

Effect of Task Oriented and Relational Leadership Style on Employee Performance; Moderating Impact of Communicator Competence

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of task oriented and relational leadership style on employee performance and moderating effect of communicator competence. Data collected from 200 full time working employees via questionnaires, incorporating leadership style, employee performance and communicator competence. Correlation and regression analysis was than employed to examine the relationship, association and effect of the variables on each other. Results indicated a strong, positive and significant association between supervisor's communication competence, task and relational leadership styles and employee performance Further regression results specify that task and relational leadership style and communication competence effect employee performance positively and significantly. Results point out that communication competence fails to moderate relationship between Task-oriented leadership and employee performance but interactive effect of communication competence is there in between relational leadership style and employee performance, one important finding is that, results prove that relational leader style combined with communication competence have more effect on employee performance. Current study provides a new aspect to focus for the organizations that is importance of communication competence possessed by the leader to enhance employee performance in achieving organizational tasks and goals. Training and enhancing communicator competence is possible so organizations can plan up training sessions in this regards for managers. Thus organization needs to acknowledge the significance of the research highlighting leadership from the perspective of communication competence to maximize employee performance for organization efficiency.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Communicator competence, Employee performance.

Introduction:

Leadership is a behavior improve through communication. Communication shapes the perception of a leader charisma, and communication can be divided into the content of the leader message and presentation of those messages (Holladay & Coombs 1993). The link between the leadership and employee job performance effected by communication competence gripped by the leader is of key apprehension. When managers are able to provide employees with accurate and useful task and organizational information, this aids employees' sense making and reduces uncertainty (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). According to Awamleh, R., and Gardner, W. L. (1999) Communication is vital to leadership. Communication competency serves as one of the main pillars that leads the leaders potential to leave a positive influence on the employees (Cetin, Karabay, & Efe, 2012). Quality communication helps employees understand their task (Hartog, Boon, Verburg, & Croon, 2012). Communicator Competence as moderating variable between leadership style and employee performance has not been previously studied, how communication competence strengthens or weakens the relationship between leadership (manager) behavior and employee performance will be addressed in this research article. Madlock in the same line (2008) highlighted that their appears to be a gap in the research relative to the communicator competence in collaboration with task and relational leadership style ; and stated by Cetin et al., (2012) "there is scarcity of empirical evidence incorporating communication competency to the scholarship of leadership" (p.228). Successful managers can be differentiated from less successful managers largely by their communication behavior. (Luthans, Rosenkrantz, & Hennessey, 1985).The purpose of the current study is to examine to what extent the communication competence of managers influence employee performance and secondly to identify effects of communication competence as interactive term between task or relational leadership style and employee performance. The research findings of the current study will be significant in three ways. First it will empirically answer that to what extent communication competence will effect employee performance secondly it

will highlight that which task oriented or relational leadership style in combination with communication competence is more impactful on employee performance. Thirdly communication competence as a moderator between task oriented and employee performance and relational and employee performance will be studied in the current research. In nutshell this research will provide insight of the effects of communication competence of manager along with two main leadership style on employee performance.

Literature Review

Communication Competence

Spitzberg (1988) defined communication competence as "the ability to interact well with others" (p.68). He explains, "the term 'well' refers to accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness"(p. 68). Mayer's and Kassing in 1998 indicated that there exist a significant relationship between supervisor communication competence and employees organizational identification. No matter what the challenges are the power of communication of a supervisor will enable the employees to overcome the roadblocks encountered. (Cetin et al., 2012). Haris and Cronen (1979) research findings point out that employee must achieve their goals efficiently, effectively and appropriately.

Leadership Styles:

Leadership is a process where in the leader influence followers in achieving the shared task and objective (Yukl, 2010). Pfeffer and Salancik in 1975 indicated that leader exhibit task and relational oriented behavior. Ohio state leadership studies also explained two types of leadership behavior namely consideration and initiating structure, consideration refers to leader act in a friendly and supportive manner whereas in initiating structure leader is concerned about the task accomplishment. The Michigan studies also supported these two types of behavior; task-oriented behavior and relations oriented behavior but the study also added up to third category participative leadership. In Task oriented leadership functions are planning, scheduling coordinating work and activities to subordinates and also manager provide technical assistance, in relations leadership style managers are more supportive and helpful towards subordinates they show trust, confidence and act friendly and try to understand their subordinates problems (Yukl, 2010). It's an assumption that all managers are leader (Hunter, Bedell-Avers & Mumford, 2007).

Employee Performance

Motowidlo (2003) defines employee job performance as " the total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioral episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period of time."(p.39).

There is no single definition of employee performance most of the authors have argued that job performance can best defined by employee behavior Cambell, MacCloy, Oppler and Sager (1993) defined performance as

Something people do and can be observed. It include all those actions and behaviors that are relevant to organization goals and that can be measured in terms of each individual proficiency. Performance is what one is hired to do and do it well. Performance is not the result of actions it is the action itself.

Performance consist of goal relevant actions.(p. 40)

Leadership Behavior and Employee Performance; Moderating effect Communicator Competence:

According to research findings of Cetin et al., 2012 Leadership style also has a significant impact on employee job satisfaction, commitment and productivity, where productivity is indicating employee job performance. Employees are organization important assets, a capable leader, leads followers towards achieving desired goals. According to Hunter et al., (2007) Leader behaviors effect subordinates actions and perceptions, ultimately resulting in some type of desired outcomes. Employees require leadership and the leadership impact each of them uniformly. According to Hiller, DeChurch, Murase and Doty (2011) Leaders and leadership can affect emotions, most remarkably in followers, Thus it can be inferred that leaders can strongly influence employee performance and leaders communication ability is significant to the employees. Leadership is the driving force in the organization of individual, teams and entire organization (Kaiser, Hogan & Craige, 2008). Leadership enables individuals to be successful (DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty & Salas 2010), supports the fact the leaders can have positive or negative effect on employee performance. Hiller et al., (2011) the effects of leaders and leadership are presumed to result in effectiveness and performance outcomes. According to Yukl (2010) leadership is significantly about motivating people and gaining their commitment, crux that followers (employees) are influenced by leaders(managers) and their performance is directly affected by their behavior. Clear communication what, when and how the task and goals are attained is a necessity for better employee performance. Hiller et al., (2011) concluded after reviewing 25 years data on leadership and its outcomes that there is no doubt that subordinates view are critical to understanding leadership. According to Amos & Ristow (2004) the effective management of individual performance is critical to the execution of strategy and the organization achieving its strategic objectives. If subordinates unable to understand leaders requirement regarding task and goal achievement, it can lead to inefficiency in organizations, aligning to research findings of Hartog et al., (2012) quality of communication is of key importance for better consideration of the task and goals and better outcomes.

According to Yuan & Lee (2011) Leadership is an important management function to maximize efficiency and achieve organizational goals. organizational goals that are achieved with the help of its workforce. Leadership act as a driver, leading managers make all decisions in terms of what are organizational goals how employees work towards the achievement of those goals. Employee performance is widely affected by the leaders but the main point of focus is in between the lines that what are the factors that are affecting this relationship one of key component is communication ability of manager.

In the current research leadership style will be studied as task oriented and relational. Supervisor or immediate boss effective or ineffective Communication competence and employee performance from the perspective of task or goal achievement.

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant and positive relationship between supervisor task-oriented leadership style and employee performance.

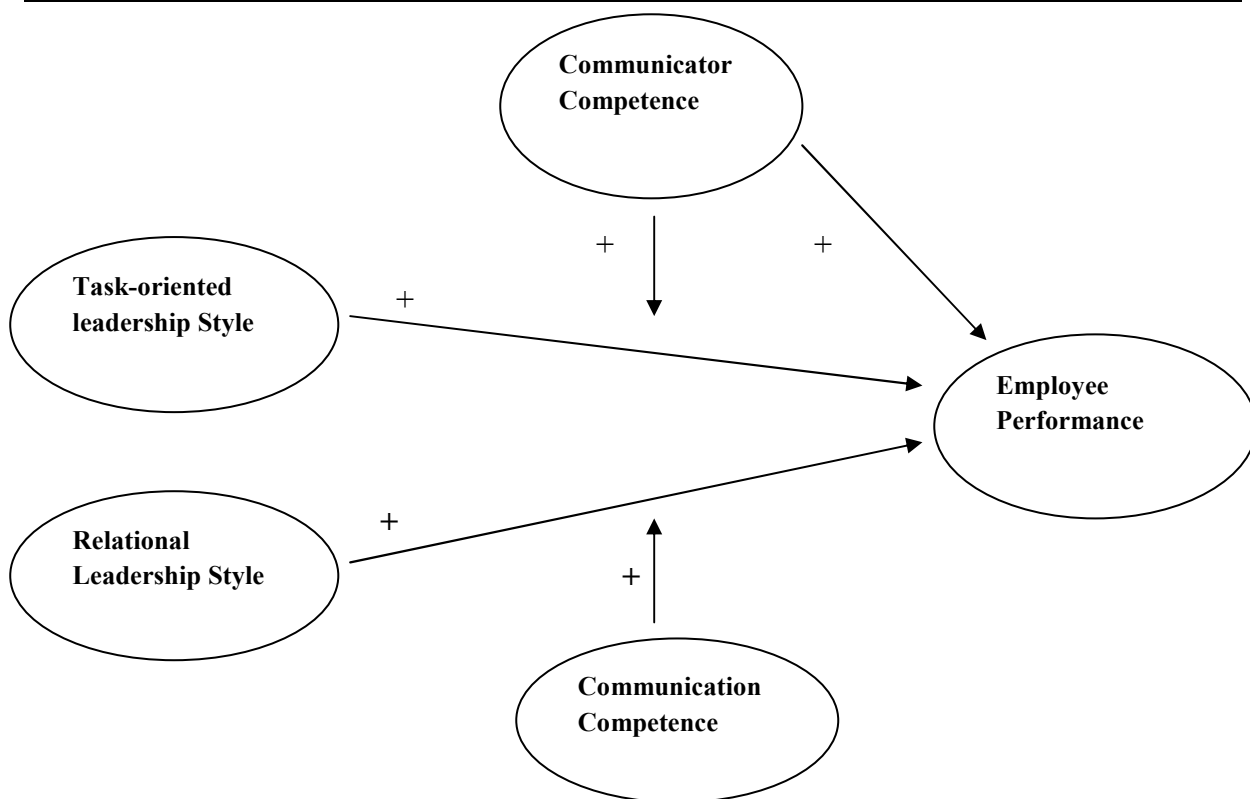
Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant and positive relationship between supervisor relational leadership style and employee performance.

Hypothesis 3: Communication competence is positively and significantly related to employee performance.

Hypothesis 4: Supervisor communicator competence moderates the relationship between task-oriented leadership style and employee performance such that the relationship is stronger when effective supervisor communicator competence exists and weak when there is ineffective supervisor communicator competence.

Hypothesis 5: Supervisor communicator competence moderates the relationship between relational leadership style and employee performance such that the relationship is strong when effective supervisor communicator competence exists and weak when there is ineffective supervisor communicator competence.

Research Model



Methodology

Participants:

Participants were 200 full time working employees. Participants reported working for array of organizations including government, services, semi-government and private. The data was collected through convenience sampling. The data was filled by employees so represents subordinate perception. Participants were provided with assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.

Response Rate was 67% , total questionnaires distributed were 300 out of which 200 were properly filled and useable. The questionnaires were filled by males 66% = 132 and female 34% = 68. 79% = 158 respondents, data was collected from service sector of Pakistan.

Measures:

The measures used in the current study were chosen for two reasons First they have consistently strong reliabilities across a number of prior studies. Second the measures tapped the behavior and attitude that is relevant for the current study.

Leadership: Leadership style was measured by the 20 item leadership style questionnaire developed by Northouse in 2001. A 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly disagree to 5=strongly Agree). It measures both task and relational style. Odd questions in the scale represents task oriented behavior and even questions focuses relational leadership behavior and when sum up together presents overall leadership behavior profile.

Communicator Competence: Measured by 12-item scale developed by Monge, Backman, Dillard and Eisenburg in 1982 to tap conceptualization of competent supervisor forwarded by Shaw in 2005, suggesting that in order for supervisors to be perceived as competent communicator they must share and respond to the information in timely manner, listen to others, communicate clearly and utilize communication channels. .The items are on 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree to 5=strongly Agree).

The current research paper acquired questionnaire scale of Leadership style and communicator competence from the appendix of Madlock (2008) research article.

Employee Performance: Employee Job Performance was measured by 5 item scale developed Wiedower,K.A. in 2001.A 5-point Likert type scale ((1=unsatisfactory to 5= Excellent).

Control Variable were identified from one way Anova test, the variables are Gender, age, Experience, Supervisor Gender, Supervisor age and Organization type.

The Cronbach alpha reliability of the scales for the current study is $\alpha = .79$ for Task oriented leadership style, $\alpha = .77$ for relational leadership style, scale reliability of overall leadership style is $\alpha = .880$ Scale reliability of communication competence is $\alpha = .74$ and Employee performance $\alpha = .80$.

Results

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation ,Correlation and Reliabilities

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Age	29.7	9.3								
2 Experience	7.4	6.8	.89**							
3 Supervisor Age	48.3	8.9	.50**	.49**						
4 Organization Type	3.3	.81	.24**	.19**	.12					
5 Task Oriented Leadership Style	2.76	.56	.40**	.41**	.09	.19**	(.79)			
6 Relational Leadership Style	2.63	.55	.33**	.39**	.17*	.14*	.78**	(.77)		
7 Communication competence	2.8	.8	.31**	.25**	.06	.18**	.69**	.75**	(.74)	
8 Employee Performance	2.7	.59	.27**	.23**	.19**	.39**	.39**	.29**	.28**	(.80)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 represents descriptive statistics and correlation among the variables . The age mean = 29 and S.D= 9.3.Task-oriented leadership mean = 2.76 and SD= .56. Relational leadership style mean= 2.63 and SD = .55. Communication competence mean=2.8 and SD= .8. Employee performance mean = 2.7 and SD = .59.

Correlation are significant at P < .01.Task oriented leadership style is associated with employee performance (r = .39, p < .01).Task oriented leader and communication competence show association (r = .69, p < .01). Relational leadership style is correlated with employee performance (r = .29, p <.01) and relational leadership style is associated with communication competence as well (r = .75, p < .01). Employee performance is associated to communication (r = .28, p <.01).

The bivariate association between the variables in Table 1 indicate provisional support for the Hypothesis and are in expected direction.

Regression analysis Of Study:
Table 2 Regression Analysis

Predictor	Employee Performance		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Task Oriented leadership			
Step 1			
Control Variable		.30	
Step 2			
Task oriented leadership Style	.26***	.35***	.05***
Relational Leadership			
Step 1			
Control Variables		.30	
Step 2			
Relational Leadership Style	.17**	.32**	.32**
Communication Competence			
Step 1			
Controls		.30	
Step 2			
Communication Competence	.14**	.31**	.01**

Control variables are gender, age , experience, supervisor gender, supervisor age and organization type.

***p < .00

** p < .01

Linear regression was performed to test Hypothesis 1, 2 & 3 in all the regression test control variables were gender, age , experience, supervisor gender, supervisor age and organization type. In the step 1 control variables were entered and in second step independent variables was entered. The dependent variable in all cases is employee performance reference Table 2 in first case independent variable is Task oriented leadership style, in second case independent variable is Relational leadership style and in third case communication competence act as a independent variable

The Hypothesis 1 predict that there is positive and significant relationship between Task oriented leadership style and employee performance .Reference table 2; The regression analysis supports Hypothesis 1 ($\beta = .26$, p < .000), so hypothesis 1 stands Valid.

The Hypothesis 2 predicts that there is a positive and significant relationship between Relational leadership style and employee performance . Reference table 2; regression results confirms Hypothesis 2 ($\beta = .17$, p < .01).Hypothesis 2 is also accepted.

Hypothesis 3 predicts positive and significant relationship between communication competence and employee performance. Reference table 2; regression test results also confirms Hypothesis 3 ($\beta = .14$, p < .01). Thus Hypothesis 3 also stands Valid.

Moderation Analysis Of Study:

Table 3 Results of Moderator Regression Analysis

Predictor Moderator analysis	Employee Performance		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Control Variables		.30	
Step 2			
Task-Oriented Leadership Style	.29**		
Communication Competence	-.03	.35	.05**
Step 3			
Task Oriented Leadership Style X Communication competence	.59	.35	.00
Step1			
Control Variables		.30	
Step 2			
Relational Leadership Style	.14		
Communication Competence	.03	.32	.02**
Step 3			
Relational Leadership Style X Communication competence	1.0**	.33	.01**

control variables are gender, age , experience, supervisor gender, supervisor age and organization type.

** p < .01

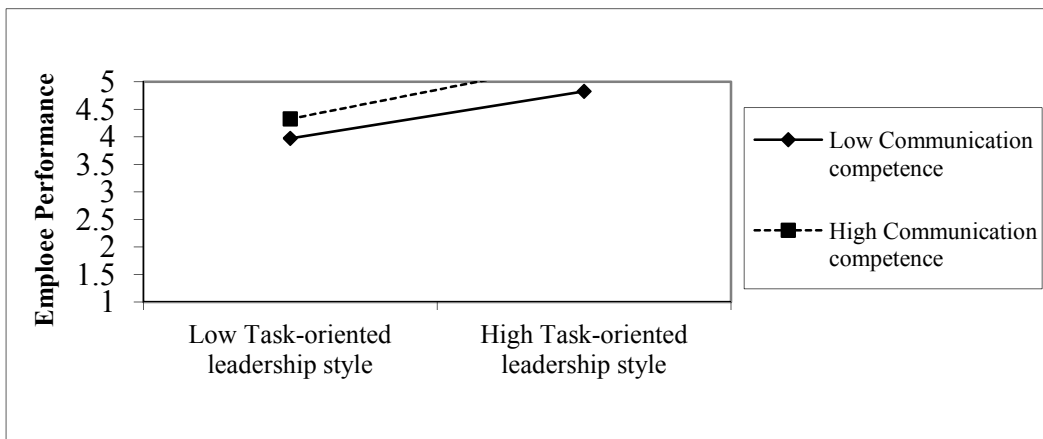


Figure 1 Task-oriented Leadership style (Independent Variable), Employee Performance (Dependent Variable) and Communication competence (Moderating variable).
 Figure 1 after plotting relevant data illustrates that communication competence does not have significant interactive effect on the relationship between task-oriented leadership and employee performance.

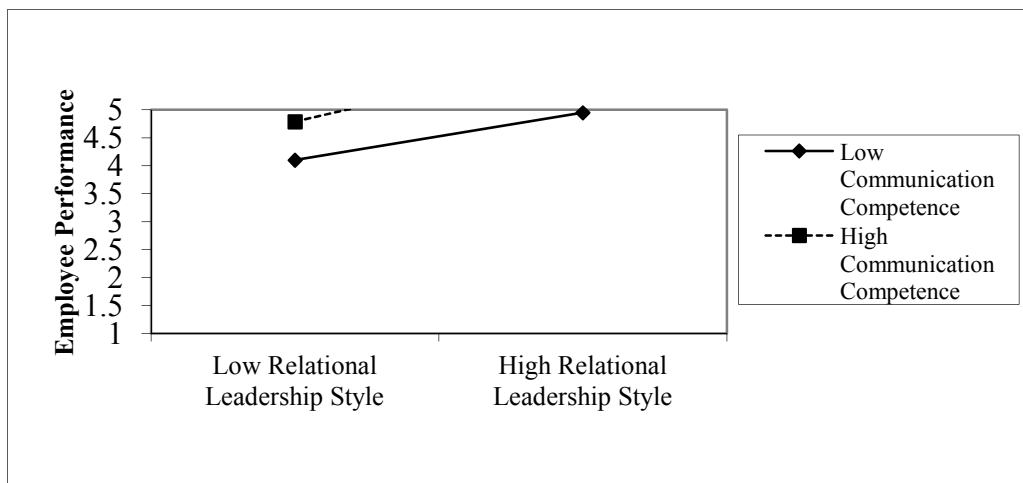


Figure 2 Relational Leadership style (Independent variable), Employee performance (Dependant variable) and Communication Competence (Moderating Variable).

Figure 2 after plotting relevant data, illustrates that there exists significant interactive effect of communication competence in between relational leadership style and employee performance.

Hypothesis 4 predicts moderating effect of Communication competence on task oriented leadership and employee performance. Reference Table 3; Moderated regression analysis was used to examine the interactive effect of Communication competence but results disconfirm the hypothesis 4 as ($\beta = .59$, ns). In step 1 control variables were entered, in second step entered task oriented leadership style variable and communication competence variable and in third step entered interaction terms of task-oriented leadership style and communication competence but the results were insignificant establishing a fact the there is no interactive effect. Hypothesis 5 predicts interactive effect of communication competence on relational leadership style and employee performance. Reference Table 3; The test results of moderated regression analysis supports hypothesis 5 resulting in acceptance of hypothesis 5 ($\beta = 1.0$, $p < .04$). In first step control variables were entered, in second step entered relational leadership style variable and communication competence variable and in third step entered interaction terms of relational leadership style and communication competence, results ensures that there exists combined effect of relational leadership style and communication competence on employee performance.

To summarize the result, Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 5 has been confirmed and accepted, whereas Hypotheses 4 is the only hypothesis that has not been confirmed and rejected on the basis of test results.

Discussion

In general out of 5 Hypothesis 4 Hypothesis are confirmed with reasonably good support of statistical results. After over all test result it can be stated that leadership behavior influence employee performance no mater its

My immediate supervisor . . .

- 7. has a good command of the language.
- 8. is sensitive to my needs of the moment.
- 9. typically gets right to the point.
- 10. pays attention to what I say to him or her.
- 11. deals with me effectively.
- 12. is a good listener.
- 13. is difficult to understand when communicating in written form.
- 14. expresses his or her ideas clearly.
- 15. is difficult to understand when he or she speaks to me.
- 16. generally says the right thing at the right time.
- 17. is easy to talk to.
- 18. usually responds to messages (memos, phone calls, reports, etc.) quickly.

C. Leadership Style Scale

Directions: Think about how often your immediate supervisor engages in the described behavior. For each item, select the number that best represents the behavior that your immediate supervisor is most likely to exhibit.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE
 5 4 3 2 1

My immediate supervisor . . .

- 19. tells group members what they are supposed to do.
- 20. acts friendly with members of the group.
- 21. sets standards of performance for group members.
- 22. helps others feel comfortable in the group.
- 23. makes suggestions on how to solve problems.
- 24. responds favorably to suggestions made by others.
- 25. makes his or her perspective clear to others.
- 26. treats others fairly.
- 27. develops a plan of action for the group.
- 28. behaves in a predictable manner toward group members.
- 29. defines role responsibilities for each group member.
- 30. communicates actively with group members.
- 31. clarifies his or her own role within the group.
- 32. shows concern for the personal well-being of others.
- 33. provides a plan for how the work is to be done.
- 34. shows flexibility in making decisions.
- 35. provides criteria for what is expected of the group.
- 36. discloses thoughts and feelings to group members.
- 37. encourages group members to do quality work.
- 38. helps group members get along.

D. Employee Job Performance Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each of the items below by circling the one number that most closely describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.	1 Unsatisf	2	3 Satisfact	4	5 Excellen t
39. TIMELINES: Consider the degree to which an activity is completed, or a result produced, at the earliest time desirable from the standpoints of coordinating with the outputs of others, maximizing the time available for other activities.	1	2	3	4	5
40. QUALITY OF WORK: Consider neatness, accuracy, and dependability of results regardless of volume.	1	2	3	4	5
41. QUANTITY OF WORK: Consider the volume of work produced under normal conditions. Disregard errors.	1	2	3	4	5
42. NEED FOR SUPERVISION: Consider the degree to which you carry out a job function without either having to request supervisory assistance or requiring supervisory intervention.	1	2	3	4	5
43. INTERPERSONAL IMPACT: Consider the degree to which you promote feelings of self-esteem, goodwill, and cooperativeness among co-workers and leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

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