

Personality, Trust and Transformational Leadership Assessments: The 2004 Australian Elections

Rajnandini Pillai, Brian D'Netto

Abstract

This study sought to identify leadership characteristics which transcend the business world and apply to leaders in other arenas. The study was conducted in the context of the 2004 Australian national election. Data were collected from 75 working students in Southeastern Australia. Voters were asked to rate the transformational/charismatic leadership of the two main candidates, John Howard (Liberal) and Mark Latham (Labour). As in studies conducted in the United States of America, party identification and transformational leadership predicted intent to vote for a particular candidate. Perceptions of candidate proactive behavior, need for achievement and trust in the leader were shown to be related to transformational leadership. Implications of the findings for leadership development and further research are discussed.

Introduction and Background

Leadership is a topic that has intrigued people through the ages (Daft, 2002). The term brings up images of charismatic and dynamic individuals who guide the fortunes of nations, corporations and other organizations. Khurana (2002) states that the secret of being a successful CEO today is leadership. Although most business leaders are appointed, in a democratic political process leaders are elected. In both contexts, however, leadership and personality have always played an important role in the decision-making processes. Our study examines whether there are common leadership characteristics which transcend the business world and are applicable in different settings. Specifically, we examined if leadership characteristics such as need for achievement, emotional empathy, proactivity and trust are associated with transformational leadership ratings in the political arena. By identifying a set of universal leadership characteristics, leadership development experts can assist individuals to be effective leaders in various types of organizations and contexts. In this study, we focused on the role of leadership in the 2004 Australian elections.

Leadership in the Political Arena

More than six months after the Australian elections of 2004, Indyk and Soutphommasane (2005) argued that

“the most striking lesson to arise from the ashes of Labor’s defeat is the primacy of leadership credentials.” Past research has shown that leadership perceptions play an important role in voter preference and choice (e.g., Maurer, et al., 1993; Shamir, 1994). Using leadership categorization theory, Maurer, et al., examined the match between voters’ perceptions of a candidate’s traits and their prototype of an effective leader. In the context of the 1988 U.S. presidential elections, they found that the higher the prototypicality of a trait with regards to an effective political leader prototype, the stronger the relationship between perceptions of the candidate regarding the trait, and whether the respondent voted for the leader. Shamir (1994) found that the level of perceived charismatic leadership and ideological position influenced voting preferences of Israeli voters during the 1992 elections for Israel’s prime minister.

In a study using both experimental and national election data, Rapoport, Metcalf, and Hartman (1989) found that voters were likely to make inferences about candidates’ approaches to campaign issues based on the candidates’ personality traits, and about their personality traits based on those approaches. However, inferences about personalities derived from issues were much stronger and were based on implicit theories of politics and human nature. In a study of

the U.S. presidential election of 2000, Pillai, Williams, Lowe, and Jung (2003) showed that perceptions of candidate proactivity, empathy, and need for achievement were related to transformational and charismatic leadership. They also showed that trust in the candidates played an important role in leadership evaluations and voting behavior, as did party identification. The present study is an exploratory attempt to replicate some aspects of that study in the context of the Australian elections of 2004. The main candidates were the incumbent prime minister, John Howard of the Liberal Party, and his charismatic and youthful challenger, Mark Latham of the Labour Party. The study took place in the context of a robust and growing Australian economy under Prime Minister John Howard's stewardship, but also the divisiveness among Australians on the issue of the Liberal government's support for the unpopular war in Iraq. Although the study was conducted against the backdrop of a national election, it also has implications for leadership in the business context. Further, the study seeks to apply concepts such as transformational leadership, trust, and personality, which have been explored in the business context, to the election of political leaders.

Transformational Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, and Voting Behavior

Over the last couple of decades, the focus of leadership research has shifted from traditional or transactional models of leadership to leadership theories, which are proposed to have extraordinary effects on individuals and organizations (House & Shamir, 1993). The impact of this shift has rejuvenated the study of leadership (Hunt, 1999) and made theories of charismatic, visionary, and transformational leadership the most studied area of leadership over the last decade (Lowe & Gardner, 2000). It may be argued, however, that the ethical transgressions of the so-called superstar CEOs like Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom, Martha Stewart and others have tarnished the image of charismatic leaders in U.S. business. Burns (1978) developed the initial ideas on transformational and transactional leadership through a qualitative analysis of the biographies of various political leaders. Bass (1985) further refined these models for the organizational liter-

ature by drawing a contrast between transformational and transactional behaviors while ultimately arguing for an augmenting impact of the former on the latter (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations by activating followers' higher order needs, fostering a climate of trust, and inducing followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organization. Transactional leaders motivate followers by making rewards contingent on expected standards of performance. Bass's current conceptualization of transformational leadership, as identified in the full range of leadership model (Avolio & Bass, 2002), treats charisma as a central aspect of transformational leadership, along with the dimensions of intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation.

Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) reviewed the leadership literature and identified intellectual stimulation, individualized support, high performance expectations, fostering the acceptance of group goals, role modeling, and identifying and articulating a vision as the key behaviors of transformational leaders. With respect to charisma, Max Weber (1968) first used the term "charismatic" to describe a form of social authority that devolved on an individual because that individual was believed to be endowed with the gift of divine grace. His conceptualization has remained singularly influential throughout the years, as interest in analyzing social change using cultural frameworks has grown (Jermier, 1993).

Research on transformational and charismatic leadership in a variety of settings has empirically established the link of such leadership to individual and organizational outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, and commitment (Lowe et. al. 1996; DeGroot, Kiker & Cross, 2000). As House and Shamir (1993) have pointed out, these studies have been conducted across a wide variety of samples (e.g., managers, military personnel, educational leaders, U.S. presidents, and priests) using a variety of methods (e.g., case studies, laboratory experiments, historical archive information, content analyses, and longitudinal analyses). House & Shamir (1993) suggest that charismatic, transformational, or visionary leadership behaviors

activate motivational mechanisms that, in turn, affect follower self-concepts and result in heightened commitment, self-sacrifice, and performance. Our study attempts to test a model that explicates the relationship of personality and trust to leadership and the impact of leadership and party affiliation on voting intentions.

Proactive Behavior and Transformational/Charismatic Leadership

Bateman and Crant (1993, p. 103) define proactivity as “a dispositional construct that identifies differences among people in the extent to which they take action to influence their environments.” The proactive personality is critical to organizational and political success in an ever-changing world and has been found to be related to in a variety of domains, including job performance, socialization, careers and leadership (Crant, 2000). According to Crant (2000), perceptions of leadership and leadership effectiveness are related to the proactive personality. Proactive behavior involves taking control of a situation and reducing the uncertainty in it, a characteristic of charismatic and transformational leaders who often emerge during a crisis. Deluga (1998) argued that charismatic leaders employ many proactive behaviors such as demonstrating initiative, taking action and enduring until goals are achieved, and this may be especially true of charismatic presidents. Deluga’s study used ratings on all American presidents from Washington to Reagan to show that proactive behavior explained considerable variance in presidential performance and charismatic leadership. Taking a “view from the top” approach, Crant and Bateman (2000) showed that managers who scored themselves high on proactivity were rated more highly by their bosses on a measure of charismatic leadership. Pillai et al. (2003) showed that voters in the 2000 U.S. presidential election accorded higher transformational ratings to the candidates that they perceived as more proactive. Thus, a review of the literature indicates that proactivity has a positive relationship with charismatic and transformational leadership which involves mobilizing followers with an appealing vision, challenging them to reframe problems, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and engaging in individual development activities.

Need for Achievement and Transformational/ Charismatic Leadership

The need for achievement which is part of achievement orientation has generally been found to enhance leadership effectiveness. Managers and leaders with a moderately high amount of achievement motivation are more effective than managers or leaders with a low need for achievement. Research on the need for achievement spans several decades (McClelland, 1985). Studies have shown that individuals who score high on the achievement motive show high self-confidence, prefer to take direct control, and assume personal responsibility for task performance (House, et al., 1991). Transformational leaders are relatively high in the personality characteristic of need for achievement and so are charismatic leaders (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Bass, 1985). Although there have been some mixed empirical findings regarding the positive effect of the achievement motive on transformational/charismatic leadership (e.g., Avolio & Dionne, et al., 1996; House et al. 1991; Judge & Bono, 2000), it is plausible to argue that in order to set challenging goals necessary for achieving the vision, leaders must have a high need for achievement. Further, in order to arouse followers’ need for achievement and elicit extraordinary levels of performance, such leaders must be perceived as highly self-confident and possessing a high need for achievement themselves. In the context of an election for national office such as prime minister, as a candidate makes his or her way through the grueling campaign, it is unlikely that he or she would become the leader of the party without being perceived as highly achievement-oriented. This perception in turn is likely to drive leadership ratings. Therefore, we posit that the extent to which a candidate is perceived as having a high need for achievement is positively associated with the candidate being perceived as transformational and charismatic.

Empathy and Transformational/Charismatic Leadership

With the popularity of the idea of “emotional intelligence” in the workplace following the publication of Daniel Goleman’s books on the subject, empathy has assumed greater importance both in the workplace and

in the political arena. According to Goleman (1998), empathy is an important component because of the increasing use of teams, the rapid pace of globalization and the growing need to retain talent. Bass (1998) also suggests that empathy, which is an important component of emotional intelligence, is associated with transformational leadership. Renshon (1998, p. 219) argues that “Empathetic attunement is the capacity to understand another by entering into an appreciation of the other’s experiences, feelings, expectations, and perspectives.” It is this interconnectedness that voters appear to seek in prime ministerial candidates and other national leaders, especially in times of crisis. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton was famous for being able to understand people’s pain, a trait especially evident during disasters. Current President George W. Bush’s empathy was severely tested after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and then New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani became an international icon because of the way he dealt with those attacks on his city. Prime Minister John Howard displayed the same empathy following the Bali terrorist attacks in 2002 that killed so many Australians. Howard also displayed genuine compassion during the Tsunami disaster in December 2004. Empathetic leaders are viewed as having a greater likelihood of effectively mentoring and developing followers, an important role in the process of being viewed as a transformational and charismatic leader. In addition, empathy is congruent with individualized consideration that a leader shows his or her followers, which is a significant component of transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Thus, we predict that empathy will be positively related to transformational and charismatic leadership.

Trust and Transformational Leadership

Trust in the leader and the organization is especially important in the context of the corporate scandals in the United States and especially during a crisis, whether it is a crisis that faces the nation or one that

faces an organization. Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggested a direct relationship between transformational leadership and trust, since effective transformational leaders must first earn the trust of their followers. Trust may also be important to transformational leaders because of the need to mobilize follower commitment toward the leader’s vision (Bass, 1985). Followers who distrust their leader are unlikely to be willing to make the sacrifices that are sometimes necessary for achieving the vision. Followers of transformational or charismatic leaders are usually expected to support the leader’s attempts to change the status quo and to be ready to take risks. In a study of the 2000 presidential election, Pillai et al. (2003) showed that transformational and charismatic leadership influenced voting preferences and actual voting behavior, a relationship that was mediated by trust in the presidential candidate. Podsakoff et al. (1990) showed that trust, conceptualized as faith in and loyalty to the leader, was directly related to transformational leadership. Lewicki and Bunker (1995) argue that trust may result from a sense of identification with another’s desires and intentions. Activities that strengthen identification-based trust, such as developing a collective identity, creating joint products and goals, and committing to commonly shared values (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995) have also been identified as characteristic of the relationship between transformational leaders and subordinates (Bass, 1985). Connell, Ferres, and Travaglione (2003) found that transformational leadership was significantly related to trust, which in turn predicted turnover intent and organizational commitment in an Australian organization. Trust played an important role in the Australian elections of 2004, with Prime Minister John Howard campaigning on trust in his government’s ability to keep the nation secure and protect its record economic expansion (Clausen, 2004). Thus, we expect a positive relationship between trust and transformational and charismatic ratings of the candidates.

Party Identification and Leadership

Party identification¹ is considered a stabilizing influence on voting intentions. In the absence of any specific reason for doing otherwise, the voter's natural tendency is to vote for candidates of the party with which he or she identifies (Crespi, 1988). Shamir's (1994) study set in the context of the 1992 Israeli elections, demonstrated that leaders' perceived charisma was strongly related to voters' ideological positions. This occurs because people are likely to attribute positive leadership qualities to a leader whose affiliation with a political institution is perceived as a proxy for embodying their views, and because followers' attitudes and beliefs may be manifested in their evaluations of leader charisma (House, 1977; Shamir, 1994). Party members are also likely to rally behind and identify with a leader whom they see as espousing a vision that advances the fundamental beliefs of the party, and they are likely to see such a leader as being transformational or charismatic. This is also relevant in the business context where followers are likely to follow a leader who embodies their values. Carly Fiorina of Hewlett Packard found this out the hard way when she tried to change the culture of the venerable Silicon Valley company. In the context of elections, this was shown in the 1996 and 2000 U.S. presidential election studies of the role of leadership and party identification in voting behavior by Pillai and Williams (1998) and Pillai et al., (2003) respectively. It is interesting that despite independent judgments about the leadership qualities of the candidates as expressed by the media and other observers, party affiliation has always been a strong determinant of charismatic and transformational leadership evaluations. Thus, the party identification argument would suggest that voters espousing Liberal Party values are more likely to see John Howard as being charismatic and transformational and voters embracing Labour values are more likely to see Mark Latham as being charismatic and transformational.

¹The Australian political system is multiparty in form with competition for government and control of the legislature being largely between two parties, Liberal and Labour. Reference to the Liberal Party in this paper includes the Liberal/National Coalition. Historically, either Labour or Liberals have dominated the electorate, winning over 80 percent of the votes cast at elections (O'Casey, 2002). Liberal and Labour roughly correspond with the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. respectively. Voting in Australia is compulsory and all citizens over 18 must be registered and must vote. Alliances are usually formed with minor parties and independent candidates to win the election and to assist in passage of bills through both houses of parliament.

Method

Participants

The participants were working students enrolled in an MBA program in Southeastern Australia. Of the sample, 67.2 percent were male and 32.8 percent female. The mean age of the sample was 32.18 years. With respect to education, 50.7 percent had completed a bachelor's degree, 38.7 percent had a master's degree and 5.3 percent had a doctorate. The average work experience was five years, with 69.3 percent currently employed. English was the first language of 74.7 percent of the participants. They were employed in a variety of industries, with 18.1 percent in supervisory or managerial jobs, 51.4 percent in professional jobs, 29.1 percent in sales and service jobs and 1.4 percent in secretarial jobs. As regards intention to vote, 62.7 percent intended to vote for John Howard and 29.3 percent intended to vote for Mark Latham. Liberal Party members composed 47.2 percent of the sample; 22.2 percent belonged to the Labour Party.

Procedures

Surveys measuring respondent demographic characteristics and perceptions of presidential candidate individual characteristics, transformational and charismatic leadership, trustworthiness, and intent to vote (which candidate) were administered as a class activity two weeks before the Australian elections in October 2004. Following previous studies in this genre (Pillai et al., 2003; Pillai & Williams, 1998), each respondent was asked to rate the two main candidates, John Howard and Mark Latham, as a leader if "you were his immediate subordinate (follower or direct report or employee)." They were asked to use their own judgment. This is common practice in studies where individuals are rating distant political leaders because of the "in your living room" familiarity and access to

print, television and Internet media that characterize modern campaigns.

Measures

Proactive Behavior

Latack (1986) developed a 17-item scale to measure active control strategies covering proactive behaviors. A five-point scale ranging from 1 = “hardly ever does this” to 5 = “almost always does this” was used for responses. A sample item from this scale is “Tries to see difficult situations as an opportunity to learn and develop new skills.” Latack provided preliminary evidence of construct validity. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) were 0.87 for John Howard and 0.92 for Mark Latham.

Need for Achievement

Medcof and Wegener (1992) developed a four-item scale to measure opportunities to satisfy the need for achievement. This scale was adapted to reflect actual need for achievement. For example, instead of having respondents indicate the extent to which the job is challenging, we asked them to indicate the extent to which the candidate “Prefers challenging jobs.” A five-point scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree” was employed. The reliability coefficients were 0.88 for John Howard and 0.87 for Mark Latham.

Emotional Empathy

A 30-item scale measuring emotional empathy was examined in Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999). The scale was compared to the Epstein-Mehrabian emotional empathy scale (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972) and found to have a high degree of content overlap. For our research a 10-item version was employed which was also used by Pillai et al. (2003). These 10 items reflect empathic suffering, positive sharing, and feeling for others. Sample items for each respective area are: “It makes him mad to see someone treated unjustly”; “Seeing other people smile makes him smile”; and, “He feels other people’s pain.” A five-point scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly

agree” was employed. The reliability coefficients were 0.91 for John Howard and 0.92 for Mark Latham.

Trust

The six-item measure of identification-based trust developed by Lewicki, Stevenson, and Bunker (1997) was used. Identification-based trust suggests empathizing strongly with the candidates and identification with the goals espoused. A sample item from this scale is “This person and I share the same basic values.” A five-point scale ranging from 1 = “not at all true of this person” to 5 = “definitely true of this person” was employed. The reliability coefficients were 0.90 for John Howard and 0.91 for Mark Latham.

Transformational Leadership

The 23-item measure of transformational leadership (transformational leadership inventory) developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) was employed. The measure includes six transformational leadership behaviors: articulating a vision; providing an appropriate model; fostering the acceptance of group goals; high performance expectations; individualized support; and intellectual stimulation. We employed the global measure to replicate the study of the 1996 election conducted by Pillai and Williams (1998). A seven-point scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree” was employed. The reliability coefficients were 0.84 for John Howard and 0.83 for Mark Latham.

Charismatic Leadership

The eight-item scale of attributed charisma from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1991) was employed. A sample item: “Displays a sense of power and confidence.” A seven-point scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree” was employed. The reliability coefficients were 0.89 for John Howard and 0.81 for Mark Latham.

Party Affiliation

Respondents indicated their party affiliation as Liberal, Labour, Democrat, Greens, or Other. Since Lib-

eral and Labour have consistently won over 80 percent of the vote in Australian elections (O’Cass, 2002) and they were the majority of our sample, we decided to focus on these two parties. For our analyses the variable Liberal was coded 1 = “liberal” and 0 = “all others,” and Labour was coded 1 = “labour” and 0 = “all others.”

Intent to Vote

On the pre-election questionnaire respondents indicated their intent to vote for John Howard, Mark Latham, or Other. For our analyses intent to vote was coded for Howard as 1 = “Howard” and 0 = “all others,” and for Latham as 1 = “Latham” and 0 = “all others.”

Background Variables

The background variables measured in the study were included as covariates in our analyses. These included age of the respondents, sex, education, race, work experience in months, employment status, occupation, and language.

Data Analysis

With respect to the main analysis, Hair, et al. (1998) and Pillai and Williams (1998) identified logistic regression as appropriate for research designs with dichotomous dependent variables such as “intent to vote.” The -2 log likelihood statistic indicates how well the model fits and is similar to the sum of squared errors in regression analysis (Hair et al., 1998). The chi-square test for the reduction in the log likelihood value measures improvement due to the introduction of an independent variable and is similar to the F-test in multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 1998). Finally several R-square like measures have been developed to represent overall model fit as done by the coefficient of determination in multiple regression; we will present the Nagelkerke R-square which operates in a similar manner and represents an improvement over the Cox and Snell R-square measures since it ranges from 0 to 1, making it comparable to the coefficient of determination (Hair et al., 1998).

We also used multiple regressions to test the relation-

ship between the personality variables and trust with transformational leadership.

Results

Analyses of these established scales indicated that their psychometric properties were robust and loaded on the appropriate factors. The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the key study variables are presented for John Howard and Mark Latham in Tables 1 and 2. There are strong correlations for each leader among the personality, leadership and trust variables. However, there are significant correlations among these variables (with the exception of the need for achievement) and intent to vote for John Howard. Regarding intent to vote for Mark Latham, the significant correlation is the one between his transformational leadership evaluations by the prospective voters and their intent to vote for him.

One of the consistent findings in previous studies on presidential leadership in the U.S. (Pillai et al., 2003; Pillai & Williams, 1998) was that party affiliation and transformational leadership and charisma drove the intent to vote for a particular candidate. Table 3 presents the results of the logistic regressions that capture this relationship and show that party affiliation (Liberal or Labour) and transformational leadership ratings for John Howard (Nagelkerke R square of 0.45) and Mark Latham (Nagelkerke R square of 0.36) are significantly related to the intent to vote for them after controlling for the background variables of age, sex, education, work experience and occupation.

Tables 4 and 5 show the results of regression analyses on transformational leadership ratings for each of the two candidates. The results indicate that after controlling for the background variables of age, sex, education and work experience, the variables that predict ratings of transformational leadership for John Howard are party affiliation, need for achievement, trust and emotional empathy. We used a step wise regression entering the background variables in the first step, the personality variables in the next step and trust in the leader in the final step. As the change in R-square indicates, the personality variables contribute significantly toward explaining the variance in the dependent variable, transformational leadership. Trust in

the leader increases the model R- square marginally. Regarding Mark Latham, need for achievement and proactivity are significant predictors of transformational leadership and trust is a marginal predictor. Party affiliation and emotional empathy are not significantly related to leadership ratings for the Labour candidate.

In order to gauge voter sentiments about two important issues in the campaign, the economy and the PM's support for the war in Iraq, we included two single-item questions relating to them. Correlation analysis indicated that trust in John Howard was strongly related to perceptions of effectiveness in his Iraq policy ($0.47, p < .001$) and moderately related to perceptions of his economic effectiveness ($0.26, p < .05$). Perceptions of his effectiveness in Iraq were also related to transformational leadership ($0.42, p < .001$), emotional empathy ($0.26, p < .05$), proactivity ($0.28, p < .05$). Economic effectiveness was related to emotional empathy ($0.33, p < .01$) and proactivity ($0.25, p < .05$), but surprisingly not to transformational leadership. Not surprisingly, economic effectiveness was correlated with both Liberal Party affiliation ($0.26, p < .05$) and intent to vote for John Howard ($0.35, p < .01$), as was effectiveness of the PM's Iraq policy ($0.28, p < .05$ for party and $0.37, p < .01$ for intent to vote).

Discussion

This study examined the relationship of party affiliation and personality variables such as need for achievement, emotional empathy, proactivity and trust in the leader with transformational and charismatic leadership behaviors, in the context of the 2004 Australian elections. We conducted the study over the course of an election with real leaders, which is a unique aspect of this research. The findings show that both leadership ratings and party identification are related to voting preference. The findings also show that personality characteristics and trust drive transformational leadership ratings of candidates in an election. This has implications for both politics and business, and we examine these implications in the following paragraphs.

John Howard, leader of the Liberal Party, won the Oc-

tober 9, 2004 Australian elections and commenced his fourth term as prime minister of Australia. Howard has a high need for achievement as demonstrated by his successful track record as prime minister for the past nine years, and his refusal to hand over the reins of power to his deputy Peter Costello, in the near future. In late 2003, Mark Latham replaced Simon Crean as leader of the Labour Party. Crean was a colorless, former trade union official who was not making inroads against Howard. Latham was seen as a person who would be more aggressive toward Howard (Suter, 2004). Latham demonstrated his high need for achievement when he won the September 12, 2004 television debate against John Howard and his subsequent health and education policies (Clausen, 2004). Latham was keen to "roll up his sleeves and get to work." This explains why need for achievement was significant for both leaders. In several studies, as indicated earlier, need for achievement has also been shown to be a characteristic of effective leaders in business. In fact, the research on need for achievement was primarily conducted in the business context by organizations such as the Center for Leadership. The fact that the need for achievement is important to a political leader only reinforces the primacy of this need as a personality characteristic in the minds of followers when they elect their leaders. It appears that need for achievement is an important leadership characteristic which all leaders must possess.

Emotional empathy, however, did not predict transformational leadership ratings for John Howard when trust was included in the regression, and not at all for Mark Latham, who was generally considered to be more in tune with the voters before the elections. John Howard has publicly displayed emotional empathy during crises and disasters, but Mark Latham is perceived as a "hard-headed" person with little emotional empathy. Although Latham seemed to understand the issues, he can hardly be credited with any real empathy. It is possible that trust played a bigger role in influencing transformational leadership perceptions, especially of the incumbent. Future studies of business and political leadership situations should explore whether empathy plays a bigger role when the organization or the country is undergoing a crisis.

Thus, trust in a leader appears to be a more important leadership characteristic than emotional empathy.

As discussed earlier in the paper, proactive leaders demonstrate initiative and take the appropriate action to achieve their goals. Both Latham and Howard are proactive leaders, but the Liberal Party's policies have always been more proactive than those of the Labour Party. John Howard demonstrated this proactivity in both the 2001 and the 2004 elections. In 2001 he turned the issue of "boat people" to his advantage, by declaring that several islands which belong to Australia are "not Australian territory for the purpose of immigration" and enforcing "indefinite mandatory detention" of all people arriving illegally by boat. Although the policy was not popular with some sections of the community, Howard certainly displayed his proactive stance and immediately stemmed the flow of boat people into Australia. His proactive strategies in this regard also won him the 2001 election. Once again, in 2003, John Howard made a firm decision to deploy troops in Iraq. Troop deployments created significant divisiveness in the community, but the public appreciated John Howard's ability to make difficult decisions. Mark Latham criticized the deployment in February 2003. However, as soon as Latham became Labour leader, he praised the U.S.-Australian military alliance (Suter, 2004). Latham recognized that U.S. support is essential for Australia's security and stability.

In this study we found that proactivity is significantly associated with ratings of transformational leadership. Proactivity is important not only in the political context but also very much so in the business context. As Crant (2000) suggests, several practitioners and scholars have suggested that proactive behavior is critical in the context of the breathtaking changes in the 21st century, and it is important to further examine the nature of the processes by which leaders and followers engage in proactive behaviors and how those processes are related to both political and organizational outcomes.

The concept of "trust" in the Australian elections is an interesting phenomenon. John Howard was successful in diverting voters' attention from the popular no-

tion of trust as "honesty and integrity" (Suter, 2004). It is pertinent to note that most Australians do not believe that politicians are honest. Howard used the more pragmatic meaning of trust as delivering continued economic success. In fact, the whole election was based on the notion of whether Latham and the Labour Party could be "trusted" to continue the strong and sustained economic growth which the Liberal Party has delivered over the past decade. Australia's growth has averaged almost four percent per annum over the past 13 years, and unemployment is close to a 20-year low of 5.6 percent. Voters ultimately trusted John Howard to continue Australia's economic expansion instead of Mark Latham, who at the age of 43 had only 10 months experience as leader of the Labour Party. This may explain why trust was a significant independent variable when it was entered into the stepwise regression equation. Business leaders also must work hard to earn the trust of their followers in the wake of the various corporate scandals in American business. Trust is very difficult to repair once it is truly broken, but there are ways that a leader can rebuild trust. For instance, the leader can demonstrate sincere regret for the breach of trust and then take action to redress any harm that it caused. Consistency in words and action sustained over time will go a long way toward rebuilding trust in such leaders and their organizations.

Australia's participation in the war in Iraq was certainly an election issue, especially from the Labour Party's platform. Although there was considerable Australian opposition to participation in the war in Iraq, once Australian troops were in Iraq, most Australians supported the troops in line with the unique Australian notion of "mateship." Thus the role of Australia in the Iraq war did not ultimately sway voter preferences.

In the final analysis, trust in the leader and the personality variables of need for achievement and proactivity were strong predictors of transformational leadership, stronger of course for Howard relative to Latham. These results underscore the importance of these characteristics in transformational leadership evaluations.

As with similar studies in the U.S. and Israel, voters are partisan when it comes to evaluating their leaders:

Liberals see John Howard as significantly more transformational (and charismatic) than any other group and the same holds true for Labour voters with respect to Mark Latham. This partisan association is not unexpected. Ideological conviction and identification with the leader are considered to be important aspects of transformational and charismatic leadership theory (Bass, 1985; House, 1977). Studies of presidential elections in the U.S. have indicated that value-congruency plays an important role in determining electoral success, although it may not necessarily ensure the president a position in history (Winter, 1987). In the short term, we are more likely to vote for the candidate with whom we feel most “comfortable” and who fits our “perceived hierarchy of motives and goals” (Winter, 1987, p. 201). In our organizations, we are also likely to feel more comfortable with a boss who shares our values and goals. Part of the challenge of motivating individuals in organizations is to address their values and goals and to create an environment where they can succeed.

In the domain of personality research, a number of studies support assessments of personality at a distance. It is possible that with the extensive media attention and access to the Internet that is the hallmark of modern elections in democracies, voters are able to form impressions of characteristics such as proactivity, need for achievement, and empathy. A poll conducted in March 2005 indicated that Prime Minister John Howard’s leadership strengths were related to his ability to manage the economy successfully, and to be seen as firm on issues of national security. Of this poll’s voters, 62 percent believed that Mr. Howard had the judgment and capability to lead Australia’s economy, and 80 percent saw him as decisive and strong. Post-election analyses indicated that the Labour candidate, Mark Latham, was seen as being in the “learner” mode on important leadership issues as evidenced by the success of the advertising campaign against him portraying the large yellow “L” learner driver sign.

One of the limitations of this study is the sample size. Although the results were consistent with previous studies conducted in the U.S. and Israel, we would have benefited from a sample gathered from several geographical locations across the country in

much larger numbers. We are encouraged by the fact that this is an exploratory study in the right direction. Future studies should include other personality variables (e.g., all the Big Five Personality Dimensions) and larger samples. Unlike the situation for those researching U.S. elections, we are also helped by the fact that we have a much larger percentage of registered voters in any given sample in Australia because voting is compulsory for individuals over 18.

Another limitation is that the assessments came from the same source. We were able to collect actual voting information from 30 participants about two weeks after the election, and initial analysis indicated that personality, trust and leadership were related in similar ways to actual voter choice regarding intent to vote for a particular candidate.

In summary, we found that leadership ratings and party identification are related to voter preferences. In particular, perceptions of the leader’s need for achievement, proactivity and trust are significantly associated with transformational leadership ratings of the candidates. This is a very promising step in the exploration of the drivers of voter choice and behavior in the context of the Australian elections and the authors plan to expand the study in future elections in order to understand fully the complex relationships involved. This study found that key variables such as need for achievement, proactivity and trust in the leader transcend the business world and are applicable to the political arena as well. The authors believe that there should be more attempts to integrate these important concepts across a variety of disciplines to facilitate a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the elements of the leadership process and leadership effectiveness.

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Table 1
Howard: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelation Matrix

Measures	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Age	32.18	5.45	(1)															
2. Sex	1.68	.47	-.02	(2)														
3. Education	4.41	.77	.19	.06	(3)													
4. Race	1.33	.47	-.22	-.17	.20	(4)												
5. Work Experience	120.25	62.13	.87**	.01	-.02	-.39**	(5)											
6. Employment status	1.31	.46	-.19	-.16	.05	.45**	-.28*	(6)										
7. Occupation	2.76	1.76	.00	-.13	-.04	.31**	-.10	.48**	(7)									
8. Language	1.87	1.58	-.09	-.21	-.15	.31**	-.24*	.29*	.05	(8)								
9. Party Affiliation Liberal	.53	.51	.12	-.14	.23	.31**	.11	-.18	.01	-.29*	(9)							
10. Proactive Behaviour	3.65	.55	.05	.11	-.20	-.10	.08	-.10	.05	.35**	.43**	(10)						
11. Need for Achievement	3.90	.79	.07	.02	-.08	-.20	.10	-.04	-.06	-.15	.21	.45**	(11)					
12. Emotional Empathy	3.40	.71	.09	.13	-.11	-.20	.06	-.08	.05	-.26*	.35**	.52**	.31**	(12)				
13. Trust	2.92	.83	.05	.20	-.05	-.24**	.06	-.35**	-.24**	-.45**	.38**	.64**	.50**	.52**	(13)			
14. Transformational Leadership	4.52	.79	.14	.14	-.05	-.19	.11	-.20	-.05	-.33**	.46**	.63**	.49**	.60**	.65**	(14)		
15. Attributed Charisma	4.60	1.10	.18	.16	-.04	-.16	.15	-.16	-.09	.40**	.28**	.64**	.39**	.51**	.63**	.77**	(15)	
16. Intent Vote Howard	.63	.49	-.01	.25*	-.15	.11	.04	-.22	.11	-.38**	.51**	.39**	.16	.41**	.52**	.41**	.34**	(16)

N = 75 * *p* < .05 ** *p* < .01

Table 2
Latham: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelation Matrix

Measures	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Age	32.18	5.45	(1)															
2. Sex	1.68	.47	-.02	(2)														
3. Education	4.41	.77	.19	.06	(3)													
4. Race	1.33	.47	-.22	-.17	.20	(4)												
5. Work Experience	120.25	62.13	.87**	.01	-.02	-.39**	(5)											
6. Employment status	1.31	.46	-.19	-.16	.05	.45**	-.28*	(6)										
7. Occupation	2.76	1.76	.00	-.13	-.04	.31**	-.10	.48**	(7)									
8. Language	1.87	1.58	-.09	-.21	-.15	.31**	-.24*	.29*	.05	(8)								
9. Party Affiliation Liberal	.22	.42	.12	-.14	.23	.31**	.11	-.10	.03	-.35*	(9)							
10. Proactive Behaviour	3.54	.51	.10	.10	-.06	-.16	.14	-.07	.01	.16	-.07	(10)						
11. Need for Achievement	3.88	.84	-.00	.08	.03	-.01	.09	.08	.03	-.05	.08	.52**	(11)					
12. Emotional Empathy	3.59	.69	.09	.03	-.09	-.14	.06	-.07	.05	-.06*	-.07	.61**	.23**	(12)				
13. Trust	2.87	.72	.01	.10	.16	-.01	.05	.22	-.17	-.05	.21	.49**	.48**	.32**	(13)			
14. Transformational Leadership	4.43	.77	-.16	-.08	.01	.05	-.10	.09	-.11	-.09*	.09	.61**	.51**	.50**	.53**	(14)		
15. Attributed Charisma	4.25	.93	-.05	.04	.00	-.04	-.03	.07	-.06	.00	.07	.60**	.40**	.44**	.60**	.79**	(15)	
16. Intent Vote Howard	.30	.46	-.01	.18	.11	.16	-.05	.20	-.01	.39**	.44**	.16	.09	.07	.14	.26*	.22	(16)

N = 75 * *p* < .05 ** *p* < .01

Table 3
Results of Logistic Regression Analysis^a

Variables	Intent to vote for Howard	Intent to vote for Latham
Age	-.03	.17
Sex	1.47	-.85
Education	-.19	.09
Work Experience	-.00	-.02
Occupation	.26	.21
Party Affiliation: Liberal	1.73*	
Party Affiliation: Labour		2.44**
Transformational Leadership (Howard)	1.07*	
Transformation Leadership (Latham)		
<i>N</i>	75	75
-2 log likelihood	61.23	62.402
χ^2	27.034***	19.99**

Notes: ^a*B* and the significance of the chi-square improvement of the coefficient are reported † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4

Results of Regression Analysis for John Howard (Dependent Variable: Transformational Leadership)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Step 1			
Age	.03	.03	.05
Sex	.12	.04	.00
Education	.03	.07	.03
Work Experience	-.00	-.00	-.00
Occupation	-.02	-.03	-.01
Party Affiliation: Liberal	.79***	.38*	.34*
Step 2			
Need for Achievement		.27**	.22*
Emotional Empathy		.38**	.18
Proactivity		.32**	.24*
Step 3			
Trust			.29*
<u>N</u>	75		
Model R_2	.26**	.59**	.62**
Adjusted R_2	.18**	.51**	.55**
ΔR_2		.33**	.04**

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 5

Results of Regression Analysis for Mark Latham (Dependent Variable: Transformational Leadership)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Step 1			
Age	.03	.00	.01
Sex	-.06	-.17	-1.7
Education	.03	.03	-.01
Work Experience	.00	-.00	-.00
Occupation	-.03	-.07	-.06
Party Affiliation: Liberal	.17	.18	.10
Step 2			
Need for Achievement		.29**	.24*
Emotional Empathy		.23 [†]	.19
Proactivity		.55**	.46*
Step 3			
Trust			.23 [†]
<u>N</u>	75		
Model R_2	.07	.54**	.57**
Adjusted R_2	.03	.47**	.49**
ΔR_2		.44**	.02**

[†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Rajnandini Pillai is an associate professor of management at California State University, San Marcos. She received her doctorate in 1994 from the State University of New York at Buffalo in Organizational Behavior. Her dissertation focused on the contextual factors that facilitate or retard the emergence of charismatic leadership. Her areas of teaching and research interest are leadership and cross-cultural management. She has published several articles on charismatic/transformational leadership and cross-cultural management in the leading journals in the field (e.g., *Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Business Studies*).

Dr. Pillai has an MBA from the University of Bombay, India and has held executive positions in the banking industry in India. She has consulted with several service organizations in the U.S. on leadership effectiveness and has received awards for excellence in teaching and research including the College of Business Outstanding Professor Award for the Academic Year, 1999-2000 and the Western Academy of Management Ascendant Scholar Award in 2001.

Dr. Brian D'Netto is an associate professor and Program Director at the International Graduate School of

Business, University of South Australia. Dr. D'Netto has a Ph.D. in human resource management from the State University of New York at Buffalo, USA. He also worked at Monash University and Mt Eliza Business School in Melbourne, Australia.

Brian's articles have been published in refereed journals. He has also presented his research at international conferences in USA, UK, Canada, France, Portugal and Greece. Working as a consultant, Brian's clients include Mobil Oil Australia, where he worked on a project to improve diversity management practices. He has also consulted on the issue of diversity management to the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Towers Perrin (USA).

Brian is a Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute and a Member of Academy of Management (USA). His special achievements include the "Best New Researcher Award (1994)" from the Department of Management, Monash University, the "Outstanding Student in Graduate Programs Award" from the University of Arkansas and the "Prestigious Nomination and Inclusion in the 1997 Edition of Marquis Who's Who in the World", published by the Marquis Foundation, USA.