequency? (2) Do followers' personality traits or explicit motives predict a preference for a leadership style? (3) Does a) followers' or b) leaders' gender predict a preference for a leadership style?

In all three experiments, we confronted participants with consideration versus initiating structure leaders by describing potential leader candidates as scoring high in consideration and low in initiating structure (further on labeled as “consideration leaders”), versus scoring low in consideration and high in initiating structure (further on labeled as “initiating structure leaders”). Participants rated liking and qualification of each leader before making a definitive leadership choice. In experiment 2 and 3, followers' personality traits and explicit motives were assessed several days before the assessment of leadership preferences (liking, qualification, choice). In addition, in these two

experiments, leaders' gender was varied systematically by presenting either same gender couples (only male or female leaders) or mixed gender couples (female versus male leader)

To answer research questions 1 and 3a, we used the data of all three experiments. To answer research questions 2 and 3b (on the effect of leaders' gender on leadership style preferences) we used the data of experiment 2 and 3. In addition, we used the data of all experiments to explore additional gender effects that might emerge independent of leadership styles, such as a general preference for male versus female leaders, or interactions between followers' and leader's gender with leadership style.

Method

In the following, we present the common method of all our three experiments, together with a description of their specific differences. In all experiments, we assessed the same dependent variables concerning leadership preferences, namely rating of liking, qualification rating, and choices. To increase generalizability of derived conclusions, the three experiments differed with regard to the cover story and the extent to that participants expected to actually work together with the chosen leader. In study 1, participants had to choose a leader for a hypothetical university project based on a written self-assessment of the leader candidate. In study 2, a leader for a hypothetical start-up had to be selected based on short videos in which the candidates described themselves. In study 3, participants anticipated making a real leader choice for a later discussion group. After the method section, we present the results based on an integrated analysis of the data of all three experiments, and we report the general and the study-specific effects concerning our research questions.

Design

All three laboratory experiments had a within-subject design. Each participant had to rate (a) his/her liking of each of two potential leaders and (b) the perceived qualification of each of these two leaders (one presented as a consideration and one presented as an initiating structure leader) and, finally, had to (c) choose one of them as the preferred leader. This basic set-up of study 1 was extended in studies 2 and 3. Both in study 2 and study 3, we assessed participants' personality traits and motives in an online questionnaire, about three days before the laboratory part. Furthermore, we also manipulated leaders' gender based on videos and pictures as a between (i.e. participants were presented with leaders of the same gender, either two male or two female) and within-factor (i.e., participants had leaders of mixed gender, that is, one male and one female leader).

Sample

The sample of study 1 consisted of 90 participants (63.3% females and 36.7% males). On average, they were 24.58 ($SD = 4.57$; *range*: 19-50) years old. The sample of study 2 consisted of 223 participants, of which three were excluded as they indicated that they know the leader candidates

shown on the pictures personally. From the 220 final participants, 75.0% were female, 24.1% male, and 0.9% other ($M_{\text{age}} = 22.9$ years, $SD = 3.66$, *range*: 17-50). The sample of study 3 consisted of 261 participants of which four were excluded because they indicated to know the leader candidates personally. From the 257 final participants, 64.2% were female, 35.0% male and 0.8% other ($M_{\text{age}} = 25.5$ years, $SD = 7.59$, *range*: 18-67). The samples mostly consisted of undergraduate and graduate students. Participants only took part in one of the three studies. In study 1, participants were remunerated with four Euro or course credits. In study 2, they received 5 Euros, and in study 3, which was run together with another experiment that followed subsequently, they received 10 Euro as remuneration overall.

Procedure

For all three experiments, participants were recruited via invitation mails, social-media announcements, or leaflets to participate in a study on decision-making in groups and, if interested, to sign in to an online recruitment system (i.e. ORSEE). For experiment 1, participants received an email with proposed time slots to take part in a laboratory study and were asked to follow the link to the online recruitment system in order to indicate their participation in a given time slot. For experiment 2 and 3, participants got an email with the information that the study has two parts, an online and laboratory part and that they are only remunerated or get study credits if they take part in both parts. The participants had the possibility to follow the link to the first online questionnaire part of the study. There, they were informed about their participant rights, gave their informed consent, and generated a personal identifier code based on personal information before the filled in questions on their personality and motives. At the end of the online questionnaire, participants were asked to send an email to the experimenter, including their identifier code and a preferred date and time slot for participating in the laboratory part of the study (the earliest time slots were three days after participating in the online part). They were then contacted by the experimenter to inform them about the exact data and time of the second part, the laboratory part of the study.

Participants of all three studies, when arriving at the laboratory, were welcomed, and their registration data was checked in the online system. After that, they were led to a separate computer laboratory room and were asked to follow the instructions on the screen. Participants were informed about their rights and the use of their data, and they only proceeded with the study if they explicitly gave their informed consent. Unlike participants of experiment 1, participants of experiment 2 and 3 again had to generate their personal identifier code based on the same personal information as in the first online part of the study before the experiment started. Then they read the specific cover story of the experiment, read and saw the description of the two leaders and indicated their preferences via liking and qualification ratings and a choice. At the end of the experiment, participants were told to contact the experimenter who led them to a separate room. There, they received their remuneration or study credits, were debriefed about the purpose of the study, and were thanked for their participation.

Materials

Online Assessment of personality scales and explicit motives (Study 2-3)

BIG-Five: The Big-Five personality inventory (Lang, Lüdtke, & Asendorpf, 2001) was used to assess extraversion (8 items, min. $\alpha = .86$), agreeableness (8 items, min. $\alpha = .73$), conscientiousness (9 items, min. $\alpha = .79$), neuroticism (7 items, min. $\alpha = .81$), and openness (10 items, min. $\alpha = .83$). Items were answered on five-point Likert-type scales (1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither/nor, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree).

Explicit motives: The Unified Motive Scale 10 (UMS10, Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012) was used to assess the power motive (10 items, min. $\alpha = .74$), the achievement motive (10 items, min. $\alpha = .86$), and the affiliation motive (10 items, min. $\alpha = .87$)¹. Items were answered on six-point Likert-type scales (0 = totally disagree/totally unimportant, 1 = disagree/unimportant, 2 = rather disagree/rather unimportant, 3 = rather agree/rather important, 4 = agree/important, 5 = fully agree/very important)

Experimental manipulation of leadership style

Study 1

Participants were asked to imagine working in a student group with two other students, and that the outcome of this student group is important for their grade. Participants were told that one of these other students has to take over the role of a group leader who is responsible for duties like, for example, the moderation of meetings, or the allocation of tasks. Participants were instructed that they would receive self-assessments of all group members which they should read carefully before indicating their liking of the candidate, assessing the candidates' qualification, and making a choice for a leader candidate. Based on the self-assessments, potential leaders were depicted as high consideration with low initiating structure (i.e., consideration), and low consideration with high initiating structure (i.e., initiating structure).

Leadership styles were manipulated with a pre-filled self-assessment questionnaire. For these purposes, we used the Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ, Ohio State Leadership Studies, 1957), which is the most often used questionnaire when it comes to describing leadership behavior. The LBDQ consists of 30 items with Likert-type answering scales ranging from 0 = never to 4 = always. To manipulate low versus high values of consideration and initiating structure, participants were confronted with two pre-filled questionnaires. In the two questionnaires, the scales were filled in such that sum scores of eight (low) and/or 52 (high) resulted for each of the two dimensions of consideration and initiating structure. To avoid effects of the material (e.g., effects of the sequence of questions pre-filled as high or low), two versions of each questionnaire were used to manipulate consideration and initiating structure leadership. A pre-test was conducted in which 101 subjects rated the different leadership self-assessments (i.e., based on the filled in LBDQ

¹ In study 2, for exploratory reasons, intimacy and fear motives were also assessed as part of the UMS10.

questionnaires) on two items, one to assess consideration (“How considerate do you perceive this candidate?”) and one to assess initiating structure (“How much initiating structure does this candidate show?”). Results on a seven point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all, 7 = a lot) showed that low versus high consideration (low: $M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.26$, high: $M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.48$, $t(201) = 26.06$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.71$) and low versus high initiating structure (low: $M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.80$, high: $M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.62$, $t(201) = 26.06$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.71$) were perceived as intended. Results also showed that the two versions of the material did not differ from each other (consideration: $t(99) = 0.01$, $p = .999$; initiating structure: $t(99) = 0.31$, $p = .757$).

Study 2

Participants were asked to imagine that they were about to found a start-up business with two friends, and that one has to take over the leadership role. For private reasons, the participant her-/himself cannot take over that role and now has to choose who of the other two should become the leader. Leadership styles were manipulated with videos, each lasting approximately two minutes, in which a potential leader presented him/herself based on a text which resembled the pre-filled self-assessment questionnaire of study 1. In study 2, also leaders' gender was manipulated. Each leadership style was presented by couples composing of only men, or only women, or of mixed gender (in the latter case, leadership style and gender were manipulated independent of each other). Figure 1 presents the four leaders.

Figure 3: Video screenshots of the material to manipulate leadership style and leaders' gender (study 2)

Study 3:

Participants were told that, in the second stage of the experiment, they will work on judgment tasks in groups. For some of these groups, discussions will be led by one of two potential experimenters, and they now had to choose who of the two candidates should lead their discussions, given that they are randomly assigned to the condition with discussion leaders. However, later on, all participants took part in leaderless discussion groups.

Leadership styles were manipulated with a text in which a former mentor described each candidate with regard to four questions (e.g., “Which priorities does this leader have in groupwork?”, “How does this leader manage the relationship to his group members and assign group roles?”). A pretest with 64 participants, using two 7-point Likert type items (1 = low; 7 = high), showed that the consideration leader was perceived as more considerate ($M = 6.61$, $SD = 0.75$) and with less initiating structure ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.44$) than the initiating structure leader (perceived consideration: $M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.07$, $t(63) = 17.73$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.33$; perceived initiating structure: $M = 6.22$, $SD = 0.92$, $t(63) = -15.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.33$). On a 7-point Likert-type item regarding perceived realism (1 = very unrealistic, 7 = very realistic), both leadership styles were seen as rather realistic (consideration: $M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.54$; initiating structure: $M = 5.91$, $SD = 1.08$)². To manipulate leaders’ gender, pictures of the candidates were used. As in study 2, each leadership style was presented by same gender couples consisting of only men or only women, or by mixed gender couples

Assessment of leadership preferences

Assessment of qualification: Participants rated the perceived qualification of each of the two leader candidates on the Leader Qualification Scale (Spisak, Homan, Grabo, & van Vugt, 2012). The seven original items of the scale (“This person is a potential project leader”, “I would follow that person”, “This person is convincing”, “This person is competent”, “This person is reliable”, “This person is trustworthy”) were extended with one item (i.e., “This person is an eligible project leader”) and answered on seven-point Likert-type scales with labeled end-points (1 = totally agree, 7 = total disagree; min. Cronbach $\alpha = .82$).

Assessment of liking: For each potential leader, participants indicated their liking on a six-items liking scale (Erhardt & Klein, 2001; “I think, I would like to work for that person”, “I would work with a lot of effort for this person”, “I would get along well with that person”, “I would admire this person”, “The working style of this person would fit to my own working style”, “This person is similar to my ideal project leader”). Answers were given on seven-point Likert-type scales with labeled end-points (1 = totally agree, 7 = total disagree; min. $\alpha = .73$).

Assessment of leadership choice: Participants had to choose who of the two presented leader candidates is their preferred leader (the wording was “Please indicate which leader candidate should be the leader”). Answers were given by choosing candidate 1 or candidate 2.

Exploratory and control variables: In studies 2 and 3, we used exploratory items to assess attractiveness, competence, trustworthiness, similarity, and complementarity of the leader candidates. We also asked whether participants knew the two leaders personally (1 = yes, 2 = no).

Socio-demographics: For each participant, we assessed gender, age, and field of study.

² The initiating structure leaders were seen as even more realistic than the consideration leaders, $t(63) = -4.89$, $p < .001$.

Sensitivity analyses

In the following, we present sensitivity analyses for research questions 1 to 3 to determine the effect sizes that we can reliably detect with the present design. All analyses were conducted with the program G*power (Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007).

Research question 1: Do potential leaders with a consideration leadership style versus an initiating structure leadership style differ in liking ratings, qualification ratings, and choice frequency? To answer the research question concerning ratings, we conducted repeated measurement ANOVAs for the overall effects, followed by *t*-tests for dependent samples to examine the simple effects. A sensitivity analysis for dependent sample *t*-tests (two-sides, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, $N = 567$) indicated that we can detect differences in leadership ratings if the effect size is $d = 0.12$ or larger (0.20 = small effect, 0.50 = medium effect, 0.80 = large effect; Cohen, 1988).

To answer the research question concerning choice, we conducted chi-square tests. A respective sensitivity power analysis (goodness-of-fit tests: contingency tables, two-sides, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, $N = 567$) indicated that we can detect differences in leadership choice if the effect is $w = 0.12$ (0.10 = small effect; 0.30 = medium effect; Cohen, 1988) or larger.

Research question 2: Do followers' personality or motives predict a preference for a leadership style? To answer the research question concerning the effect of personality traits on ratings, we conducted a multiple linear regression analysis. For the effect of the five personality traits on leadership style ratings, we adjusted the Alpha level to .01 (.05 divided by five personality factors). A respective sensitivity analysis for linear multiple regressions (*t*-test, two-sided, Alpha level = .01, power = .80, $N = 472$, number of predictors: 5) indicated that we can detect the effect of a followers' personality trait on qualification or liking if it is $f^2 = .025$ or larger (0.02 = small effect, 0.15 = medium effect, 0.35 = large effect). To answer the research question concerning the effect of personality traits on choices, we conducted a multiple logistic regression. A sensitivity analysis for logistic regressions (*z*-test, two sided, Alpha level = .01, power = .80, $N = 472$) indicated that odds ratios of 1.50 or larger can be detected for the choice variable (1.68 = small effect, 3.47 = medium effect, 6.71 large effect; Chen, Cohen & Chen, 2010).

To answer the research question concerning the effect of motives on ratings, we again used a multiple linear regression, however, adjusted the Alpha level to .017 (0.05 divided by three motives). A sensitivity analysis for linear multiple regressions (*t*-test, two-sided, Alpha level = .017, power = .80, $N = 472$, number of predictors: 3) indicated that we can detect the effect of a followers' motive if it is $f^2 = .022$ or larger. To answer the research question concerning the effect of motives on choices, we again conducted a multiple logistic regression. A sensitivity analyses for logistic regressions (*z*-test, two sided, Alpha level = .017; power = .80, $N = 472$) indicated that odds ratios of 1.46 or larger can be detected for the choice variable.

Research question 3: Does followers' or leaders' gender predict a preference for a leadership style?

Effect of followers' gender on leadership style preferences: To answer the research question concerning the effect of followers' gender on ratings, we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA for the overall effects, and subsequent *t*-tests for independent samples to examine the simple effects. A sensitivity analyses for independent *t*-tests (*t*-test, two-sided, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, 200 male followers, 363 female followers) indicated that we can detect the effect of followers' gender if the effect is $d = 0.25$ or larger. To answer the research question concerning the effect of followers' gender on leadership style choice, we conducted a multiple logistic regression. A sensitivity analysis for logistic regression (*z*-test, two sided, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, $N = 567$) indicated that odds ratios of 1.34 or larger can be detected.

To answer the effect of leaders' gender on leadership style preferences, we analyzed the same-gender leader couples ($N = 228$) for between-subject effects, and the mixed gender leader couples ($N = 249$) for within-subject effects. Concerning differences in liking and qualification ratings in the same-gender couples, we conducted repeated measures ANOVAs for overall effects and *t*-tests for independent samples for simple effects. A sensitivity analysis (independent *t*-test, female couples: $N = 115$, male couples: $N = 113$, two-sides, Alpha level = .05, power = .80) indicated that we can detect ranking effects of $d = 0.37$ or larger). Concerning differences in liking and qualification ratings in the mixed gender leader couples, we conducted repeated measures ANOVA for the overall effect and *t*-tests for dependent samples for the simple effects. A sensitivity analysis based on a dependent *t*-test ($N = 249$, two-sides, Alpha level = .05, power = .80) indicated that we can detect ranking effects of $d = 0.18$ or larger.

To answer the effect of leaders' gender on choice of a leadership style in the same gender couples, we conducted a multiple linear regression. A sensitivity analysis for logistic regressions (*z*-test, two sided, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, $N = 228$) indicated that odds ratios of 1.60 or larger can be detected. Concerning the effect of leaders' gender on choice of a leadership style in the mixed gender couples, we conducted a chi-square test. A respective sensitivity analysis (goodness-of-fit tests: contingency tables, $N = 249$, two-sides, Alpha level = .05, power = .80, $df = 1$) indicated, that we can detect a difference if the effect is $w = 0.18$ or larger.

To sum up, for research question 1 on the preference for a leadership style and research question 2 concerning personality and motive predictors for leadership preference, we can reliably detect even small effects with a power of .80 or more (largest effect is $w = 0.12$). Concerning research question 3a on the effect of followers' gender on leadership preferences, we also can detect small effects (largest $d = 0.25$). For the effect of leaders' gender on leadership preferences (research question 3b), we can detect small to medium sizes effects (largest effect is $d = 0.37$).

Results

In the following, we present the results based on integrated analyses of the data of all three studies to highlight general and study-specific effects. To increase readability, main effects of study will not be reported in detail, as these effects only indicate that overall ratings differed between studies (which is irrelevant for our research questions). In addition, upon publication of this manuscript, we will make the complete dataset publicly available (together with the statistical code).

Qualification ratings

Qualification ratings of the leaders: A repeated measures ANOVA with qualification ratings of the consideration vs. the initiating structure leader as within-subject factor and study 1-3 as between subject factor showed a significant main effect of leadership style, $F(1, 564) = 58.31, p < .001, \eta^2 = .094$, a significant main effect of study, $F(2, 564) = 217.48, p < .001, \eta^2 = .435$, and no significant leadership x study interaction, $F(2, 564) = 1.54, p = .274$. The main effect of leadership style indicated that initiating structure leadership ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.20$) is rated as more qualified than consideration leadership ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.24$).

Predicting qualification ratings with follower's personality and motives: As the dependent variable for this analysis, we calculated a difference score by subtracting the qualification ratings for the initiating structure leader from the qualification ratings for the consideration leader, such that positive values indicate a higher qualification rating for the consideration leadership style. A linear regression on the data from studies 2 and 3 with qualification difference score as criterion was conducted. As predictors, followers' personality traits and explicit motives were included. In addition, gender and study were included as control variables. To test for possible differential effects in study 2 versus 3, the interaction terms of each predictor with study were also included in the regression analysis.

The results are presented in Table 1. On an adjusted Alpha level of $p = .01$ (.05 divided by five personality traits) for personality and an adjusted Alpha level of $p = .017$ (.05 divided by three motives) for motives, only the personality factor openness was positively related to these difference scores: participants higher in openness more strongly preferred the consideration leader to the initiating structure leader. Results also revealed a significant openness X study interaction. Two separate regression analyses were conducted for study 2 and 3. Results showed that in study 2, openness is significantly related to qualification ratings ($b = .55, SE = .16, t = 3.50, p = .001$), whereas there is no such relationship in study 3 ($b = -.01, SE = .16, t = -0.07, p = .949$).

Predicting qualification ratings with followers' and leaders' gender: To examine the effect of followers' gender on qualification ratings, a repeated measures ANOVA with qualification ratings of the consideration and initiating structure leader as within-subject factor and study 1-3 and followers' gender as between subject factor was conducted. If men and women differed in their preferences for consideration vs. initiating structure leadership styles, this would be indicated by a significant

interaction between followers' gender and the repeated measures factor "type of leadership style". This interaction, however, was not significant, $F(1, 557) = 0.46, p = .830$. The only significant effect was the study X followers' gender interaction, $F(2, 557) = 4.31, p = .014, \eta^2 = .02$. A post-hoc t -test for independent samples showed that in study 3, female followers ($M = 5.29, SD = 0.66$) gave overall higher qualification ratings than male followers ($M = 4.96, SD = 0.68$), $t(253) = -3.75, p < .001, d = 0.49$. There was no such difference between male and female followers in the other studies (max $t = 1.25, p = .211$). No other main or interaction effect of followers' gender were found (max $F = 1.70, p = .193$).

To examine whether female versus male leaders are rated differently in general, or depending on their leadership style, or whether female versus male leaders are rated differently by female and male followers, we used the same gender couples ($N = 228$) and the mixed gender couples ($N = 249$) of study 2 and study 3).

For the same gender couples, an ANOVA was conducted with qualification ratings for consideration and initiating structure as repeated measures factor, and leader couples' gender, followers' gender, and study as between subject factors. A main effect for leader couples' gender would indicate that female or male couples are rated differently, but this effect is not significant, $F(1, 218) = 0.21, p = .647$. A leader couples' gender X leadership style interaction would indicate that female and male leader couples are rated differently depending on their leadership style. However, this interaction was also not significant, $F(1, 218) = 0.02, p = .896$. A leader couples' gender X followers' gender interaction would indicate that female and male leader couples' qualification was rated differently by female versus male followers. Once more, this interaction was not significant, $F(1, 118) = 0.24, p = .630$. No other main or interaction effects of gender were significant (max $F = 2.41, \max p = .122$).

For the mixed gender couples, we conducted an analysis of variance with qualification ratings of male and female leaders as repeated measures factor, and followers' gender, female leadership (i.e., the female is the consideration leader versus the female is the initiating structure leader) and study as between subject factor. A main effect of the repeated measures factor would indicate that female and male leaders are rated differently, however, this effect is not significant, $F(1, 239) = 0.62, p = .430$. A main effect of the female leadership factor would show that female and male leaders are rated differently depending on their leadership style, however, this effect is also not significant (female consideration: $M = 4.45, SD = 0.96$; female initiating structure: $M = 4.62, SD = 0.93$), $F(1, 239) = 3.63, p = .058$.

The only significant effects were a main effect for followers' gender, $F(1, 239) = 4.93, p = .027, \eta^2 = .02$) and a repeated measures X female leadership interaction, $F(1, 239) = 42.39, p < .001, \eta^2 = .15$. The main effect for gender showed that female followers ($M = 4.64, SD = 1.23$) give higher qualification ratings than male followers ($M = 4.52, SD = 1.17$). Post-hoc tests for independent means on the interaction effect showed that both females, $t(247) = -5.35, p < .001, d = 0.68$, and males, $t(247)$

= 3.19, $p = .002$, $d = 0.41$), receive higher qualification ratings for initiating structure compared to consideration leadership (this is the same effect that we have already seen in the first paragraph of the results section). No other gender effect was significant (max $F = 2.08$, max $p = .151$).

Liking ratings

Ratings of liking for the leader: A repeated measures analyses of variance with liking ratings for the consideration versus initiating structure leader as within-subject factor and study 1-3 as between subject factor showed a main effect of leadership style, $F(1, 564) = 39.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .066$), a main effect of study, $F(2, 564) = 256.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .477$, and a leadership X study interaction, $F(2, 564) = 19.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .064$. The main effect of leadership style indicated that consideration leaders received higher liking ratings ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.15$) than initiating structure leaders ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.31$). Post-hoc tests for the leadership X study interaction with dependent sample t -tests showed that liking ratings between consideration and initiating structure significantly differ in study 1 (consideration: $M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.09$; initiating structure: $M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.06$), $t(89) = 5.45$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.94$, and in study 2 (consideration: $M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.05$; initiating structure: $M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.99$), $t(219) = 5.07$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.54$, but not significantly so in study 3, consideration: $M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.07$; initiating structure: $M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(256) = -1.16$, $p = .247$.

Predicting liking ratings with follower's personality and motives: As the dependent variable for this analysis, we calculated a difference score by subtracting the liking ratings for the initiating structure leader from the liking ratings for the consideration leader, such that high values indicate a higher liking rating for the consideration leadership style. A linear regression on the data from studies 2 and 3 with liking difference score as criterion was conducted. As predictors, followers' personality traits and explicit motives were included. In addition, gender and study were included as control variables. To test possible differential effects in study 2 versus 3, interaction terms between each predictor X study were also included in the regression analysis.

The results are presented in Table 1. On an adjusted Alpha level of $p = .01$ (.05 divided by five personality factors) for personality and an adjusted Alpha level of $p = .017$ (.05 divided by three motives) for motives, no significant predictor emerged, max $b = -.21$, $p = .043$. The significant main effect for study showed that in study 2 ($M = 0.55$, $SD = 1.62$) consideration leadership was liked more than in study 3 ($M = -0.12$, $SD = 1.59$).

Predicting liking ratings with followers' and leaders' gender: To examine the effect of followers' gender on liking ratings, a repeated measures ANOVA with liking ratings for the consideration and initiating structure leader as within-subject factor and study 1-3 and followers' gender as between subject factor was conducted. As already outlined, if men and women differed in their liking for consideration vs. initiating structure leadership styles, this would be indicated by a significant

interaction between followers' gender and the repeated measures factor "type of leadership style". This interaction, however, was not significant, $F(1, 557) = 1.13, p = .288$. Instead, results showed a significant main effect for followers' gender, $F(1, 557) = 4.49, p = .034, \eta^2 = .01$, indicating that women ($M = 4.09, SD = 1.32$) give higher liking ratings than men ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.28$). No other interaction effects of followers' gender were significant (max $F = 2.44, p = .088$).

To examine whether female versus male leaders are rated differently in general, or depending on their leadership style, or whether female versus male leaders are rated differently by female and male followers, we used the same gender couples ($N = 228$) and the mixed gender couples ($N = 249$) of study 2 and 3. For the same gender couples, an ANOVA was conducted with liking ratings for consideration and initiating structure as repeated measures factor, and leader couples' gender, followers' gender and study as between subject factors. None of the effects that are relevant for research question 3a and 3b became significant (max $F = 1.87, p = .173$), and we also found no other significant main or interaction effects of followers' or leaders' gender (max $F = 3.72, \max p = .055$).

For the mixed gender couples, we conducted an ANOVA with liking ratings of male and female leaders as repeated measures factor and followers' gender, female leadership (i.e., female consideration versus female initiating structure) and study as between subject factor. A main effect of the repeated measures factor would indicate that female and male leaders are rated differently, however, this effect is not significant, $F(1, 239) = 3.34, p = .069, \eta^2 = .014$ (female leaders: $M = 4.09, SD = 1.30$, male leaders: $M = 4.29, SD = 1.19$). A main effect of the female leadership factor would show that female and male leaders are rated differently depending on their leadership style, however, this effect is also not significant, female consideration: $M = 4.12, SD = 0.94$; female initiating structure: $M = 4.26, SD = 0.89$; $F(1, 239) = 3.43, p = .065$.

Instead, results showed a significant main effect for followers' gender, $F(1, 239) = 8.14, p = .005, \eta^2 = .033$, a repeated measures X female leadership interaction, $F(1, 239) = 4.53, p = .034, \eta^2 = .019$, and a three-way repeated measures X female leadership X study interaction, $F(1, 239) = 10.55, p = .001, \eta^2 = .042$. The main effect of followers' gender showed that female followers ($M = 4.32, SD = 1.16$) give higher liking ratings than male followers ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.26$). For the two way interaction, a post-hoc t -test for independent samples revealed that male consideration leaders ($M = 4.46, SD = 1.09$) are liked more than male initiating structure leaders ($M = 4.13, SD = 1.29, t(247) = -2.18, p = .03, d = 0.28$) whereas there is no significant difference in liking ratings between female consideration ($M = 4.11, SD = 1.26$) and female initiating structure leaders ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.34, t(247) = 0.24, p = .813$). However, the three-way interaction³ showed that gender effects concerning the liking of different leadership styles occurred only in the mixed couples conditions in study 2.

³ The three-way interaction showed that in study 2, male consideration leaders ($M = 4.15, SD = 0.98$) are liked more than male initiating structure leaders ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.09, t(114) = -4.06, p < .001, d =$

Choice

Choice of leadership style: To test whether one of the two leadership styles is chosen more often overall, a chi square test was conducted on the data of study 1-3. Results showed that, across studies, there was no significant difference between the choice frequencies for consideration (46.9%) and initiating structure (53.1%), $N = 567$; $\chi^2(1) = 2.16$; $p = .14$). Including study 1-3 as a second factor indicated that the distribution of leadership style choices among the different studies varied, $N = 567$; $\chi^2(2) = 6.17$; $p = .046$. In study 3, initiating structure (58.0%) was chosen more often than consideration (42.0%), $\chi^2(1) = 6.54$; $p = .011$, whereas in study 1 (consideration: 56.7% versus initiating structure: 43.3%, $p = .206$) and in study 2 (consideration: 48.6% versus initiating structure: 51.4%, $p = .686$) no significant differences occurred.

Predicting choice with follower's personality and motives: A logistic regression (Table 1) with data from study 2 and 3 with followers' choice of consideration versus initiating structure leadership as criterion was conducted. As predictors, followers' personality traits and explicit motives and, as control variables, followers' gender and study were included. To test for possible differential effects in study 2 versus study 3, interaction terms between each predictor and study were also included in the regression analysis.

As shown in Table 1, on an adjusted p-level of $p = .01$ for personality traits, openness is a significant predictor: followers with high openness values are more likely to choose a consideration leader than an initiating structure leader. On an adjusted Alpha level of $p = .017$ for motives, results showed that the achievement motive is a significant predictor ($b = -.55$, $SE = .20$, $t = 7.38$, $p = .007$): followers with a strong achievement motive are more likely to choose an initiating structure leader than a consideration leader. No other effects were significant (max. Wald statistics = 3.54, $p = .060$).

Choice and followers' and leaders' gender: To examine the effect of followers' gender on the choice for consideration versus initiating structure leadership style, a logistic regression with choice for consideration as predictor and gender, study 2, study 3 as well as the interactions between study and gender was conducted (study 1 was the reference group) based on the data from studies 1 to 3. A significant main or interaction effect of gender would indicate that female and male followers differ in their leadership preferences, however, results showed no such significant effects (max Wald statistics = 0.05, max $p = .827$).

0.76) whereas there is no such difference in study 3, male consideration: $M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.11$, male initiating structure: $M = 4.80$, $SD = 0.99$, $t(131) = 0.47$, $p = .639$.

To examine whether female versus male leaders are chosen differently in general, or depending on their leadership style, or whether female versus male leaders are chosen differently by female and male followers, we used the same gender couples ($N = 228$) and the mixed gender couples ($N = 249$) of study 2 and 3. For the same gender couples, a logistic regression with the choice for consideration versus initiating structure as criterion and leader couple's gender, followers' gender and study as well as the three interaction terms between leader couple, followers' gender and study as predictors was conducted. A main effect for leader couples' gender would indicate that in female as compared to male couples, different leadership styles are chosen. However, this effect is not significant, Wald statistics = 2.10, $p = .147$. A leader couples' gender X followers' gender interaction would indicate that in female as compared to male leader couples, female and male followers choose different leadership styles. This interaction was significant, Wald statistics = 4.78, $p = .029$. A post-hoc chi-square test on the distribution of choices among male and female couples and male and female followers showed that male followers chose differently in male versus female couples, $N = 63$; $\chi^2(1) = 4.46$; $p = .035$. In male gender couples, male followers chose initiating structure (72.7%) more often than consideration, 27.3%, $N = 33$; $\chi^2(1) = 6.82$, $p = .009$. Male followers make no difference in female couples (consideration: 53.3%; initiating structure: 47.7%; $p = .715$). Female followers' choices of leadership style do not vary depending on the gender of the leader couple, $N = 163$; $\chi^2(1) = 0.74$; $p = .390$; consideration: 49.7%, initiating structure: 50.3%. No other main or interaction effect with gender was significant (max. Wald statistics = 0.15, $p = .696$).

In the mixed-gender leader couples, a chi-square test on the distribution of male versus female leader choices was conducted. This test was, however, not significant; overall, female leaders (47.8%) and male leaders (52.2%) were chosen about equally often, $N = 249$, $\chi^2 = 0.49$, $p = .486$. To examine whether the choice for female versus male leaders differs depending on leadership style, followers' gender or study, a logistic regression was conducted. Choice for leader gender was the criterion and choice for a leadership style, followers' gender, study and the corresponding interactions were the predictors. This analysis did not reveal any significant effects (max Wald statistics = 0.54, max $p = .461$).

Table 1: Integrated analysis of study 2 and 3 ($N = 472$) for the effects of personality traits and motives on leadership preferences

	Qualification			Liking			Choice		
	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	Wald	<i>p</i>
Extraversion	.03(.13)	0.24	.814	-.09(.13)	0.67	.503	-.05(.21)	0.05	.828
Agreeableness	-.06(.13)	0.46	.649	.23(.12)	1.84	.066	-.10(.16)	0.37	.541
Conscientiousness	-.08(.12)	0.64	.524	-.20(.11)	1.75	.080	.05(.16)	0.11	.745
Neuroticism	.12(.11)	1.16	.247	.07(.10)	0.71	.476	.21(.17)	1.61	.204
Openness	.39(.11)	3.54	<.001	.24(.10)	2.30	.022	.56(.17)	10.64	.001
Power motive	-.23(.12)	1.86	.063	-.19(.12)	1.62	.107	-.29(.19)	2.35	.125
Achievement motive	-.10(.11)	0.94	.346	-.21(.10)	2.03	.043	-.55(.20)	7.38	.007
Affiliation motive	.05(.10)	0.46	.644	.20(.10)	2.00	.046	.29(.19)	2.35	.125
Gender	-.04(.18)	0.23	.820	.24(.17)	1.43	.154	-.11(.38)	0.09	.764

PREFERENCE FOR CONSIDERATION AND INITATING STUCTURE

Study	.11(.19)	0.58	.560	-.58 (.18)	3.25	.001	-.34(.40)	0.73	.394
Extroversion x study	.06(.13)	0.46	.646	.12 (.12)	1.00	.320	.14(.28)	0.27	.605
Agreeableness x study	.16(.11)	1.53	.128	.03(.10)	0.32	.748	.02(.23)	0.01	.936
Consciousness x study	.02(.10)	0.23	.819	.01(.10)	0.08	.935	-.10(.23)	0.21	.649
Neuroticism x study	-.01(.11)	0.12	.906	.04(.10)	0.40	.692	-.05(.23)	0.05	.949
Openness x study	-.28(.11)	2.50	.013	-.16(.10)	1.60	.109	-.42(.24)	3.11	.078
Power motive x study	.01(.11)	0.08	.940	-.03(.11)	0.29	.773	.02(.25)	0.01	.925
Achievement motive x study	.11(.12)	0.95	.940	.20(.11)	1.78	.075	.49(.27)	3.54	.060
Affiliation motive x study	-.05(.12)	0.41	.680	-.13(.11)	1.13	.261	.23(.26)	0.79	.374
Gender x study	.06(.23)	0.26	.793	-.21(.22)	0.97	.331	-.08(.49)	0.03	.868
<i>Max VIF</i>	5.67			5.67					
<i>F/χ²</i>	1.78		.033	4.07		<.001	46.65		<.001
<i>df</i>	19			19			19		
<i>Adj. R²/Cox & Snell R²</i>	.03			.11			.09		

Note: Linear regression results for qualification and preference and logistic regression results for choice. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Study: 0 = study two, 1 = study three); Choice: 0 = initiating structure, 1 = consideration

Discussion

The leadership styles consideration and initiating structure belong to the most prominent leadership behaviors in the literature (Stogdill, 1950; Fleishman, 1953; Bass, 1990). Whereas there is an abundance of literature on the effects of both styles on outcomes such as satisfaction or motivation (e.g., Judge et al., 2004), relatively little is known about whether these styles are also important for followership and contribute to the emergence of leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The aim of the present study was to investigate followers' preferences for consideration and initiating structure leadership and to shed light on followers' personality and motives as predictors of such leadership preferences. In addition, we also investigated whether followers' or leaders' gender influences leadership preferences.

To this end, we conducted three laboratory experiments in which a large sample of 567 participants indicated their leadership preferences by rating their liking for and the perceived qualification of a consideration leader (i.e., a potential leader who scored high on consideration, but low on initiating structure) and an initiating structure leader (i.e., a potential leader with the opposite profile) before making a choice between the two. In two of the experiments ($N = 472$), participants' personality and motives were assessed online several days before the laboratory assessment of leadership preferences. Additionally, these two experiments manipulated leaders' gender based on videos and pictures. All three experiments varied concerning their cover story, and with regard to the extent that participants anticipated that they would actually work together with the chosen leader, thereby adding to the generalizability of our findings.

Results showed that both styles are rated differently, but overall no "winner" emerged. Followers indicated that they liked consideration leaders more than initiating structure leaders while, at the same time, evaluating the initiating structure leaders as more qualified than consideration leaders. However, when it comes to a concrete choice, followers chose both types of leaders about

equally often. Thereby, our results contradict past literature reporting that consideration is generally preferred over initiating structure leadership (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Sellgren et al., 2006; Rhee & Sigler, 2015). A likely reason is that the majority of past research assessed followers' preferences not by means of asking them to select a particular leader, but rather by means of eliciting ratings of liking (and with regard to such ratings of likings, our results showed the same superiority of consideration leadership). Based on the present data, from a large sample, assessing preferences based on choices instead of solely ratings, in controlled laboratory settings over varying contexts, such a clear preference for consideration is not found. Instead, followers do, in general, prefer both styles equally often.

At the same time, our findings indicate that followers' preferences are, to some extent, affected by followers' personality traits and explicit motives. Concerning predictive personality factors, our results, in contrast to previous studies, only showed one robust predictor, namely openness. Followers who have high values in openness prefer a consideration leader to an initiating structure leader indicated by higher qualification ratings and by choice. Openness means to appreciate novelty, adventure or unusual ideas, and describes intellectually curious and creative individuals (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). Having the choice, open followers likely rather choose the consideration leader than the initiating structure leader who might be more likely to restrict their intellectual and creative autonomy. Thus, the current results add evidence to previous studies which also reported that openness is a significant predictor of leadership preferences (e.g., Emery et al., 2013; Felfe & Schnyns, 2010; Stevens & Ash, 2001). However, our study, to the best of our knowledge, is the first that showed that openness does not only affect ratings but also leadership choices.

In contrast to the existing literature, no other personality factor was a significant predictor of leadership preferences. In particular, precursor studies reported that agreeableness is related to leadership preferences (e.g., Emery et al., 2013; Felfe & Schnyns, 2010; Stevens & Ash, 2001). However, the current results based on larger sample sizes than any previous study, suggest that the relevance of agreeableness can be doubted.

The present study, to the best of our knowledge, delivers first evidence on the predictive power of followers' explicit motives (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) for leadership preferences. Results indicated that the achievement motive, but not the affiliation or the power motive is related to leadership preferences. Followers with a high achievement motive more likely chose an initiating structure leader to a consideration leader. In addition, the achievement motive predicted qualification ratings and choices, but not liking ratings, suggesting that the achievement motive is predictive for instrumental leadership judgments and choices, and less so for sympathy judgments such as liking. Individuals with a high achievement motive are predominantly interested in their personal success (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) and, thus, for them it is probably less important than for others whether they like a future leader or not.

The present studies also allowed us to examine the effect of followers' and leaders' gender on leadership style preferences. Results showed no significant general differences. In contrast to studies that suggest that female and male followers might prefer different leadership styles (e.g., Fein et al., 2010), our results showed that female and male followers rate and choose consideration and initiating structure leadership in a similar manner. Furthermore, in contrast to previous findings on the backlash effect (e.g., Rudman, 1998), our results also showed no significant differences in preferences for consideration and initiating structure leadership depending on whether the leader is female or male.

Although we occasionally found some gender effects, it should be noted that these effects were inconsistent with predictions from the literature and, more importantly were not consistent over the assessed variables or studies. For example, we found that male consideration leaders are more liked than male initiating structure leaders (whereas there was no such difference for female leaders). However, this effect only occurred in the mixed gender couples in study 2 and not concerning the qualification rating or the choice behavior. To the opposite, this result was contrasted by another finding showing that in same gender leader couples, male followers rather chose the initiating structure leader than the consideration leader. In sum, our results indicate that there is no general mismatch between females and the leadership role (Eagly, 2007), and that no simple or robust backlash effect can be found which postulates that leadership behavior violating gender stereotypes is punished (Rudman, 1998; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Thereby, the present results underline the conclusion of recent studies that general gender effects in leadership are diminishing since the first studies conducted some decades ago (Williams & Tiedens, 2016).

When considering our current findings, some limitations have to be taken into account. First and foremost, our samples predominantly consisted of students instead of employees, meaning that our participants had less experience with leadership in "real" business contexts. Also, the laboratory set-up of our experiments was clearly more artificial compared to real business situations. Hence, to the extent that leadership preferences are formed or modulated within real business environments, and from experience from leadership in such environments, such determinants of leadership preferences could not be grasped with our experiments and, hence, were outside the scope of our study. Instead, our series of experiments focused on basic leadership preferences that might exist before experience with "real" business environments sets in (although, of course, to some extent schools and universities also provide participants with examples of leadership). Apart from the fact that this is an interesting question in its own right, an upside of the above-mentioned limitations is that we were able to effectively manipulate different leadership styles in a controlled environment, which allowed us to make conclusions about general patterns in leadership preferences. A "clean" manipulation of leadership styles is difficult to reach in business organizations with experienced subjects who have strong pre-experimental opinions. Thus, the present result complements existing field research, rather than attempting to replace it. Nevertheless, we think that it could be a fruitful next step to run, for example, field-experiments in which different leadership styles are manipulated and, importantly, real,

consequential choices are being made, to examine the generalizability of the present findings. To particularly examine the practical implications of the present findings, future research also could address leadership emergence in businesses which are known to vary concerning openness and achievement motives of their employees. For instance, in business sectors that particularly deal with creativity (e.g., marketing, advertising) in which more employees have high openness values, more often consideration leaders should be chosen than in the financial sector where more employees might endorse a high achievement motive. Hence, although our current set of experiments was designed to detect basic leadership preferences in a very controlled setting, in the long run an extension of this research might also lead to recommendations about which behaviors might be helpful in which contexts if one aims at emerging as a leader.

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