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When Authoritarianism is Beneficial: The Curvilinear Relationship Between Authoritarian leadership and Follower Extra-Role Behavior

shu ge
ges@unk.edu

William Gardner
Texas Tech University, William.Gardner@ttu.edu

Elizabeth Karam
Colorado State University, elizabeth.karam@colostate.edu

Zhen Yan
Texas Tech University, zhenyan@ttu.edu

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leadership and Follower Extra-Role Behavior

Shucheng Ge (ges@unk.edu)

William Gardner (William.Gardner@ttu.edu)

Elizabeth Karam (elizabeth.karam@colostate.edu)

Zhen Yan (Zhenyan@ttu.edu)

Intended Track: Management in Organizational Behavior and Leadership

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Abstract

Although authoritarian leadership is often assumed counterproductive, it may benefit certain follower outcomes. Drawing on theories of authoritarian leadership and social exchange, we propose that moderate levels of authoritarian leadership can enhance follower extra-role behavior, particularly when authoritarian leaders also demonstrate benevolence and/or morality. Results from a three-wave survey of 84 leader-follower pairs across U.S. companies show both U-shaped curvilinear and linear relationships between authoritarian leadership and follower extra-role behavior. Trust in the leader mediated the linear relationship, while the leader's perceived benevolence and morality moderated the curvilinear one. We discuss theoretical and practical implications for authoritarian leadership.