The role of subjective theories for leadership evaluation

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The current article argues that taking subjective theories of both the rater and ratee into consideration contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership evaluations. In the present study, individuals’ pre-existing implicit personality theory (Dweck, 1996) was measured in an organizational setting and was identified as a moderating variable for leadership assessments (108 participants). It was shown that when judging their managers, raters who believe in the ability to change and the dynamic nature of personality (“incremental theorists”) place significantly stronger weight on the situation and dynamic factors, while raters who believe in the stability of human characteristics (“entity theorists”) focus more strongly on their relationship to these people. Moreover, managers with entity theory are judged significantly more positively than managers with an incremental theory. In view of these findings, implications are derived for the measurement of leadership behaviour as well as information concerning the application of leadership behaviour in an organizational setting.

One of the most common and controversial concepts in organizational psychology is the concept of leadership. Diverse approaches have been developed and then discarded, leaving a lack of either a generally recognized
leadership concept or a fixed tool for measuring leadership behaviour. One of the central questions in both research and practice is how to measure the magnitude of the influence that leadership has on company production and the gathering of leadership evaluations. Finding the factors that determine how a manager evaluates his or her employees or how employees judge their manager is as of current ineffective and vague. In the following we wish to show that implicit theories, i.e., subjective assumptions that an individual has about people’s ability to change, influence leadership evaluations.

Leadership evaluations are usually carried out with the help of questionnaires in which leadership behaviour is measured by question items or by lists of characteristics with which employees reveal to what extent a characteristic applies to their manager (Neuberger, 2002; there are also standardized questionnaires, such as the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire, LBDQ; Fleishman, 1972; Stogdill, 1963). While many aspects can be depicted with objective standards (for instance measuring performance by way of productivity in terms of number of items), some aspects are difficult to quantify and are largely a matter of opinion. In particular, evaluating people’s commitment and involvement to a company is a subjective matter. For instance, individual’s loyalty can be perceived very differently by different people. While one manager may judge the criticism of the employees as negative and perceive them as troublemakers, the same criticism could be interpreted by another manager as a positive constructive commitment (Near & Miceli, 1987). Similarly, while one employee may attribute the loyal behaviour of his or her manager to the manager’s personality, another employee may see the manager’s loyalty as a result of the work situation. Briefly put, the judgement of management is, as with any other type of judgement or perception, a subjective process (Bohner & Wänke, 2004; Förster & Strack, 1998; Martin & Tesser, 1992). Consequently, as noted by Brown and Lord (2001), leadership needs to be understood not just in terms of the effects of leadership traits and behaviours. Additionally, subordinates’ cognitive processes, the antecedents to those cognitive processes, and their effects on behavioural ratings need to be included in the concept of leadership. In other words, an understanding of the raters’ information processing is necessary.

What people perceive and how they process it depends decisively on the personal characteristics of the ratee (such as attractiveness, status, nonverbal behaviour) and the specific situation surrounding that individual (i.e., complexity, salience), as well as on the features of the rater (for example their abilities, or convictions; for a review see Bretz, Milcovich, & Read, 1992). Even in early theories of person perception, a perceiver’s subjective assumptions about social structures were argued to play an important role (Heider, 1958; Kelly, 1955; Ross, 1989). For example Jones and Thibaut (1958) proposed that missing links in inference chains about interpersonal
perceptions are supplied by the perceiver’s own “theory” of personality. Such “lay theories” have since come to be seen as increasingly important perceiver variables in person cognition (see Trope & Higgins, 1993). Other areas of research have convincingly proven that perceptions, judgements, and behaviour are influenced to a large extent by implicit variables (for a review see Strack & Deutsch, 2004), such as, unconscious motives, needs, and expectations (e.g., Snyder & Swann, 1978), or goals (e.g., Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Troetschel, 2001; Gollwitzer, Heckhausen, & Steller, 1990). Research shows that in the area of personnel, the performance expectations of army instructors were shown to influence both their evaluation of their subordinate soldiers and their behaviour towards them (Eden, 1990; Eden & Shani, 1982). As was shown here, motivational and cognitive variables influence person perception. Moreover, purely cognitive processes such as subjective theories also guide our judgements.

In the current article we therefore focus in particular on the influence of subjective theories on the evaluation of leadership behaviour. We will begin by addressing subjective theories and will move on to examine their relationship to the area of employee leadership.

SUBJECTIVE THEORIES

Research on individual’s subjective theories about the self and others is wide-ranging. Although these theories have been variously labelled as: “implicit theories” (e.g., Dweck, 1996; Hong, Chiu, Dweck, & Sacks, 1997; Levy, Plaks, & Dweck, 1999), “subjective beliefs” (e.g., Förster & Strack, 1998), “naive theories” (e.g., Heider, 1958; Wegener & Petty, 1995), “lay theories” (e.g., Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997b), or “metacognitive knowledge” (e.g., Nelson, 1996; Strack & Bless, 1994; Strack & Förster, 1998); they all share the fundamental feature that they are referred to as being implicit rather than explicit. This is because most scientific theories are rarely explicitly articulated or consciously present at the time of their influence.

Implicit knowledge can be activated from many different sources (Nelson, Kruglanski, & Jost, 1998). An initial basis can be provided by momentary feelings, impressions, or actual perceptions, such as when the feeling of familiarity with a person’s name is used as information when making a judgement about that individual’s level of fame (e.g., “if a name is familiar to me it must belong to a famous person”; Jacoby, Kelley, Brown, & Jaseckho, 1989). Examples of this implicit use of information found in literature include feelings of familiarity (Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Jacoby et al., 1989; e.g., a sense of fluency or familiarity indicates the validity of a hypothesis one was entertaining), feelings of uncertainty (Clore & Parrott, 1994; e.g., “the more certain I am, the more correct my answer will be”), or
feelings of happiness (Schwarz & Clore, 1983; e.g., “if I am in such a good mood when I meet the person, I am bound to like him”).

Furthermore, implicit theories can be based on knowledge, assumptions, or expectations about a person. Examples of this source of implicit information known from the literature include theories about memorability (e.g., a person may know that he/she has a better memory for unusual or infrequent events and can use this knowledge for recognition tasks, Förster & Strack, 1998; Strack & Bless, 1994; Strack & Förster, 1998; Strack, Förster, & Werth, 2005), personal stability and change (Dweck, Hong, & Chiu, 1993; Levy & Langer, 1994; Werth & Förster, 2002; e.g., intelligence, Hong, Chiu, & Dweck, 1995; morality, Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997a), creativity (e.g., Runco, Johnson, & Bear, 1993), expertise (e.g., Wright & Murphy, 1984), and theories about bias and correction (Strack, Schwarz, Bless, Kübler, & Wänke, 1993; Wegener & Petty, 1995). For example, if a person experiences a great deal of liking for somebody this feeling could result in an evaluation that is overly positive—but if awareness is gathered about this influence then the judgement can be corrected downwards. Research from various different areas has therefore highlighted that implicit theories play an important role in everyday judgements.

Even if they occur automatically and without awareness, implicit theories influence all steps of information processing (e.g., Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Bargh, 1997; Fazio, 2001; Strack & Deutsch, 2004). As was shown in the related area of person perception, pre-existent expectations can guide the process of deciding what information is relevant to a concept like leadership or how one is to interpret the evidence on the topic (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). A particular kind of expectation might be an individual’s implicit person theory (Dweck, 1996), which has been shown to construct an interpretative framework for understanding the social world. Therefore this theory might result in varying interpretations/evaluations of leadership behaviour. In order to demonstrate the interplay between the implicit person theory and leadership evaluation, we will begin by briefly explaining the implicit person theory by Carol Dweck and colleagues (Dweck, 1996; Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998).

Implicit person theories

Research by Carol Dweck (1996; Hong et al., 1997) has shown that individuals’ implicit beliefs about the malleability or fixedness of human attributes guides information processing and especially inferences in person perception. In particular, the tendency to use traits as a bases for drawing inferences is greater among evaluators who believe that an individual’s personality consists of fixed, static traits (entity theorists) than among evaluators who believe that personality consists of dynamic personal
qualities which change and develop (incremental theorists) (Chiu et al., 1997a; Erdley & Dweck, 1993; see Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995a, 1995b for a review). In terms of academic achievement it was found that individuals who believe that their intelligence is a fixed entity (entity theorists) tend to focus on traits and inferences based on dispositionism. In contrast, individuals with an incremental theory focus on the relevance of situational moderators for drawing inferences about personality. Furthermore, Levy et al. (1998) found that entity theorists endorsed existing stereotypes to a significantly greater degree than did incremental theorists. Moreover, in comparison to incremental theorists, entity theorists seem to be more confident that trait-relevant behaviours will be consistent over time (Erdley & Dweck, 1993) and across different contexts (Chiu et al., 1997b, Study 1). Entity theorists believe to a greater extent that knowing a person’s traits will allow them to make confident predictions about that person’s behaviour in new situations (Chiu et al., 1997b, Studies 2 and 5), and that an awareness of how a person behaved in a particular situation will enable them to make confident inferences about that person’s traits in that relevant domain (Chiu et al., 1997b, Studies 3 to 5). Therefore entity theorists would assume, that a person, whom they have experienced as acting aggressive in a particular situation will also behave aggressively in the future. In addition, research shows that entity theorists draw strong trait judgements even when situational information (e.g., the external pressures influencing a person) and psychological process information (e.g., a target’s thoughts, intentions, goals, expectancies, affect) are made salient (Erdley & Dweck, 1993).

Effects of the implicit person theory were also shown in the applied context of person evaluations. When making judgements about themselves and their own behaviour, incremental theorists tend to attribute their failures to specific processes that may have mediated their performance (e.g., amount of effort exerted, effectiveness of current task strategies), whereas entity theorists tend to explain their academic failures in terms of stable personality traits (i.e., that they reflect their global, enduring intellectual ability or personality). This difference in attribution between the two theorists occurs despite the fact that both display equal levels of ability before encountering a failure (Hong & Dweck, 1992) and similar levels of confidence in their ability (Henderson & Dweck, 1990; Hong & Dweck, 1992; Zhao & Dweck, 1994). Although evaluators are able to indicate their assumptions about the stability of a person’s character when prompted to do so, they are typically unaware of their views and how these views influence their social understanding or evaluations. In addition, different implicit theories lead to differences in individual’s judgements of the

1Namely, the tendency to draw global trait inferences from behaviours even when there is a plausible situational explanation for the behaviours.
behaviour of others (e.g., Levy et al., 1998). When explaining and predicting behaviour, incremental theorists appear to take into account the actor’s current state as well as relevant aspects of the situation (Chiu, 1994, Study 1; Hong, 1994). For example, Hong (1994) asked college students to explain isolated positive or negative behaviours (e.g., “Arthur brought his colleagues some souvenirs from a trip”) and found that whereas entity theorists proposed significantly more trait attributions (e.g., “Arthur is good-hearted”), incremental theorists focused significantly more on psychological process attributions (e.g., goals, needs, or values such as “Arthur wanted to please his colleagues”) and placed more emphasis on environmental factors impinging on the person (see also Levy & Dweck, 1998).

In summary, when drawing inferences, incremental and entity theorists generally use their implicit theories about people very differently. Whereas entity theorists see traits as reliable predictors for the future and enduring dispositional labels, incremental theorists see traits as having less predictive value and as serving as more tentative or provisional descriptors (Chiu et al., 1997b; Erdley & Dweck, 1993). It therefore appears that on a more general level, entity theorists select, encode, and organize person information to facilitate a trait-based judgement, whereas, incremental theorists process this information to enable an understanding of psychological mediators. The influence of the aforementioned theories on perception and subsequent inferences leads us to the assumption that these theories may also influence leadership perceptions and styles in the organizational context.

THE LINK BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE THEORIES AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Question 1 (valence of the evaluation)

There is reason to believe that both incremental as well as entity beliefs can promote better leadership. Hence, we would now like to delineate possible advantages for both leadership styles.

Pro-“incrementals”/contra-“entities”. Wood and Bandura (1989) induced entity or incremental beliefs about ability (ability as a stable entity vs. as an acquirable skill) in a simulated organization context. Their data shows
that “incrementals” are better in diverse areas of performance including: self-set goals, efficient use of analytic strategies, and organizational performance. Furthermore, “incrementals” showed higher self-efficacy than “entities” did. Additionally, Heslin and Latham (2004) argue that inducing manager’s incremental theory increases their readiness to support their employees (even those with poor performances) through coaching, and generally provide them with more feedback, since these managers have the assumption that their employees’ characteristics can be changed. These findings suggest that “incrementals” would be the better managers than “entities”.

Moreover, incremental theory has some similarities to the theory of transformational leadership (e.g., Bass, 1990, 1998), which addresses inspiring and challenging subordinates and setting a personal example. Specifically, transformational leaders tended to score higher than others on the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience (Judge & Bono, 2000). However there are differences between transformational leadership and incremental theory in that transformational leadership construes the leader as “a great person” and pays little attention to subordinates or the work situation. According to current literature, incremental theorists place more emphasis on environmental factors impinging on an individual than entity theorists do (e.g., Levy & Dweck, 1998).

Contra-“incrementals”/pro-“entities”. However, the above-mentioned advantages of “incremental” leaders do not necessarily imply that “incrementals” are correspondingly evaluated more positively by their employees. It can be speculated that incremental theorist workplace managers are quicker to see situations and tasks as changeable, and confront their employees with new ideas and flexible decisions. This behaviour could lead employees to finding them more demanding and less controllable. Consequently, an incremental manager could, on the whole, be less well-liked or perceived less positively by his or her employees. Since entity managers would act more consistently employees might rate them more positively. Further arguments in favour of the hypothesis that entity theorist managers should be evaluated more positively than incremental theorist managers can already be found in the early literature on traditional attribution theory. This research assumed that a perceiver seeks consistency in individuals or situations in order to be able to assess his or her opponent (Deschamps, 1997; Jones & Davis, 1965). In addition, people search for stable causes in their social world, i.e., for dispositional characteristics of the world (Heider, 1958). The trait judgements of incremental theorists appear to be more provisional and thus less stable. They see their judgements as valid only for the present (Erdley & Dweck, 1993), and readily revise them.
when presented with new, discrepant information (Erdley & Dweck, 1993; Plaks & Dweck, 1997). In conclusion, since managers with an entity theory should display more stable behaviour and consequently be considerably easier to assess and more predictable in their behaviour, as they are less apt to revise their trait judgements even in the face of counterinformation.

In view of these possible advantages of both entity and incremental leadership styles, we predict that the subjective theory of the evaluated individual will influence the valence of his or her evaluation.

Question 2 (weighting of the dimensions of leadership behaviour)
Not only does the subjective theory of the person being evaluated influence the valence of their evaluation, additionally the raters’ implicit theory should also have an influence on the evaluation of leadership behaviour. Individuals should judge the leadership behaviour of others differently according to their own implicit theory. Arguments in favour of this hypothesis can be found in the literature on implicit leadership theory, in the literature on information processing, as well as in the works of Dweck and colleagues.

As postulated in the framework of so-called Implicit Leadership Theory, leadership-relevant judgements and evaluations are largely implicit-theory based and only tangentially associated with actual behavioural performances (e.g., Brown & Lord, 2001; Engle & Lord, 1997; Gioia, Dennis, & Sims, 1985; Lord & Brown, 2004; Pavitt, Whitchurch, McClurg, & Petersen, 1995). An individual’s own assumptions of social justice have a greater influence on evaluations than the target’s actual behaviour this can be attributed—as is apparent from the literature on information processing—to the finding that structures such as beliefs, expectancies, values, etc. lead people to devote greater attention to particular aspects of incoming information (Bruner, 1957; Erber & Fiske, 1984; Hilton, Klein, & von Hippel, 1991). The same applies to entity and incremental theorists—they focus their attention on different aspects of incoming social information, evaluate them differently and perceive them selectively, and base their assessment of incoming information according to their own implicit theory (see Plaks & Dweck, 1997). An entity theorist’s belief in a fixed trait encourages him or her to measure, judge, or evaluate this trait—entity theorists strive to know themselves and others by diagnosing people’s fixed attributes. In contrast, it is suggested that the belief in a more dynamic, malleable attribute orients the incremental theorist to the goals of developing those attributes and understanding the dynamics behind them. We thus hypothesize that individuals judge others in a way that fits with their view of reality.
In particular, we predict that when assessing their managers, an employee’s subjective theory will change the way they perceive their managers. This will occur because raters focus their attention on different aspects of incoming social information according to their own implicit theory. Specifically, raters with an incremental theory will place significantly more weight on dynamic dimensions. In other words, when evaluating leadership behaviour incremental theorists are more likely to take into account the way in which a manager deals with change or said manager’s flexibility. On the other hand, employees with an entity theory, focus more intently on static dimensions. Which translates to entity theorists taking into account their stable relationship to their manager or their manager’s stable dependability when assessing “general management”. Statistically speaking, in a regression analysis, depending on the implicit theory of the rater (and quite independently of the theory of the rated manager—the ratee), a stronger explanation of variance in the evaluation of “general management” should be shown through those factors/dimensions that match the theory of the rater.

If leadership evaluations are influenced by both the subjective theories of the raters and of the ratees, this would be of both theoretical and practical relevance (see Results and Discussion section). The following study therefore examines the influence of subjective theories of raters and ratees on the evaluation of changeable and stable management behaviour. In particular, we address whether managers (ratees) are evaluated differently by their employees depending on the manager’s personal subjective theory (Question 1). In addition we look at whether employees (raters) focus on different aspects of their manager’s behaviour in accordance with the employee’s subjective theory when evaluating their managers (Question 2).

**METHOD**

All data were collected in the framework of an employee survey commissioned by a large German company. The goal of the employee survey was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the company. To answer the two questions of interests we examined the sample along the pre-existent differences between incremental and entity theorists.

**Sample and procedures**

A total of 108 participants (96 male, 11 female; one person did not indicate their gender) from all levels of the hierarchy of the target company took part in the investigation (only the most senior director of the company was excluded from the analyses, as he did not have a superior to rate). Participants were engineers and concerned with the development and testing
of methods, components and facilities for the automation and rationaliza-
tion of industrial manufacturing processes. They were between 20 and 63
years old, and 27% held a managerial position (29 out of 108). All of those
interviewed had been employed by the company for more than 6 months
(average duration of employment 5 years). The employee survey took place
during working hours and achieved—a participation rate of almost 100%. As an acknowledgement for their participation
participants received a bar of chocolate.

All of the data collection took place in company rooms that had been
commissioned for the survey. The survey was carried out in a total of 11
group sessions each with a maximum of 10 participants. The entire survey
instrument was computer based. Each participant received a user code and
worked through the catalogue of questions independently on a laptop
computer. This ensured the absolute anonymity of the participants. To help
them work through the questions, the participants were introduced to the
computer program by means of standardized instruction. Several general
questions designed to ascertain whether or not the subject held managerial
responsibility were placed at the beginning of the question catalogue. The
program then used this information to independently select the questions
intended for each group of people. The questions for evaluating the
managers were integrated into a separate item block on “management”,
which began with the questions concerning how well the manager, on the
whole, fulfils his or her managerial duties. This was followed by a block of
questions evaluating leadership behaviour. Due to in-house company
regulations, the items designed to assess the subjective personality theory
of the participants were presented towards the end of the employee survey,
i.e., after they had answered all questions on their company, themselves, and
their managers.

The items relevant to our study were embedded in a catalogue of
questions in the employee survey. At the end of the survey, participants were
asked to voluntarily provide statistical information such as age, gender and
duration of employment in the company, as well as the department of the
company to which they belonged, thus enabling each person to be
(anonymously) matched to their manager. The complete employee survey,
including the embedded current study, lasted approximately 2 hours.

Independent variables

Independent variable “subjective theory of the rater”. The subjective
personality theory was ascertained for all participants. In order to measure
participants’ implicit theories, a translation (by Werth & Förster, 2002) of a
domain-general questionnaire by Carol Dweck and colleagues was used
(e.g., Hong et al., 1997). The questionnaire consisted of eight items (e.g.,
“Everyone, no matter who they are, can significantly change their basic characteristics”). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item on a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 (“strongly agree”) to 6 (“strongly disagree”). The items for which greater agreement corresponded to a belief in the change of characteristics (incremental theory) were all recoded. Through the recoding, now all items that showed a high value indicated an entity theory. By way of extreme group formation, participants were then divided into those who believe in the change of human characteristics versus those who believe in the stability of personality. Specifically, participants with a total mean value of less than or equal to 3 were classified as having incremental theory ($N = 21$) and those with a total mean value of greater than or equal to 4 were deemed to have entity theory ($N = 47$) (following Plaks, Stroessner, Dweck, & Sherman, 2001). All participants with a mean value between 3 and 4 were excluded from the analyses ($N = 27$). Furthermore some participants did not complete the questionnaire ($N = 13$). Through this procedure of extreme group formation only participants who have a clear subjective personality theory ($N = 68$) go into the further analyses.

Through forming two groups, entity rater versus incremental rater, it was possible to examine whether leadership evaluations are influenced by the subjective theories of the raters. Particularly whether individuals with entity versus incremental theory focus on different dimensions when they evaluate “general management” (Question 2). (Please note that in this question the independent variable “theory of the manager” does not play a role.)

Independent variable “subjective theory of the evaluated manager”. In addition, the subjective theory of the ratees was recorded. Due to the necessity of ensuring anonymity, this ensued in a rather complicated fashion, which included the raters being asked who their manager was. As all managers had also taken part in the survey, their subjective theory had also been recorded, and thus with the help of this additional voluntary information (recoded to ensure anonymity) it was possible to separate evaluations of employees whose manager has an incremental theory ($N = 14$), and evaluations of employees whose manager has an entity theory ($N = 30$). In this way it was possible to answer the question of whether managers with a subjective entity theory would be evaluated differently from managers with an incremental theory (Question 1). The study was therefore based on a 2 (subjective theory of the employee rater: incremental vs. entity) $\times$ 2 (subjective theory of the evaluated manager ratee: incremental vs. entity) factorial design, which enabled a comparison.

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3Due to missing information (information was provided on a voluntary basis), the amount of assignable data was reduced to $N = 44$. 

between the subjects of the manager evaluations depending on the subjective personality theories of raters and ratees.

**Materials**

In order to distinguish the independent variables, the questionnaire on Implicit Person Theory was used (Hong et al., 1997; translation by Werth & Förster, 2002). In order to establish the dependent variables, a catalogue of questions on the evaluation of the manager leadership behaviour was employed. The material used is described below.

*Implicit person theory measure.* In order to measure participants’ implicit theories, a translation (by Werth & Förster, 2002) of the domain-general questionnaire by Carol Dweck and colleagues (mentioned above) was used (e.g., Hong et al., 1997). The eight items were averaged. Cronbach’s alpha of the person theory scale was .94.

*Evaluation of leadership behaviour.* A total of 40 items were used to judge leadership behaviour (see the complete questionnaire in the Appendix). The items were specifically geared towards the company on the basis of previous qualitative interviews with employees of the company. All of the leadership behaviour question items were used to determine the dependent variables. These 40 items can be divided into seven concept dimensions that refer to various aspects of leadership behaviour and a global judgement of management.

A series of five items measured the dimensions: “Interest in employees and interpersonal feeling” (My manager is also interested in me as a person), “Dependability of the manager” (My manager sticks to arrangements), “Relationship between manager and employees” (I have a good relationship with my manager), “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” (My manager recognizes in time if changes are necessary), “Conflict management” (My manager is very good in crisis situations), “Dealing with mistakes” (My manager reproaches his employees for their mistakes without making any constructive suggestions for change), and “Feedback/praise/criticism” (My manager invites us to give him feedback). In addition five items were related to the global judgement of the management (“General management”—On the whole, my manager fulfils his management duties very well). The items in the eight constructed dimensions were never presented in just one block, but were distributed across the whole block on leadership

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4In analyses with only individual items of the question, e.g., only the four entity items or only three items (following Dweck et al., 1995b), the effects were in the same direction.

5Items are formulated with the masculine pronoun because all managers were males.
behaviour. A 5-point Likert scale on which the participants expressed the extent of their agreement with each item from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) was used to answer the questions. Cronbach’s alpha for all scales lies between $\alpha = .77$ and $\alpha = .86$.

Dependent variables for “evaluation of the leadership behaviour of the manager”. Participants were required to evaluate the leadership behaviour of their direct superior on a scale from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) (in the target company the direct superior for each employee was always explicitly one particular person). It was possible to categorize whether strong agreement describes a negative or a positive behaviour of a manager for each item (example of positive behaviour: “If I need my manager he is always there for me”; example for negative behaviour: “When there are problems/mistakes in our organization my manager always blames the employees”). All items were recoded so that a high agreement with the questions also always meant a positive assessment of the manager. (Only for the regression analysis is this variable entered as a predictor and therefore as an independent variable.)

Dependent variable “valence of the other evaluation”. The main prediction for the valence of the dependent variable was that managers with a subjective entity theory and managers with a subjective incremental theory would be judged differently with regard to all types of leadership behaviour.

Dependent variable “weighting of the dimensions of leadership behaviour”. As Dweck (1996; Hong et al., 1997) has shown, individuals’ implicit beliefs about the malleability or fixedness of human attributes guides information processing and especially inferences in person perception. Therefore, it was predicted that when judging their managers’ “general management”, raters would focus on different leadership dimensions depending on their own subjective theory. To test this question, separate observations (via regression analysis) are made for raters with incremental theory and raters with entity theory concerning which of the seven specific dimensions of leadership behaviour play a role in the evaluation of “general management” (independently of the theory of the evaluated managers).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Dependent variable “valence of the other-evaluation”
Each of the mean values of the manager behaviour evaluated by others was tested for statistical significance using a one-way analysis of variance
(ANOVA). It was expected that managers who believe in the stability of personality vs. in the dynamic nature of personality would be judged differently. As shown in Table 1, managers with an entity theory were judged more positively than managers with an incremental theory in the areas “Interest in employees and interpersonal feeling”, $F(1, 42) = 12.31, p < .001$, “Dependability of the manager”, $F(1, 42) = 9.58, p < .003$, “Relationship between manager and employees”, $F(1, 42) = 6.20, p < .017$, “Ability to deal with change/flexibility”, $F(1, 42) = 6.92, p < .012$, “Conflict management”, $F(1, 41) = 22.97, p < .000$, “Dealing with mistakes”, $F(1, 42) = 8.73, p < .005$, and “Feedback/praise/criticism”, $F(1, 42) = 13.80, p < .001$.

It can therefore be established that managers with entity theory are judged significantly more positively than managers with an incremental theory in all seven separate areas of management behaviour, as well as in terms of “General management”, $F(1, 41) = 10.01, p < .003$. The interaction between the implicit theory of the evaluated managers and the theory of the raters is not statistically significant ($F = 0.09, p < .768$).

Dependent variable “weighting of the dimensions of leadership behaviour”

Stepwise regression analyses were used to explore whether different judgemental dimensions are included in the analysis for raters with an incremental or entity theory, when judging their managers’ “General management”. Two stepwise linear regression analyses were carried out, the

| TABLE 1 |
| Mean values for the dependent variables |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rated managers with incremental theory</th>
<th>Rated managers with entity theory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“General management”</td>
<td>3.14 (.95)</td>
<td>4.01 (.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Interest in employees and interpersonal feeling”</td>
<td>3.14 (.70)</td>
<td>3.91 (.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dependability of the manager”</td>
<td>3.56 (.83)</td>
<td>4.23 (.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Relationship between employees and managers”</td>
<td>3.53 (.69)</td>
<td>4.14 (.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ability to deal with change/flexibility”</td>
<td>3.62 (.70)</td>
<td>4.16 (.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Conflict management”</td>
<td>3.16 (.76)</td>
<td>4.15 (.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dealing with mistakes”</td>
<td>4.56 (.70)</td>
<td>5.21 (.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Feedback/praise/criticism”</td>
<td>3.07 (.68)</td>
<td>3.88 (.66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incremental theory: $N_{\text{Rated managers}} = 14$. Entity theory: $N_{\text{Rated managers}} = 30$; Exception “General management” and “Conflict management” with $N_{\text{Rated managers}} = 29$.

Mean values of the dependent variable scales, anchored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Higher mean values correspond to a more positive evaluation of the manager. Standard deviations in parentheses.
first only for raters with incremental theory and the second only for raters with entity theory. For this purpose, all seven specific dimensions of the leadership behaviour were taken into account and were entered into a stepwise regression as predictors, both for raters with incremental theory and those with entity theory. The choice of the stepwise method allows the influence of the separate dimensions that play a role in the evaluation of the “General management” to be shown, dependent on the theory of the rater. With this method it also can be shown to what extent the separate dimensions contribute to the explanation of variance.

Relevant dimensions for raters with incremental theory

Table 2 describes how for participants with an incremental theory the variables were selected in two steps, with the dimensions “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” and “Dependability of the manager” being included in the regression equation. Sixty-seven per cent of the emerging variance of “General management” was explained by the regression equation (corrected .63). For those participants with incremental theory the strongest predictor for the global judgement of “General management” was the area “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” with $\beta = .52$, $F(1, 19) = 26.02$, $p < .001$, which contributes somewhat more to the prediction of the dependent variable than the variable “Dependability of the manager” with $\beta = .39$, $F(2, 18) = 18.09$, $p < .001$. The more positively the areas “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” ($R^2 = .56$) and “Dependability of the manager” ($R^2 = .63$) were evaluated, the more positively “General management” was also assessed. In total, it was possible to predict 82% of the variance of the variable “General management” from these two dimensions.

Relevant dimensions for raters with entity theory

In the regression analysis in which the factor “General management” was only predicted by individuals with entity theory, the variables “Relationship between managers and employees” and “Dependability of the managers” were entered as predictors (see Table 3). The selection of variables took place in two steps: The variables “Relationship between managers and employees” and “Dependability of the manager” were entered into the regression equation. Seventy-two per cent of the emerging variance of the “General management” was explained by this regression equation (corrected .70). With a standardized regression coefficient of $\beta = .50$, $F(1, 45) = 79.61$, $p < .001$, the variable “Relationship between managers and

---

6Regression analyses that separate data both according to subjective theory of the rater as well as the subjective theory of the manager could not be carried out due to small cell sizes.
employees’ contributed somewhat more to the prediction of the dependent variable than the variable “Dependability of the manager” with $\beta = .40$, $F(2, 44) = 54.51$, $p < .001$. The more positively the areas “Relationship between managers and employees” ($R^2 = .63$) and “Dependability of the manager” ($R^2 = .70$) were evaluated, the more positively “General management” was also assessed. In total, these two dimensions were able to account for 82% of the variance of the variable “General management”.

In summary different content areas are taken into account when evaluating general management for individuals who believe in the ability to change and the dynamic nature of personality compared with individuals who believe in the stability of human characteristics. Whereas for incremental theorists, the specific dimension “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” is of particular importance, for entity theorists “Relationship between managers and employees” is of central importance. The dimension “Dependability of the manager” appears to be of particular importance for both incremental and entity theorists and, thus, should prove to be critical in a leadership context. When judging their managers, raters with an incremental theory place significantly stronger weight on the particular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE $B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to deal with change</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to deal with change</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>.52***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .58$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .67$ for Step 2.

**$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$. 

**TABLE 2**
Summary of the regression model for variables on the prediction of “General management” for people questioned with an incremental theory ($N=21$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE $B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between managers and employees</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>.80***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between managers and employees</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.40***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .58$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .67$ for Step 2.

**$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$. 

**TABLE 3**
Summary of the regression model for variables on the prediction of “General management” for those questioned with an entity theory ($N=47$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE $B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between managers and employees</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>.80***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between managers and employees</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.40***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .64$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .71$ for Step 2.

***$p < .01$. 

employees” contributed somewhat more to the prediction of the dependent variable than the variable “Dependability of the manager” with $\beta = .40$, $F(2, 44) = 54.51$, $p < .001$. The more positively the areas “Relationship between managers and employees” ($R^2 = .63$) and “Dependability of the manager” ($R^2 = .70$) were evaluated, the more positively “General management” was also assessed. In total, these two dimensions were able to account for 82% of the variance of the variable “General management”.

In summary different content areas are taken into account when evaluating general management for individuals who believe in the ability to change and the dynamic nature of personality compared with individuals who believe in the stability of human characteristics. Whereas for incremental theorists, the specific dimension “Ability to deal with change/flexibility” is of particular importance, for entity theorists “Relationship between managers and employees” is of central importance. The dimension “Dependability of the manager” appears to be of particular importance for both incremental and entity theorists and, thus, should prove to be critical in a leadership context. When judging their managers, raters with an incremental theory place significantly stronger weight on the particular
situation and dynamic factors, while raters with an entity theory focus more strongly on people and their relationship to these people. This being said, both entity and incremental theorists perceived the reliability of their supervisor as equally important, resulting in it being the second factor in the respective analyses of regression.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current findings demonstrate that leadership evaluations are influenced by both the subjective theories of the raters and of those being rated. First, an influence of the subjective theory of the rated manager is found. Managers are judged significantly different in the perception of others on all eight dimensions of the leadership behaviour depending on whether they believe in stable characteristics or in change: managers with entity theory are judged more positively than managers with incremental theory throughout. In addition, the influence of the employee raters’ theory finds expression in the fact that raters with an incremental theory place significantly stronger weight on the situation when judging their managers, while raters with an entity theory focus more strongly on stable personality traits.

In other studies (e.g., Heslin & Latham, 2004), it was shown that the implicit personality theory has an important influence on the choice of goals and the performance behaviour of individuals in an organization. For instance, inducing the incremental theory of a manager increased the readiness of said manager to support his or her employees (even those with poor performances), to coach them, and to provide them with more feedback. This induction worked because incremental theory supports the assumption that the employees’ characteristics can be changed and the behaviours subsequently shown by managers attempted just that (Heslin & Latham, 2004). Based on this positive management behaviour it could be assumed that incremental managers are evaluated better—but the current study shows a more negative evaluation in the case of a manager with incremental theory. We speculate that employees possibly expect more frequent feedback from managers with incremental theory than from managers with entity theory. Although incremental managers might give feedback even more frequently than managers with entity theory, their evaluation nevertheless turns out to be more negative when additional criteria are brought into play. On the basis of the current study this difference in expected feedback must remain pure speculation, but in future studies it would be beneficial if, in addition to subjective assessments of manager behaviour (through items such as “When I say something to my manager he includes it in his considerations”), additional measures or even “more objective” measures (such as frequency/quality of feedback) should be considered, with a comparison of the two. In this way, an examination of
whether there is a discrepancy between absolute frequency of feedback and evaluation of the satisfaction with the feedback can be made evident. Additionally, it would be interesting to examine in subsequent studies to what extent these differing evaluations of leadership behaviour are determined by the management style. It is conceivable that the unpredictability of an incremental manager is only perceived as problematic as long as the manager promotes it in an authoritarian manner. In the case of participatory or democratic management, an incremental theorist manager might even be better liked, as he or she takes into account the needs of individual employees more strongly and flexibly.

Finally, follow-up studies could also look at the importance of a “theory fit”, i.e., the concurrence between the theory of the manager and the employee. The importance of the similarity between manager and employee on performance judgements (Pulakos & Wexley, 1982), job satisfaction (Turban & Jones, 1988), and the relationship between managers and employees (Bauer & Green, 1996) has already been demonstrated in other contexts. Where similarity exists, the exchange between manager and employees is better and accompanied by a greater number of positive feelings (Bauer & Green, 1996). Furthermore, it has been shown that employees prefer managers who are similar to themselves (Taylor & Brown, 1988). It would therefore be useful to examine whether employees also prefer managers (or vice versa) with whom a “fit” in terms of their implicit theories exists, i.e., with whom they, for example, agree in their implicit personality theory on change and stability (greater preference with the same theory). In the current study no indication of such an interaction was found, but it could be the case that in the present data set or company the positive evaluation of the entity managers was so strong that it led to a positivity bias, masking other types of effects.

Practical implications

The current findings show that an incremental manager is judged more negatively on the whole by his or her employees than an entity manager. A possible practical implication of this might be that employees with incremental managers need to be convinced of the advantages of this theory, for example that flexibility is something positive and not something that generates fear or stress. A possible intervention would be to integrate the found influence of subjective theories more strongly into team building initiatives.

In the organizational context particularly, the differences in implicit personality theory should have a relevant effect with regard to social behaviour. This is supported by findings that entity theorists were significantly more likely to wish to escape from or avoid a problematic
performance situation, while incremental theorists were significantly more likely to propose more productive coping strategies (Zhao & Dweck, 1994), presumably because they tend to attribute more to situational factors. Moreover, in several studies (Chiu et al., 1997a; Erdley & Dweck, 1993) entity theorists were found to be significantly more likely to recommend punishment and a greater degree of punishment for the transgressor, while incremental theorists recommend education or rehabilitation for wrong-doers. Therefore, implicit person theory appears to have implications not only in terms of how we think about or judge others, but also with regard to how we believe others should be treated (with regard to perceptions of groups, see Levy & Dweck, 1998). These findings have direct relevance for management behaviour and personnel development in organizations, as reactions to others’ behaviour, to achievement, and to social setbacks are important determiners of qualitatively good management.

Equally relevant are findings that individuals with incremental theory develop higher self-efficacy and more positive affect, set themselves more challenging goals, and show better performances in complex tasks (Tabernero & Wood, 1999). These findings suggest that persons with incremental theory are possibly “better” employees making it beneficial for a company to induce employees and managers to develop incremental theory. According to VandeWalle (2001), the implicit theory of the changeability of characteristics and abilities is an important prerequisite for enabling learning goals, and therefore ultimately innovations and growth in a company. He therefore recommends that managers influence the assumptions of their employees and thereby help to turn their implicit entity theory into an implicit incremental theory through explaining, for example, how a particular ability can be developed; at the same time managers should show their employees, as a model, comparable people who have acquired this ability, offer them training possibilities to acquire the abilities themselves, give them feedback, and encourage them. In various studies individuals’ implicit theory was experimentally induced through situational manipulations (see e.g., Bergen, 1991, cited in Dweck & Legget, 1988; Chiu et al., 1997a). Not least, the organizational culture also has a decisive influence in that it either strengthens or restricts the implicit orientation that the employee possesses.

**Theoretical implications**

Consistent with Brown and Lord (2001; Lord & Brown, 2004), we argue that leadership theory needs to be articulated with a theory of how employees create meaning from leadership acts and how this meaning helps employees to carry out evaluations and to self-regulate in specific contexts. In order to know the influence of implicit theories on management evaluations and to bring these into play in the interpretation of evaluations, however, we
believe it is not sufficient to “only fight half the battle”. Rather, the current findings indicate that measurements that fail to include implicit aspects can, by definition, only deliver incomplete results (Strack & Werth, in press). In conclusion, the current data calls for a new approach in the measurement of leadership behaviour. The combined use of explicit and implicit measures has recently been suggested as one possibility for dealing with the problem (see Werth, Häfner, Seibt, & Stork, 2004).

On a more conceptual level, the implicit personality theory sheds light on the “fundamental attribution error”, which is described as the general tendency to overestimate the role of individual’s traits and to underestimate situational factors in explaining their behaviours, even when situational factors are made salient (Jones & Davis, 1965; Ross & Nisbett, 1991). According to Dweck et al. (e.g., Levy et al., 1999), incremental theorists are less prone to the fundamental attribution error because they take situational explanations into account to a larger extent (Hong, 1994; Levy & Dweck, 1998) and make more process attributions than entity theorists (Hong, 1994; Levy, 1998). In the current study we took this view one step further by showing that when judging leadership behaviour, incremental theorists judge dynamic dimensions more strongly, while entities evaluate more static dimensions of leadership.

In previous studies we have shown that, depending on their implicit person theory, raters use the same available information differently, or rather see it as diagnostically different. The implicit personality theory was also shown to be a moderating variable for the use of idiosyncratic knowledge, i.e., knowledge about one’s own psychological functioning (e.g., “Knowing me, I would remember that!”; Werth & Förster, 2002). Entity theorists use this idiosyncratic knowledge more often since it makes sense under the assumption of stable, consistent behaviour and can be used to make a top-down inference. It is important to note that the use of such implicit theories does not imply that individuals have introspective access to this knowledge. On the contrary, individuals are frequently not even able to identify the actual causes of their decisions and behaviours, since they have no direct introspective access to themselves and have to rely on inferences instead (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Nevertheless, although those questioned are often unable to explicitly state their theory, the theory does guide behaviour and can definitely have fundamental effects on information processing and behaviour. In order to achieve a better quality of the evaluation of leadership behaviour, these perspectives or methodological approaches should also be given consideration. The current study provides an initial contribution in this respect. Finally, it is important to note that neither theory should be seen as the only “correct” one. Instead the two theories should be understood as different ways of constructing reality, each with its own potential costs and benefits. For example, an entity theory, with
its emphasis on stable traits that can be readily assessed, constructs a parsimonious and knowable reality for its adherents, where the world (here: the managers) appears predictable and possibly controllable. However, the simplicity of an entity theory can sometimes lead to global trait judgements being made too hastily and result in helpless coping styles—reality can be more complex than this view would imply. In contrast, an incremental theory, with its emphasis on more specific process analysis, provides its adherents with a more complex and less knowable reality. It is a theory that can foster effective persistence and flexibility in the face of obstacles, while the possibility of change inherent in the theory means that reality can never be known with any finality. This may leave a person in a constant state of uncertainty. The extent to which one or the other subjective theory is particularly helpful or unhelpful in combination with particular conditions in an organization needs to be examined through further research.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Areas of the other-perception and the corresponding question items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of management behaviour</th>
<th>Items in the analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General management</td>
<td>All in all, my manager fulfils his management duties very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All in all, my manager fulfils his professional duties very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My colleagues and I show our manager unlimited solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager finds the right balance between instructing us and allowing us our freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager just administers instead of pointing the way and guiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in employees/</td>
<td>I feel that my manager values me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal feeling</td>
<td>My manager is also interested in me as a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager completely neglects interpersonal aspects of everyday working life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager recognizes when there is a bad atmosphere among his employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of his employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability of the manager</td>
<td>My manager treats confidential information of his employees with responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I receive binding statements from my manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My manager sticks to arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The opinions of my manager can be easily influenced by others (other employees, his own direct superior, other managers, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once decisions have been made, my manager consistently follows them through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between</td>
<td>I feel that my manager only has authority over me because he works hierarchically above me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manager and employees</td>
<td>My manager supports me in my work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of management behaviour</th>
<th>Items in the analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My manager is behind his employees and defends them when necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I need my manager he is always there for me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good relationship with my manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to deal with change/flexibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager recognizes in time if changes are necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager has good foresight with regard to possible market changes that may be in the air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager places more value on maintaining the status quo than on promoting innovations <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager is open to new ideas of employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager always only begins to act when something goes wrong <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager is able to mediate conflicts between the employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager copes very well with crisis situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager deals with problems openly and does not avoid conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When there are problems in our department, my manager is interested in why/how they have arisen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager always tries to get his own way even when he is in the wrong <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with mistakes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager cannot admit to his own mistakes <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I make a mistake I am scared of my manager’s reaction <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager uses every opportunity to make his employees aware of their incompetence <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager reproaches his employees for their errors instead of making concrete suggestions for improvement <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When there are problems/mistakes in our organization my manager always blames the employees <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback/praise/criticism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager invites us to give him feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager deals well with criticism (of himself or his department)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager takes good performances of his employees for granted without comment, but always comments on poor performances <strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I say something to my manager, he includes it in his considerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager rewards achievement and commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale according to the degree of agreement from 1 ("not at all true") to 5 ("very true").

**R**: Item recoded in the analyses so that a high agreement means a positive assessment of the manager.