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Is Charisma Hyper-Romanticism? Empirical Evidence From New Data and a Meta-Analysis

Abstract

In prior research, mixed results were obtained with respect to the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership. In this paper, we first present new studies originating from different contexts (students and employees) and different countries and, second, we meta-analyse these studies together with prior studies in order to shed light on the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership. In the meta-analysis, we considered the following moderators: Field/employees vs. experimental/student samples region of origin, and type of assessment of transformational leadership. The results indicate a positive relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership. Only the moderating effect of region of origin was significant. In line with social constructivism and information processing approaches of leadership, our results indicate that the perception of leadership is comprised of more than merely the actual behaviour the leader exhibits.

Keywords: transformational leadership, implicit leadership theories, Romance of Leadership

Is Charisma Hyper-Romanticism? Empirical Evidence From New Data and a Meta-Analysis

One of the core questions in recent leadership research concerns the extent to which the perception of leadership is biased by follower characteristics (e.g., Need for leadership: de Vries, Roe, Taillieu, 1999; Big Five: Felfe & Schyns, 2006) or the extent to which leadership is a social construction (e.g., Keller, 1999). Early research by Lord and colleagues (e.g., for an overview see Lord & Maher, 1993) already suggests that information given to individuals, affects their perception of leaders. This means that leadership is indeed (at least partly) a social construction of the perceiver. An extreme position in this discussion is taken by Meindl (1990), who regards leadership as being completely a social construction. As Meindl (1998a) puts it, "The romance of leadership perspective [...] assumes that the relationship between leaders and followers is primarily a constructed one, heavily influenced by interfollower factors and relationships. The behavioral linkage between the leader and follower is seen as a derivative of the construction made by followers" (p. 286). With his Romance of Leadership approach, he suggests that some individuals may be especially prone to romanticize leadership, that is, to regard leaders as responsible for all the successes and failures of organizations, thereby ignoring other factors. This idea has been supported in a series of studies (Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985).

An important consequence of this perspective is that the social construction of leadership is not only likely to affect the perception of leaders in general but also the perception of the actual supervisor. Rush, Thomas and Lord (1977) found, for example, that performance information influences ratings of leaders. This means that the perception of leaders is not independent of other information that perceivers receive. In addition, prior to meeting a leader, individuals have ideas about how leaders are or should be, that is, they have implicit leadership theories (e.g., Eden & Leviatan, 1975; Offermann, Kennedy & Wirtz,

1994). These theories impact on how leaders are perceived (e.g. Shamir, 1992). This impact becomes particularly obvious in the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership. Meindl (1990) argues that transformational / charismatic leadership is "hyper-romanticism" (p. 182). According to him, "Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on charisma and vision, is in part a matter of perception and attribution, myth and symbol, that is likely to have a romanticized component to it." (p. 182). That charismatic leadership in particular is prone to perception biases can be derived from Weber (1921) who states with respect to charisma: "how the quality [charisma] would be evaluated as 'objectively' correct from whatever ethic, aesthetic or other point of view does not, of course, matter on a conceptual basis. All that matters is how it is indeed evaluated by the charismatically mastered, the supporter" (p. 140, own translation). This raises the question of how reliable the evaluation of transformational leadership is when assessed through follower ratings. To what extent are leaders who are labelled "transformational" really transformational or is this label in part a projection of followers based on their inclination to romanticize leadership?

Empirically, results with respect to the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership have been quite mixed (Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002; Awamleh, 2003; Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Meindl, 1990; Schyns & Sanders, 2004). This paper summarizes several new studies, which investigate samples from different settings (students and employees) and from different countries. In addition, we meta-analyse these new studies along with prior studies in order to systematically synthesize the existing body of research on the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership and investigate the impact of a few variables that potentially moderate this relationship.

Romance of Leadership

The Romance of Leadership approach (e.g., Meindl, 1990, 1998a) focuses on the belief that leaders are responsible for the successes and failures of organizations, implying that factors other than leadership (such as economy or context) are ignored. Whereas Meindl (1990) originally defined Romance of Leadership as an implicit theory about organizations, he argues more recently that it is an implicit leadership theory as well (Schyns & Meindl, 2005).

The first studies summarized in Meindl et al. (1985) focused on Romance of Leadership as a societal phenomenon by showing that the attention paid to company leaders is particularly high in times of high or low, as opposed to medium, company performance. Meindl et al. examined Romance of Leadership on two different levels, namely, societal and individual. On a societal level, they found, for example, that in times of good or bad company performance, economy journals tend to focus on the leaders of those companies. On an individual level, the same result emerged: Information about the performance of an organization biases the attribution of responsibility to the leader. Moreover, empirical findings show that the individual propensity to romanticize leadership is related to followers' personality (Felfe, 2005; Meindl, 1990). These results provide additional support for the assumption that followers' characteristics influence the perception of leadership via their implicit leadership theories.

Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership

Before exploring the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership more deeply, we want to make our definitions of these leadership styles explicit. First, we agree with Bass' (1985) definition of transformational leadership as exceptional leadership, characterized by visions, stimulation and motivation of followers. Second, although there is an ongoing discussion about possible differences between transformational leadership and charisma (e.g., Yukl, 1999), we will regard them as more or less interchangeable and summarize them under the term transformational / charismatic

leadership, following the assumption that the two concepts have more characteristics in common than not (House & Shamir, 1993).

In the following section, we will consider the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership from a theoretical perspective. As noted above, Meindl (1990) carried out an attributional analysis of leadership perceptions and believed transformational leadership to be highly romanticized. Considering that charisma and transformational leadership have much in common, we can see similarities between Meindl's position and the one taken by Weber (1921), who views charisma as being present only when followers perceive it as such. In Meindl's terms, the social construction of charisma involves viewing leaders as exceptional, which is to say, to romanticize them.

Relevant research on information processing in the context of leadership may also help us to theoretically clarify the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership. This research has found that the attribution of leadership is not independent of performance information (e.g., Lord & Maher, 1993). In particular, individuals attribute more leadership to leaders of successful groups, a finding that is in line with predictions of the Romance of Leadership approach. As transformational / charismatic leadership is based on the idea of exceptional, successful leadership, we can expect that individuals who have a tendency to romanticize leadership will not only perceive leadership more strongly but, more specifically, tend to attribute more transformational / charismatic leadership.

A different line of research, however, suggests a negative relationship between Romance of Leadership and charisma. Based on expectancy violation theory (Jussim, Coleman, & Lerch, 1987; Jussim, Fleming, Coleman, & Kohberger, 1996), we could assume that Romance of Leadership involves high expectations towards an actual leader, which may lead to a lower rating of charisma, when expectations are not met. Similarly, transferring

research on relationship standards (Kohn & Sayers, 2005) can lead us to expect that, when leaders do not live up to standards, their charismatic evaluation may suffer.

On the empirical side, several studies have yielded mixed results with respect to the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational / charismatic leadership. Meindl (1988, in Meindl, 1990) found that the Romance of Leadership scale was positively related to the charisma subscale of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Bass, 1985). This result was supported by research on employees in Jordanian banks (Awamleh, 2003), Jordanian sales managers (Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002) and Israeli students (Shamir 1992). Awamleh and Gardner (1999) did however report a contrasting result for US-American students: Here, Romance of Leadership was not related to transformational leadership. Finally, Ehrlich, Meindl, and Viellieu (1990) found low correlations between Romance of Leadership and subscales of transformational leadership. There was even one negative relationship for intellectual stimulation. This result may seem more plausible when we consider the fact that, in comparison to the other subdimensions of transformational leadership, intellectually stimulating behaviour does not focus as much on the central and extraordinary role of the leader. Instead, the focus of intellectual stimulation is on the empowerment of the follower. Consequently, followers who romanticize their leaders may experience less stimulation and empowerment. Despite these mixed empirical results, we will assume based on our theoretical considerations that employees who tend to romanticize leaders also regard their own leaders as transformational / charismatic.

H 1: Romance of Leadership is positively related to the perception of transformational / charismatic leadership.

The fact that the results found for the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership are mixed suggests that it could be fruitful to look for moderators of that relationship. This point is addressed in the following section.

Possible moderators of the relationship between Romance of Leadership

and transformational / charismatic leadership

As noted above, the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership has been varying between studies. The meta-analytic part of our manuscript investigates moderators that might explain these differences.

Student versus employee samples (experiment versus field study)

In some of the above-mentioned studies, the samples comprised of students. In others, the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership was examined using employee samples. An important difference between those types of samples is the design of the studies: While students rated descriptions of different leaders or video-tapes, following an experimental design, employees rated their actual supervisors. We suspect that the use of these different types of samples and design may explain differences in the correlations between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership: First of all, students are less experienced with leadership and will therefore probably have a more "rosy" and less differentiated image of leaders. We expect that this has an impact not only on Romance of Leadership but also on the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of leadership. People whose image of a leader is less differentiated are expected to have a stronger bias in the perception of actual leadership than more experienced employees. Second, as mentioned above, in student studies, the leaders are not real persons. Rather, actors or descriptions are employed to expose participants to leadership. In these studies, there is little (if any) interaction between the participants and the leaders. Therefore, a generalized image such as Romance of Leadership should have a stronger impact on the perception of leadership.

H 2: In experimental/student samples, the correlation between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership will be higher than in field/employee samples.

Region of origin

With respect to the different countries involved in our meta-analysis, we will focus on cultural differences between country clusters. Studies have so far been conducted in Germany, the Netherlands, the US, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Israel. However, because the number of relevant studies is rather small for a meta-analysis, and to avoid ending up at the individual study / country level, we concentrate on possible differences between meaningful country clusters. We identified three clusters, namely, West Europe (Germany and the Netherlands), the US, and the Middle East (Jordan, United Arab Emirates and Israel). Based on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, we can expect relevant differences between these country clusters, mainly on the Individualism / Collectivism dimension. According to Hofstede (2001), this dimension focuses on the degree to which the society reinforces individual vs. collective achievement and emphasizes interpersonal relationships. A higher ranking on the scale indicates higher collectivism and lower individualism. The rank scores for the countries were as follows: The Netherlands rank 4-5, Germany 15, the US ranks 1, the UAE 26-27, and Israel 19 (Hofstede, 2001). No data were available on Jordan.

It is difficult to derive clear-cut expectations with respect to the impact of the region of origin on the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership. Taking into account Individualism / Collectivism, two different assumptions can be derived. On the one hand, collectivists may tend to defer responsibility for group performance onto others as opposed to themselves and may therefore defer responsibility onto leaders. On the other hand, individualists may be more prone to attribute responsibility to single persons and therefore may also attribute responsibility for group performance to

leaders. We therefore assume that region of origin will moderate the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership but do not engage in speculations about the direction of moderation.

H 3: The relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership is expected to be different for different regions of origin of the samples.

Assessment of transformational / charismatic leadership

Throughout this article, we have treated transformational and charismatic leadership as interchangeable constructs. We nevertheless wanted to check for the validity of this assumption, especially considering the fact that different instruments are used to assess these concepts. Therefore, for exploratory reasons, we include type of concept / assessment (MLQ vs. Charisma) as a potential moderator variable. In the following section, we will first briefly describe our own studies, before we turn to the meta-analysis of these and other studies.

Study 1: East-German and West-German students

In our first study, we examined the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership using student samples and an experimental design.

Method

Design and procedure

In study 1, an experimental design was employed to examine the relationship between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership. The participants were asked to take part in the study at the end of lectures. Two questionnaires were distributed. First, students were asked to indicate their Romance of Leadership and demographic data such as age, gender, course of studies, and professional training (t1). Second, the participants were divided into two groups: One group was given a description of a transformational leader; the other group was given a description of a transactional leader (t2,

for more details on the description see Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Felfe & Schyns, 2006).

They were asked to rate the respective leaders with regard to transformational leadership. The

questionnaires were returned to the authors personally in exchange for course credits.

Participants

Four student samples were drawn in this study. The first sample was made up of 132 students

(including 121 psychology majors and eleven psychology minors) from two Universities in

the former East Germany[1] (East German sample 1). Most of them were women (108 women

and 24 men). The mean age was 22.8 (*SD* = 3.9). Seventy of the students had work

experience. At t2, 114 participants (86.4%) of the first sample returned the questionnaire. In

the following year, the study was repeated with 62 students at one of the universities (mostly

psychology students, 12 men and 50 women, average age 22 years, *SD* = 3.8, East German

sample 2). A second replication was done still one year later with 85 students from the same

university and one West German university (49 psychology students and 36 business

administration students, 27 men and 57 women, average age 22.3 years, *SD* = 2.88, East

German sample 3). The fourth group was comprised of 96 students from another West

German University (economy and psychology students, 27 men and 69 women, average age

24.6 years, *SD* = 4.1, West German sample). See Appendix 1 for an overview of all studies

included here.

Materials

    Romance of Leadership Scale. Romance of Leadership was assessed using Meindl's

(1998b) instrument (German translation by Schyns, Meindl, & Croon, 2004). The scale

ranged from −3 (does not apply at all) to +3 (applies completely). Recent research has shown

that, seventeen of the original 32 items assess the core of Romance of Leadership (Schyns,

Meindl, & Croon, 2004b, in press). This core focuses on the attribution of influence to

leaders. We therefore used only these seventeen items here. The reliabilities (Cronbach's

alpha) of the core instrument were .87 for the first East German student group, .79 for the second East-German student group, .81 for the third East German student group, and .79 for the West German students.

Transformational Leadership. The participants were asked to evaluate the described leader with respect to *transformational leadership.* The instrument used for this purpose was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995; adapted and modified German version: Felfe, 2006). The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) of the 20-item scale were .91, .84, and .90 for the East-German student samples 1 to 3, respectively, and .92 for the West German students. See Appendix 2 for means and standard deviations of charisma and Romance of Leadership for all studies.

Results

Our first hypothesis was tested using a correlational analysis. Since, in the present context, we are exclusively interested in *perceptions* of leadership and not in differences in leadership behaviour per se, we computed all correlations across the transformational and transactional leadership descriptions. The perception that a leader is showing transformational leadership was found to be positively correlated with Romance of Leadership for the East German student sample 1 ($r = .38$, $p < .001$) and for the East German student sample 3 ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). The correlation was significant neither for the second East German student sample ($r = .12$, *n.s.*) nor for the West German students ($r = .01$, *n.s.*). Thus, H1 is partly supported.

Summary of study 1 and outlook

We examined the correlation between Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership on four (German) student samples. Romance of Leadership was related to the perception of leadership in two of the East German student samples. We expected experimental/student samples to produce higher correlations between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership than field/employee samples. In contrast to results

found in a US student sample, which were small and non-significant (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999), results for two of our samples reveal a considerable relationship between the two constructs. It will be left to the meta-analysis to uncover whether or not the effects found in the different studies are due to special study characteristics.

Study 2: German, Dutch, and US employees

Method

Similar to Study 1, Study 2 was designed to examine hypothesis 1. This study comprised samples of employees rating their actual leaders rather than leader descriptions.

Design and procedure

The participants were approached during their working time and asked to fill in the questionnaire. In Germany[2], participants filled in the questionnaires in small groups; in the Netherlands and the US, the questionnaire was handed out and participants were asked to return it when completed. The participants first answered questions concerning demographic data, such as age, sex, and work experience, before going on to answer items concerning Romance of Leadership and the perception of transformational leadership in their actual leader. In the Netherlands and the US, transformational leadership was assessed at different points in time. In Germany, this was not possible.

Participants

In Germany, 202 employees of 20 organizations (banks and insurances) took part in this study. One hundred and twenty-four were female, 77 male (1 not indicated). The mean age was 35.6 years ($SD = 9.8$). On average, the participants worked for 19.1 years ($SD = 10.6$). Sixty-three of the participants were currently holding or had been holding a leader position. In the Netherlands, 190 employees of one big accountancy company took part in the study. Of the participants, 89 were male and 100 were female (1 not indicated). On average, they were 34.3 years of age ($SD = 10.0$, 6 not indicated) and had 14.9 years of work experience ($SD =$

10.4, 1 not indicated). Forty-seven participants had worked as a supervisor (currently or in the past, 1 not indicated). In the US, 107 employees from different accountancy companies took part in the study (43 men, 60 female, 4 not indicated). On average, they were 38.5 years old ($SD = 11.4$, 6 not indicated) and had 16.7 years of work experience ($SD = 11.1$, 5 missing). 49 of the participants reported having experience working as a manager (4 not indicated).

Materials

Romance of Leadership was assessed, as in Study 1, with Meindl's (1998b) Romance of Leadership scale (German translation by Schyns, Meindl, & Croon, 2004a; Dutch translation by Schyns, Meindl, & Soeters, 2004). The scale ranged from −3 (does not apply at all) to +3 (applies completely). For the Dutch participants, the scale ranged from 1 to 7, with the same verbal anchors. As above, only the seventeen core items were considered here. The reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) were .88, .83, and .80 for the German, Dutch, and US employees, respectively.

Transformational leadership. The participants were asked to evaluate their actual leader with respect to transformational leadership. The instrument used was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995; German version: Felfe, 2006; Dutch version: Vinkenburg & van Engen, 2002). The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the 20-item scale was .94 for the German, .91 for the Dutch, and .94 for the US employees. See Appendix 2 for means and standard deviations of charisma and Romance of Leadership for all studies.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Test of hypotheses

Our first hypothesis was tested using a correlational analysis. Romance of Leadership was not significantly related to the perception of the leader being transformational, neither for the

German employees ($r = .09$, *n.s.*), nor for the Dutch employees ($r = -.01$, *n.s.*), nor for the US

employees ($r = .13$, *n.s.*). This indicates no support for H1 in the employee samples.[3]

A comparison of the results from Study 2 to those from Study 1 is relevant for our

second hypothesis (stronger correlation between Romance of Leadership and transformational

leadership in experimental/student as compared to field/employee samples). And indeed, at

first glance the correlations obtained in Study 2 involving employees were lower than those

found in Study 1 involving students. Before drawing conclusions, however, this issue will be

pursued further in our meta-analysis.

Summary of study 2 and outlook

Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership were not significantly correlated for

any of the employee samples. Although we did expect lower correlations for Romance of

Leadership and transformational leadership in employee samples, we still expected that, in

general, the correlation would be positive and significant. Other studies in organizations have

indeed found substantial correlations (e.g., Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002; Ehrlich et al.,

1990). However, these samples come from different cultures (Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002;

Awamleh, 2003). The following meta-analysis will clarify if such differences in study

background can explain the differing results.

Meta-Analysis

Method

Inclusion and exclusion of studies

In order to examine overall correlations between Romance of Leadership and transformational

/ charismatic leadership, we carried out a meta-analysis. Studies were collected using

PsycInfo with the search term "Romance of Leadership" and "transformational or charismatic

leadership". In addition, authors of prior studies were contacted and asked if they had

conducted further studies using both constructs that had not yet been published. The final

sample for the meta-analysis comprised eighteen studies, including published and

unpublished papers as well as conference presentations. One dissertation had to be excluded,

because the sample was the same as in a published journal article (Awamleh, 1997; Awamleh

& Gardner, 1999). Another study was excluded although it used both concepts, because it did

not use employees, students or leaders in its sample, but was a one-case study involving the

attribution of leadership with respect to a single leader (Horner, 1992). A third article was

excluded because no information was available concerning the correlations on an individual

level (Haslam et al., 2001, see Appendix 1 for more information on the included studies). In

sum, eleven studies conducted by other researchers plus the studies we reported here were

included in the meta-analysis.

Analyses

Our meta-analysis followed the standard procedures suggested by Cooper and Hedges (1994)

and Hedges and Olkin (1985). A first step involved calculating a weighted average for the 18

samples correlations (see Appendix 1 for a list of included studies, moderator levels, and

correlations) in order to estimate the overall population correlation between Romance of

Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership. Second, we assessed the

homogeneity of the study correlations, that is, their variation around the estimated population

correlation, and looked for potential outliers. Finally, we tested for the influence of

moderators. We investigated three potential moderators, as stated in the introduction, (1)

region of origin (country clusters: West Europe vs. Middle East vs. US), (2) participants

(employees vs. students), and (3) the particular construct used in the investigation of

transformational / charismatic leadership (MLQ vs. Charisma).

A preliminary analysis assessed the homogeneity of correlations between Romance of

Leadership and *sub*scales of transformational leadership in those studies that relied on the

MLQ questionnaire to measure transformational / charismatic leadership. This seemed

necessary because at least one study (Ehrlich et al., 1990) had found substantial differences in the magnitudes of the correlations between Romance of Leadership and different transformational leadership subscales within the same sample. Such differences could be of theoretical and practical interest. Thus, we performed tests for the homogeneity of statistically dependent correlations (Cooper & Hedges, 1994; chap. 22) on 11 studies that investigated transformational leadership using the MLQ questionnaire and reported subscale correlations. In only two out of these 11 studies (Ehrlich et al., 1990; Schyns & Sanders, 2004) was homogeneity rejected at the .05 level, indicating an overall tendency for correlations to be similar across transformational leadership subscales. Therefore, all following analyses are based on transformational leadership values at the general scale level. No such general level correlation was reported in the Ehrlich et al. (1990) study and it was therefore estimated from the subscale correlations according to the procedure described in Cooper and Hedges (1994; chap. 22).

Results

An initial meta-analytic integration of all 18 studies listed in Appendix 1 yielded an estimated population correlation between Romance of Leadership and transformational / charismatic leadership of $r = .25$. This correlation is based on a total sample size of $N = 3312$ participants and has therefore a very narrow 95% confidence interval (.22; .28). Also, it is associated with an extremely large Z score of 14.36, indicating a highly significant deviation from a zero correlation ($p < .001$).

However, a subsequent homogeneity analysis showed that our set of study correlations was extremely heterogeneous. The homogeneity statistic Q (actually a misnomer, because large values indicate deviations from homogeneity) was at a high 289.88, a value that is considerably larger than what could be expected by chance. The statistic is chi-square distributed and has 17 degrees of freedom in our case (number of studies minus one); the null

hypothesis of homogeneity is therefore rejected at $p < .01$. An outlier analysis (e.g., Hedges & Olkin, 1985; chap. 12) identified three studies as outliers (Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002, $r = .72$; Awamleh, 2003, $r = .56$; Schyns, Kroon & Moors, unpublished, $r = -.06$). Removal of these outliers renders the remaining set of studies homogenous ($Q = 20.22$, $df = 14$, $p = .12$) but reduces the estimated population correlation between Romance of Leadership and Transformational Leadership to $r = .15$. Nevertheless, this correlation is clearly different from zero ($Z = 7.13$, $p < .001$); its 95% confidence interval reaches from .11 to .19.

To summarize this first set of analyses: Our meta-analytic integration, both with and without outlying studies, clearly supports our first hypothesis that tendencies to romanticize leadership are positively related to perceptions of transformational / charismatic leadership. However, it should be noted that the magnitude of this relationship only falls within the small to medium range, according to Cohen and Cohen's (1983) suggested conventions.

A final set of analyses was directed at the possible impact of moderator variables on the magnitude of this relationship. Because three outlying studies had been identified, these analyses were conducted both with and without outliers. Table 1 gives a summary of the results. The Q_b statistic indicates the amount of variance in study correlations that is explained by the moderator, and Q_w reflects the remaining variance within levels of the moderator. Ideally, if a moderator explains all the variance between studies, there should be no significant remaining heterogeneity within moderator levels.

The first thing that can be noted in the pattern of results in Table 1 is the enormous differences resulting from the inclusion or exclusion of outliers. Paralleling the simple homogeneity analyses presented above, there were no significant (at a level of .05 or less) remaining deviations from homogeneity either between or within moderator levels if the outliers were excluded from analysis. This means that all significant heterogeneity in those analyses, which included outliers, is wholly due to these outliers, leaving us with the difficult

decision as to whether or not to trust any of those results, which include the outliers. There is no fail-safe statistical way to solve this dilemma because there might in fact be meaningful, substantial factors underlying the outlying values. However, a useful indicator with respect to the question as to whether or not a moderator effect including outliers is artificial or real might be whether or not the patterns of mean effects changes as a result of excluding the outliers. With respect to this criterion, the only meaningful moderator is the region of origin (Asia vs. Europe vs. US). Here, the rank ordering of the moderator level means is approximately preserved (.47, .09, and .09 vs. .21, .13, and .09). This cannot be said of the other two moderators, participants (hypothesis 2: field/employees vs. experimental/students) and construct assessment[4] (charisma vs. MLQ). Region of origin is also the moderator with the highest Q_b value (133.07) in the inclusive analysis, and the corresponding value when outliers are excluded (4.77) remains at least marginally significant ($p = .09$). Finally, the pattern of mean correlations is in the expected direction in both cases. Hence, we conclude that our third hypothesis, in which we expected to find regional differences resulting from differing degrees of Individualism, is at least tentatively supported. Because of changing patterns of results as a consequence of excluding outliers, we can only draw tentative conclusions with respect to the impact of the other moderators. In line with our second hypothesis, examining field/employee vs. experimental/student samples without outliers leads to a higher correlation for students.

<div align="center">General discussion, limitations, future research, and conclusions</div>

The aim of this study was to clarify the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership. In order to do so, we employed several new samples from different countries and meta-analysed these together with existing studies. Results from our own samples only partly supported the idea that Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership are positively related. Given the results of the meta-analysis, however, we can

conclude that the relationship does indeed exist, which supports Meindl's (1990) idea of transformational leadership as "hyper-romanticism". Although we argued referring to Weber (1921) that particularly charismatic leadership is prone to perception biases for theoretical reasons, it remains an open empirical question if this is a specific link. This could be easily tested by integrating other leadership dimensions, such as consideration or initiating of structure.

With respect to the results of our moderator analyses, only region of origin remains as a significant moderator. This result has to be considered in light of the limitations of our study. A problem in our meta-analysis was that the two Jordanian studies turned out to be outliers. This fact limits the generalizability of our results, as some moderators are only significant because of these studies. It is difficult to know whether or not these studies are outliers due to particularities of the sample or due to methodological reasons. However, as two of these studies reported particularly high correlations, we may assume that the results may be inflated, and the studies should better be excluded from the analyses. In terms of future research, it is important to note the existence of outliers in meta-analyses and the effects they may have. On the other hand, one could say that the chance to find moderating effects at all is limited when the studies included in a meta-analysis are very homogeneous.

We did not find experimental/student and field/employee sample to be a significant moderator. However, we need take into account confoundation effects here. Students rated only two different leaders so all variance is due to perception while in the employee samples, real differences between leader may have been occurring. Consequently, future research, all three factors should be systematically randomized: students versus employees, experimental versus field and one leader or several leaders presented.

Together with our own samples, eighteen studies could be included in the meta-analysis. This small number of studies naturally leaves certain questions open. Although,

generally spoken, a meta-analysis allows better conclusions about a relationship than single studies, more studies would be necessary to confirm our results. Only three moderators (field/employees vs. experimental/students, country of origin and assessment of transformational leadership) could be considered in our study. It would certainly be fruitful to consider other possible moderators as well. One example could be types of organization, in that future research could explore the differences in the relationship between the two concepts in different sectors of industry. Another example could be education, in that the relationship may differ for individuals with different educational backgrounds. It might also be interesting to examine the extent to which the relationship changes with different situations, for example, with the performance status of an organization. We may expect that the romanticisation and the perception of transformational leadership equally increase in times of good company performance, as leaders may be held responsible for the good performance and may therefore be seen as exhibiting exceptional leadership.

Another limitation is to be found in the studies included: First, all studies used the same source to assess Romance of Leadership and the perception of a leader. Although this is natural to the research question investigated, future research could try and assess Romance of Leadership using assessment different from questionnaires, such as more implicit methods (e.g., the implicit association test, Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) to decrease the effect of same source bias. Second, none of the studies differentiated between situations of success versus failure. Thus, in our meta-analysis, we could not use this information as a moderator. The limitation that results is that our correlations are based on a general level of perception, rather than on a differentiation between states of success or failure with respect to Romance of Leadership. This then should be rectified in future research. It is possible that the correlations would be different when taking this information into account. However, prior research (Horner, 1992; Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985) implies that Romance of

Leadership takes place in both cases of exceptionally good and exceptionally poor performance.

In addition, no mediators were included in the studies we analysed. Given the line of thought of expectancy violation theory (Jussim et al., 1987, 1996) or relationship standards (Kohn & Sayers, 2005), it could be interesting for future research to analyse in how far supervisors live up to their followers' expectations, for example, by assessing the preference for idealized styles of supervision (Vecchio & Boatwright, 2002).

Although some of the studies included were cross-sectional and none of the studies explicitly used a complete longitudinal design, we can assume that Romance of Leadership impacts on the perception of transformational leaders rather than the other way round. This assumption is based on results obtained by Epitropaki and Martin (2004) who found that implicit leadership theories are relatively stable over time. Perceptions of leaders, in contrast will be less stable as they at least change from leader to leader. However, we can not rule out that, for example, when actual leaders are considered ineffective, this affects the general assumption of effectiveness of leadership, that is, negatively affects Romance of leadership.

For organizational practice our results imply that – at least in the case of transformational leadership – the perception of leadership is affected by more than only the leader's actual behaviour. Taking into account that the evaluation of leadership is biased by implicit leadership theories this sheds new light on the reliability of followers' assessments of their respective leaders. This is actually important information for leaders, particularly when it comes to interpreting followers' feedback. Our results suggest that followers' ratings – whether positive or negative – should not always be taken at face value. Followers high in Romance of Leadership are prone to make too positive assessments and followers low in Romance of Leadership may show the opposite bias. This can be of practical importance as the evaluation is related to the acceptance of the respective leader. Moreover, leaders with

followers high in Romance of Leadership will be given more credit for their actions and projects. For example, Felfe and Petersen (in press) showed that Romance of Leadership even influenced managerial decision making in a way that persons high in Romance of Leadership tended to (a) overestimate leaders' capabilities and (b) neglect other relevant cues in a specific situation. Thus, leaders should be aware of being systematically over- or underestimated and should consider the factors that enhance these up- or downward biases. As shown in our study, at least one important factor seems to be the followers' implicit leadership theories. It may be helpful to control for Romance of Leadership in feedback procedures. Considering that Romance of Leadership is supposed to occur with unexpected success or failure, leaders should be particularly careful with the interpretation of the feedback they receive if the performance of their group, their department, or the organization is unexpectedly high or low. Moreover there is some empirical evidence that Romance of Leadership is also related to followers' personalities. Felfe (2005) found followers' self-efficacy, self-esteem and extraversion to be positively related to their tendency to romanticize leadership. To summarize, leaders (or their supervisors who also interpret subordinates' evaluation) should be aware of the situation and the characteristics of the followers who provided the feedback.

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Authors' Note

Table 1: Results of moderator analyses

Potential moderator	Analyses including outliers				Analyses excluding outliers			
	Q_b	k	r	Q_w	Q_b	k	r	Q_w
Region of origin	133.07 ***				4.77 (*)			
West Europe		11 (1)	.09	23.60 **		10	.13	15.24
Middle East		4 (2)	.47	133.02 ***		2	.21	0.01
US		3	.09	0.20		3	.09	0.20
Participants	11.58 ***				3.04 (*)			
Employees		11 (3)	.30	266.08 ***		8	.11	4.96
Students		7	.18	12.22 (*)		7	.18	12.22 (*)
Construct	35.83 ***				0.72			
Charisma		3 (1)	.11	14.25 ***		2	.17	2.80
MLQ		15 (2)	.32	239.80 ***		13	.13	16.70

Note. Q_b = test statistic for differences between moderator levels; Q_w = test statistic for homogeneity of effect sizes within moderator levels (significance indicates rejection of homogeneity); k = number of studies within each moderator level (number of outliers in parentheses); r = estimated effect size (correlation coefficient r) at each moderator level. (*) $p < .10$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Appendix 1: Overview of the studies included in the meta-analysis

Study	N	Corr.	Region	Sample	Construct
Samples from the present Studies 1 and 2					
Study 1 (East German sample 1)	108 [1]	.38	Europe	Stud	TL
Study 1 (East German sample 2)	59	.12	Europe	Stud	TL
Study 1 (East German sample 3)	83	.29	Europe	Stud	TL
Study 1 (West German sample)	96	.01	Europe	Stud	TL
Study 2 (German sample)	190	.09	Europe	Empl	TL
Study 2 (Dutch sample)	120	-.01	Europe	Empl	TL
Study 2 (US sample)	78	.13	US	Empl	TL
Samples from other studies					
Al-Dmour & Awamleh (2002)	454	.72	Asia	Empl	TL
Awamleh (2003)	155	.56	Asia	Empl	TL
Awamleh & Gardner (1999)	304	.09	US	Stud	TL
Ehrlich, Meindl & Viellieu (1990)	34	.04	US	Empl	TL
Fernandes & Awamleh (2004)	141	.22	Asia	Empl	TL
Kujat & Rühlemann (2005)	151	.19	Europe	Empl	TL
Patzak & Felfe (2005)	145	.08	Europe	Empl	TL
Schyns, Kroon & Moors (unpubl.)	283	.09	Europe	Empl	Cha
Schyns, Kroon & Moors (in prep.)	291	-.06	Europe	Empl	Cha
Schyns & Sanders (2004)	71	.14	Europe	Stud	TL
Shamir (1992)	549	.21	Asia	Stud	Cha

[1] Sample sizes reported in this table are sometimes smaller than those reported in the method sections of Studies 1 and 2 because of missing values.

Appendix 2: Overview of the studies included in the meta-analysis

Sample	N	Range Charisma	Mean Charisma	SD Charisma	Range Romance of Leadership	Mean Romance of Leadership	SD Romance of Leadership
Study 1 (East German sample 1)	108[1]	1 to 5	3.94	0.52	-3 to +3	0.90	0.73
Study 1 (East German sample 2)	59	1 to 5	3.85	0.46	1 to 5	3.74	0.47
Study 1 (East German sample 3)	83	1 to 5	3.76	0.55	1 to 5	3.67	0.45
Study 1 (West German sample)	96	1 to 5	3.49	0.61	1 to 5	3.38	0.50
Study 2 (German sample)	190	1 to 5	3.65	0.60	-3 to +3	1.24	0.76
Study 2 (Dutch sample)	120	1 to 5	3.28	0.58	1 to 7	3.53	0.70
Study 2 (US sample)	78	1 to 5	2.59	0.80	1 to 7	2.92	0.63

Footnotes

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[1] Although East and West Germany had been re-united for twelve years when the study took place, considerable differences persist due to the different history of both Germanies. Treating data from East and West Germany separately is therefore common (see also the GLOBE study, House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

[2] The sample consisted mostly of East German participants.

[3] A reviewer of this work made the interesting suggestion that the relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership could also be curvilinear, depending on the performance of the evaluated leader. Following Meindl et al.'s (1985) original conception of Romance of Leadership as a tendency to attribute success or failure of an organization to its leader, one might expect individuals high in Romance of Leadership to attribute high levels of charismatic or transformational leadership to leaders if cases of good performance but to deny their leaders these qualities in cases of poor performance. Importantly, these opposite tendencies might cancel each other out, resulting in a zero correlation between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership. Although we did not assess performance, we were able to test this assumption in our field/employee samples, based on the following logic: In natural circumstances, performance of leaders will vary. Given that people with a high value in Romance of Leadership will give low transformational leadership ratings in case of low performance and high transformational leadership ratings in case of high performance, we expect a higher variance in transformational leadership for high values of Romance of Leadership than for low values of Romance of Leadership. Accordingly, for each of the three employee samples, we divided the Romance of Leadership values into three categories: high, medium, and low. For each of these categories, we calculated the standard deviations in transformational leadership. If the assumption was true, the standard deviations of transformational leadership should be highest

for high Romance of Leadership. This was in fact the case for the German data. However, in both the Dutch and the US samples, the highest standard deviations occurred for low Romance of Leadership. Consequently, we have to reject the assumption of a curvilinear relationship between Romance of Leadership and transformational leadership.

[4] For completeness, we also assessed the potential impact of different ways to measure Romance of Leadership. Although significant in the inclusive analysis, this technical moderator variable yielded no significant effects after removal of the outlying studies. Moreover, opposite patterns of means resulted in the inclusive and exclusive analyses. Hence, type of assessment of Romance of Leadership does not seem to influence its correlation with transformational / charismatic leadership in any meaningful way.