


Promotion versus prevention: The effect of leadership on followers' self regulatory focus and outcomes



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Introduction

- ❑ Transformational and charismatic leadership are an influential mode of leadership, associated with high levels of performance (e.g., Dvir, et. al. 2002).
- ❑ The leadership literature has paid limited attention to the underlying psychological processes through which leaders motivate followers.
- ❑ Recent developments in motivation theory stress the importance of people's self-regulatory focus, as a central component shaping their motivations and behavior (Higgins, 1997, 1998).
- ❑ This theoretical development may be helpful in the attempt to understand leadership processes.

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- ❑ In the current paper we develop a theoretical framework that integrates different theoretical perspectives.

We draw on:

- ❑ Transformational and charismatic leadership theory (e.g., Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1998).
- ❑ Identity and self-concept based theories of leadership (e.g., Kark & Shamir, 2002; Lord & Brown, 2004; Shamir, et. al., 1993; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003),
- ❑ Theory of regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997, 1998).

Research Aims:

The aim of the current study is two-fold:

- ❑ To understand the effect of leaders' SRF on their motivation to lead and subsequently on their leadership style.
- ❑ To decipher how different leadership behaviors affect followers' motivation and performance, by priming different modes of followers' self-regulatory foci.

By focusing on both leaders' and followers' motivations we endeavor to develop a theoretical framework that traces a full course of the workings of motivation in the leadership process.

Self Identity and Leadership Theories

- ❑ There is growing interest in understanding the influence of leadership on follower's identity and self-concept (e.g., Kark & Shamir, 2002; Lord & Brown, 2004).
- ❑ **Different aspects** : According to this conceptualization, people's self-perception is composed of different aspects.
- ❑ **Different situations** may bring different aspects of the self to the fore; the self-concept may change through exposure to various external stimuli (e.g., behavior of leaders).
- ❑ This dynamic enables leaders to play a major role in the activation of the various levels and aspects of the self.

Regulatory-Focus Theory

- ❑ Higgins (1997; 1998) developed the regulatory-focus theory, which describes important differences in the processes through which people approach pleasure and avoid pain.
- ❑ He proposed that people have **two basic self-regulation systems**.
- ❑ One system regulates the achievement of rewards and focuses individuals on *promotion* goals, while the other system regulates the avoidance of punishments and focuses individuals on *prevention* goals.
- ❑ The regulatory focus is determined both by **situational** factors and **chronic** factors.
- ❑ Each regulatory focus has different consequences for **perception, decision making, behavior** and **emotions**.

Promotion vs. Prevention Foci

Promotion Focus

- ❑ Ideal self
- ❑ Accomplishments and aspirations
- ❑ Presence or absence of rewards (gain non-gain).
- ❑ Approach strategy
- ❑ Motivation for change.
- ❑ Happiness to dejection.

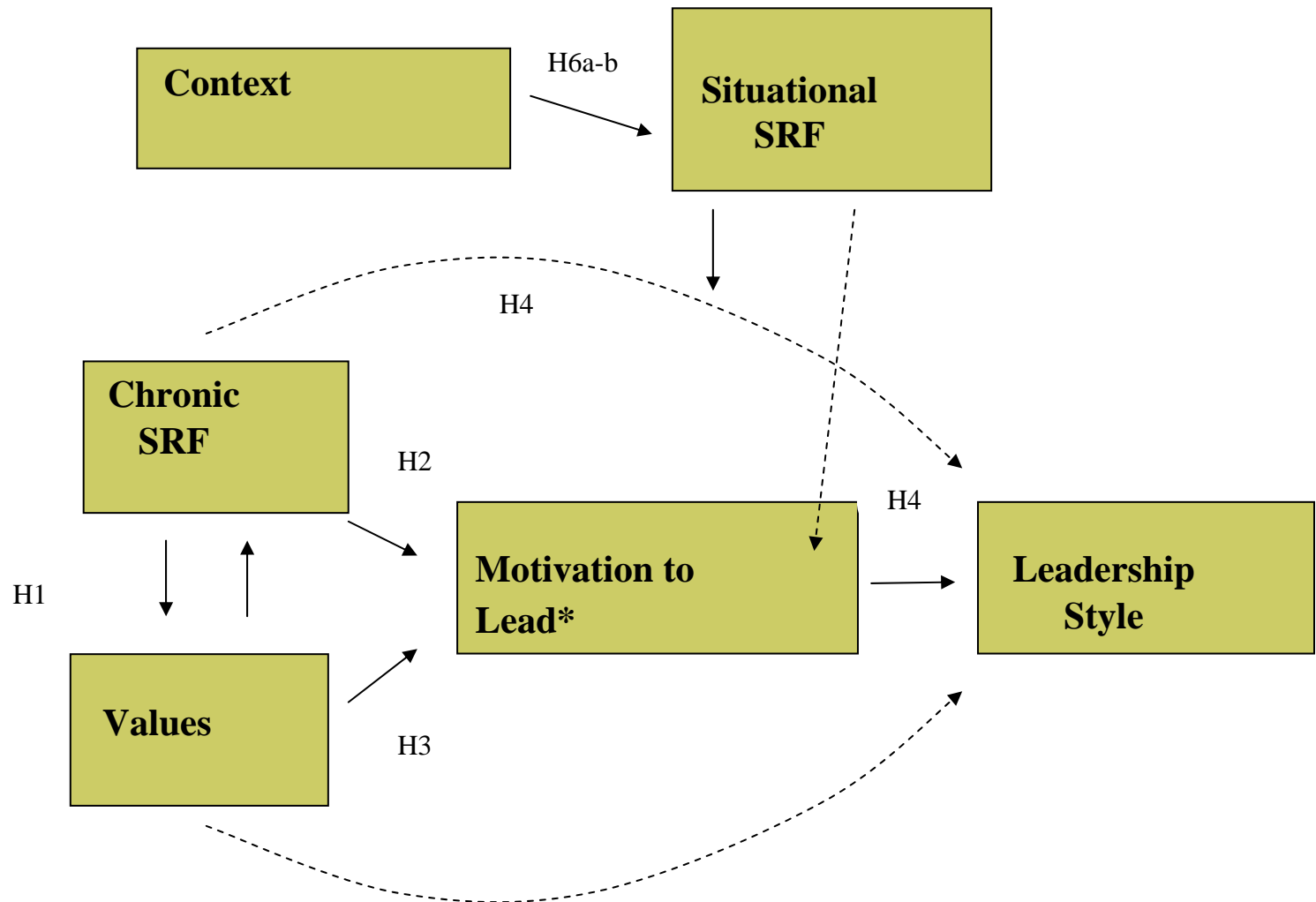
- ❑ Purpose - pursuit of development, change and exploration of novel behavior.

Prevention Focus

- ❑ Ought self
- ❑ Responsibility, duties and obligations
- ❑ Presence or absence of punishments (loss non-loss).
- ❑ Avoidance strategy.
- ❑ Motivation for stability
- ❑ Anxiety to quiescence.

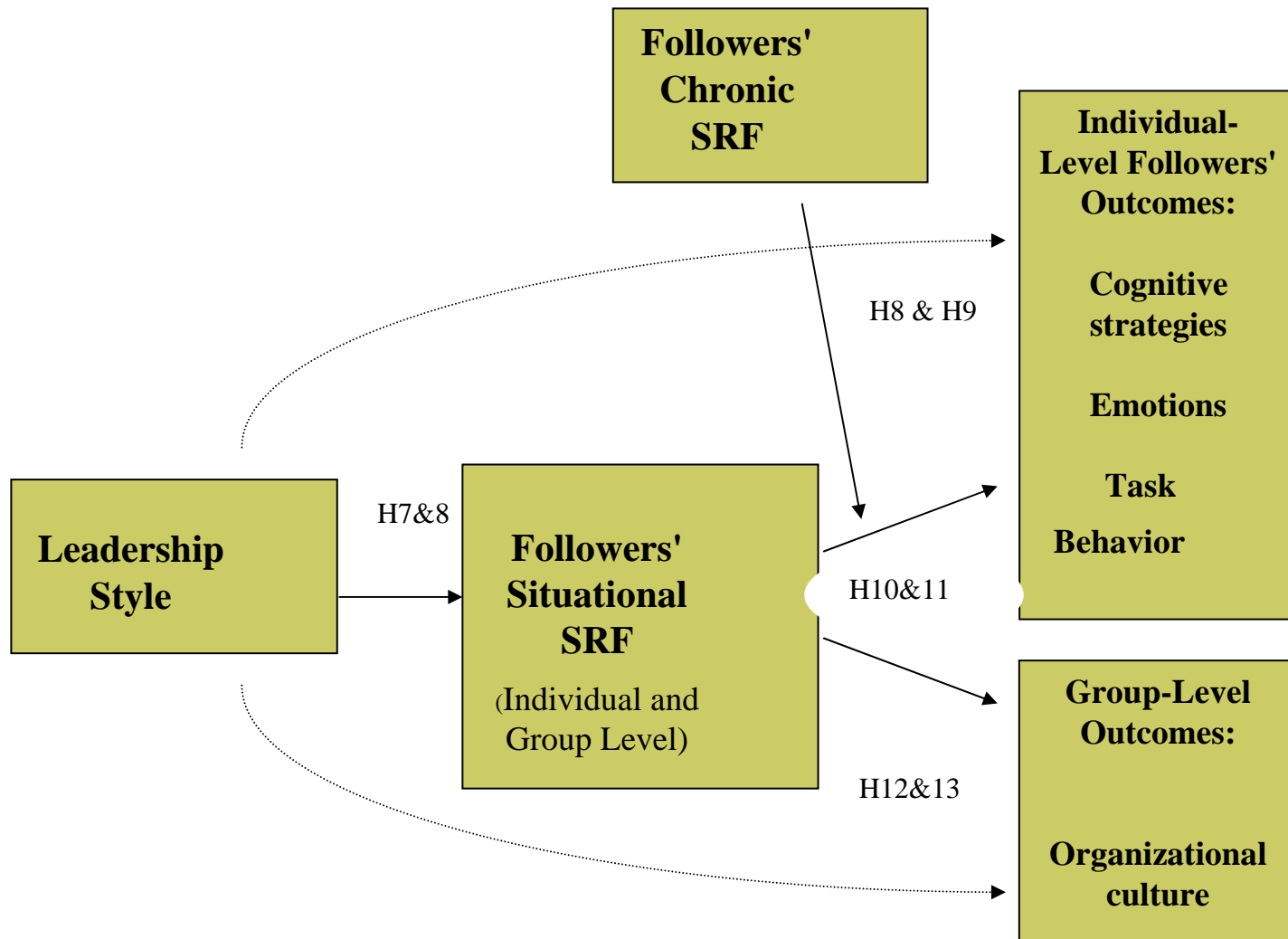
- ❑ Purpose – to assure safety and security, maintain routines, and keep the status quo.

Leaders' Motivations and Their Effects on Leadership Behavior



H5* – The Mediation Hypothesis

Followers' Motivation: Priming Followers' Regulatory Focus



Priming SRF at the Individual level

- ❑ Brockner and Higgins (2001) were first to suggest that leaders, may influence followers' regulatory focus.
- ❑ We contend that:

Transformational leaders will prime -> promotion SRF.

Transactional leaders will prime -> prevention SRF.

Priming a Promotion Foci

- ❑ Transformational and charismatic leaders are likely to elicit a promotion SRF among their followers in the following ways:
 1. Using a vision and a rhetoric that focuses on ideals, dreams and aspirations.
 2. Highlighting change.
 3. Focusing on the nurture, growth and development of their followers (e.g., Kark & Shamir, 2002).
 4. Providing a behavioral role model of promotion.



Priming a Prevention Foci

- Transactional and monitoring leaders are likely to elicit a prevention SRF among their followers in the following ways:
 1. Focusing the followers on preserving stability and security.
 2. Highlighting followers' responsibilities, obligations or things that they ought to do.
 2. Being active mostly when followers are not working as required and there are mishaps, exceptions and irregularities.
 3. reacting toward their followers in a negative or punishing manner, thus highlighting loss/non-loss orientation.
 4. Providing a preventive role model.



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- Therefore, we propose that different leadership behaviors can prime different self-regulatory foci among followers in the following manner:

Proposition 1: Leadership behaviors will prime followers' regulatory focus.

- **Proposition 1a:** Charismatic and transformational leadership will prime followers' promotion motivational focus.
- **Proposition 1b:** Monitoring or transactional leadership will prime followers' prevention motivational focus.

Priming Followers' Regulatory Focus at the Group Level

- ❑ Leaders are likely to influence motivations also at the group level.
- ❑ There are leader behaviors that are directed toward the entire group of followers.



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- ❑ These behaviors do not differentiate between followers, portraying them as a larger collective and are likely to operate at the unit level (Kark & Shamir, 2002).
 - ❑ There is initial support, for the effect of prevention / promotion on group level (Levine, et. al. 1998).
 - ❑ There are different ways in which we believe leaders can give rise to a shared regulatory foci orientation:
 1. The perception of the leader as a **representative character** who embodies a unit's identity and values (Shamir, et al., 1998).
 2. Engaging in **symbolic, verbal and performative acts** aimed at the collective.
 3. Leader-follower **emotional contagion** processes.
 4. **Shaping of the work context** (e.g., choice of tasks for the workgroup, task structure, allocation of rewards).

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- Thus we propose that:

Proposition 2: Leadership behaviors will prime a shared regulatory focus orientation among the workgroup members.

- **Proposition 2a:** Charismatic and transformational leadership will prime a shared promotion motivational orientation among members of the workgroup.
- **Proposition 2b:** Monitoring or transactional leadership will prime a shared prevention motivational orientation among members of the workgroup.

Followers' Chronic SRF as a Moderator

- ❑ Shah et. al. (1998) found that congruency between the situational and the chronic regulatory focus leads to better performance.
 - ❑ Leaders' can elicit followers' situational SRF, however, followers' chronic SRF is also likely to effect their behavior.
 - ❑ Therefore, we suggest that the situational SRF's effect on followers' outcome will be stronger when it fits the followers' chronic SRF.
 - ❑ **Proposition 3:** Congruence between the situational SRF, elicited by the leader, and the followers' outcomes - will be moderated by the followers' chronic SRF.
- Proposition 3a/b.** The effect of promotion SRF, elicited by transformational/transactional leadership, on followers' outcomes - will be stronger when the followers' chronic SRF is promotion / prevention.

Outcomes of Priming Followers' SRF

Individual Level Outcomes

- Different levels of possible selves are important because they have perceptual, motivational, emotional and behavioral consequences.

Promotion primed:

Proposition 4: The more a leader engages in transformational and charismatic behaviors, that make salient the ideal-self and elicit followers' situational promotion focus, the higher the level of followers':

- i) Sensitivity to positive outcomes; preference of change.,
- ii) Risk taking behavior; creativity; speed in task performance.
- iii) Positive affectivity; affective commitment.

Prevention primed

Proposition 5: The more leaders engage in monitoring behaviors, that give salience to the ought-self and elicit followers' situational prevention focus, the higher the level of followers':

- i) Sensitivity to negative outcomes; preference of stability and vigilance
- ii) Risk avoidance behavior; non-creativity and repetitiveness; accuracy and attention to details in task behavior.
- iii) Negative affectivity; normative and continuance commitment

Group Level Outcomes

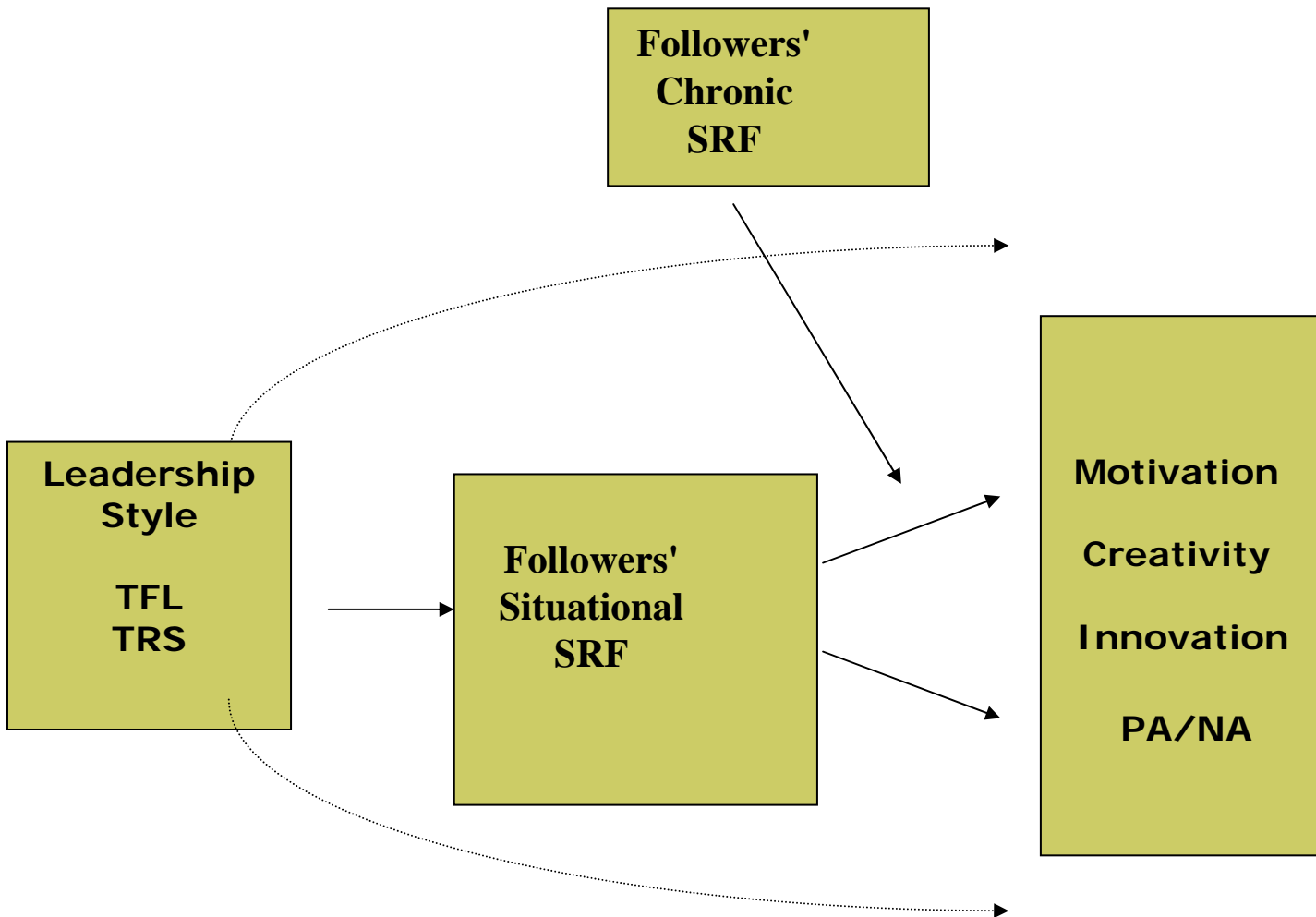
- ❑ **Proposition 6:** The more a leader engages in transformational and charismatic behaviors the higher the group and organizational level of innovation (**innovative culture**).
- ❑ **Proposition 7:** The more leaders engage in monitoring behaviors, the higher the group and organizational level of attention-to-detail (**quality culture**), and outcome orientation (**efficiency culture**).

Study 1



A Lab Scenario Study

Research Model



Research Design

- T1: Chronic prevention-promotion
(Lockwood, Jordan & Kunda, 2002).

- Manipulation: Leadership scenario.

- T2: Situational prevention-promotion.
 - Motivation (Fox & Feldman, 1988).
 - Creativity (Zhou, & George, 2001).
 - Entrepreneurship & Innovation.
 - PA/NA (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988).

Results

- H1: A positive relationship will be found between leadership style and SRF.

- A significant interaction between time and Leadership style was found for both prevention and promotion.

Leadership style and SRF

	TFL		TRS	
	T1	T2	T1	T2
Promotion	6.93	7.02	6.99	6.36
Prevention	4.25	3.84	4.39	4.98

SRF as Mediator

H2: SRF will mediate the relationship between leadership style and related outcomes.

Correlations between SRF and Outcomes

	Chronic		Situational	
	Promotion	Prevention	Promotion	Prevention
Motivation	.18*	-.04	.56**	-.20**
Innovation	.07	-.17*	.44**	-.40**
Creativity	.06	-.12	.45**	-.40**
PA	.03	-.01	.46**	-.31**
NA	-.24**	.28**	-.17*	.61**

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Mediating Effects of SRF

	Motivation		Creativity		Innovation	
	Model A	Model B	Model A	Model B	Model A	Model B
Leadership Style	-.23**	-.04	-.36**	-.15**	-.30**	-.08
Situational Promotion		.55**		.41**		.40**
Situational Prevention		-.16**		-.35**		-.36**

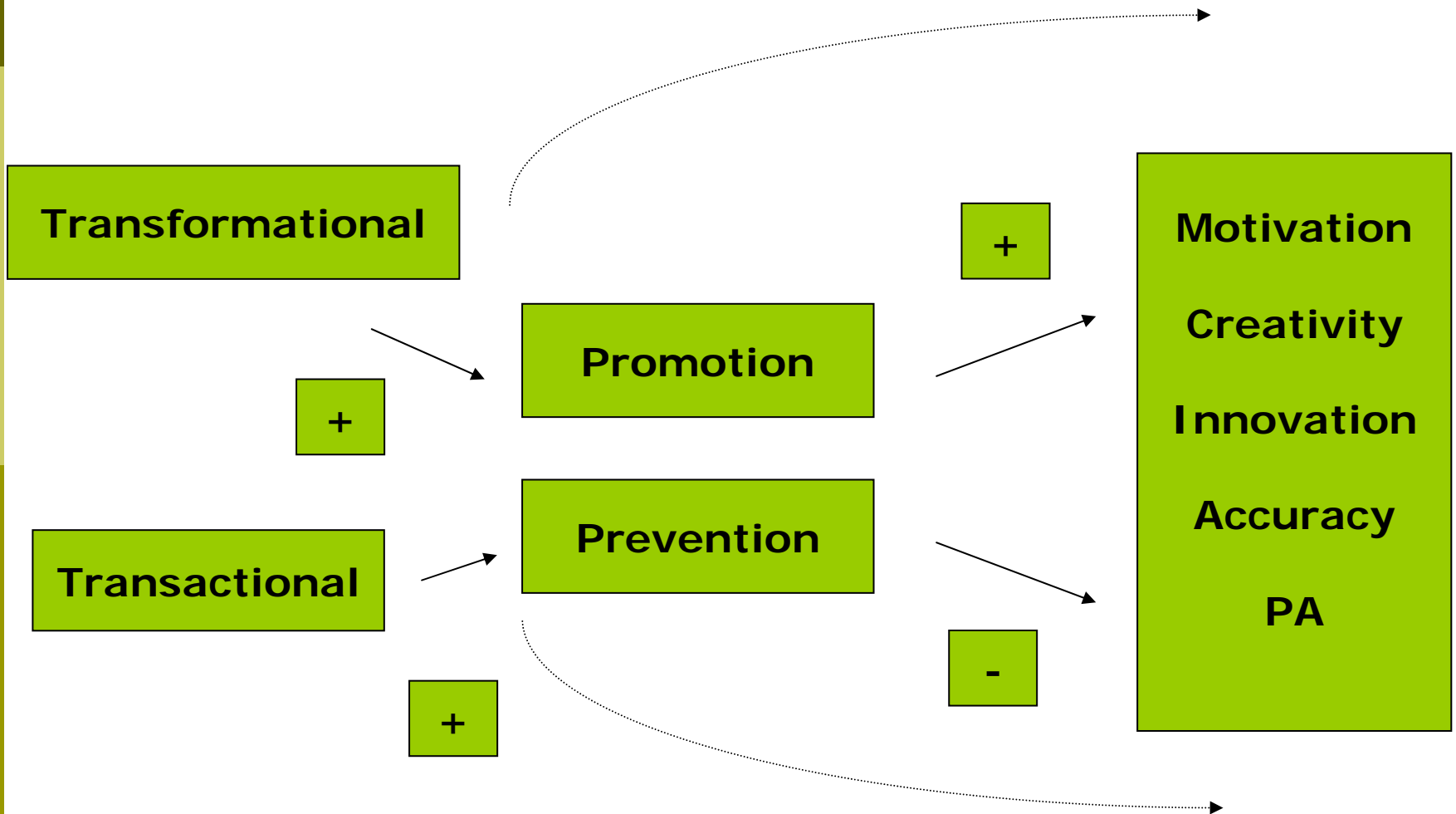
a p < .10 * p < .05 **p < .01

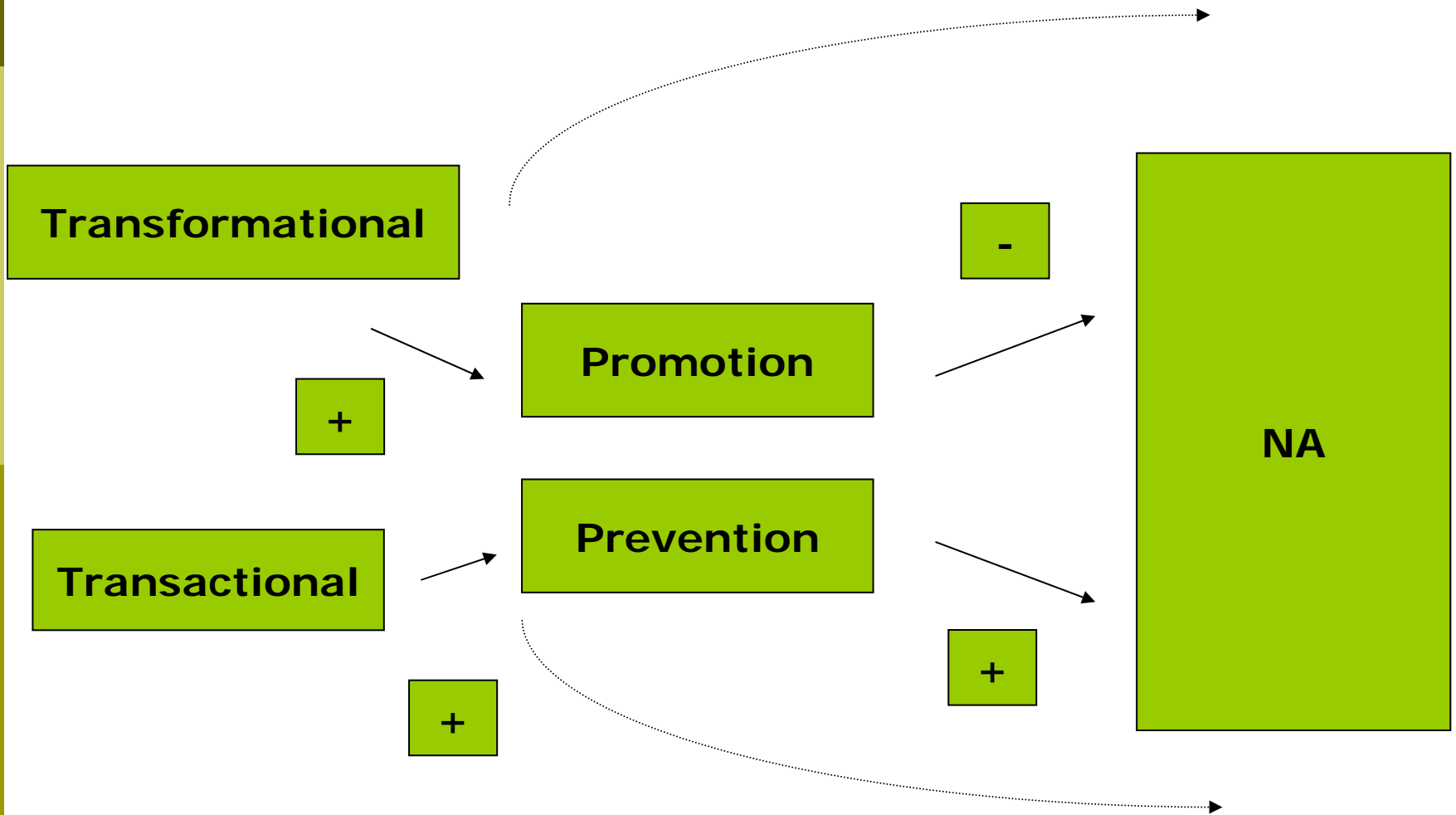
Mediating Effects of SRF

	Positive affectivity		Negative affectivity	
	Model A	Model B	Model A	Model B
Leadership Style	-.48**	-.32**	.44**	.26**
Situational Promotion		.38**		-.11*
Situational Prevention		-.22**		.54**

a p < .10 * p < .05 **p < .01

Results Summary





Study 2



A Laboratory Study
Leadership style is manipulated
by a professional actor

Research Design

- T1: Chronic prevention-promotion
(Lockwood, Jordan & Kunda, 2002).

- Manipulation: Leadership is manipulated by a professional actor.

- T2: Situational prevention-promotion.
 - Motivation (Fox & Feldman, 1988).
 - Cognitive style (Miron, Erez & Naveh, 2004).
 - PA/NA (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988).
 - Performance on three different tasks (1. generating ideas, 2. error detection, 3. creative (slogan)).

We are still collecting the data...

Research Design

- ▣ 103 undergraduate students (six groups). 3 groups of transactional and 3 groups of transformational leadership.
- Students were invited to participate in an experimental project aimed to help the university to develop a new service for students.
- When arriving they met the "project manager", which was a professional actor.
- The manager told the students he was hired by the university to establish a new service of "vocational guidance center" for graduate students.

Research Design

- The meetings with the “manager” was carried out in groups of 15-20 persons.
- The manager performed different style of leadership in each group.
- After a short introduction, the manager asked the students to participate in a brainstorming exercise in which they were asked:
 - a) Task 1 - to raise different ideas of how such a vocational service center should be established.
 - b) Task 2 - to think of a slogan to this center.
 - C) Task 3 - to find errors in an experimental brochure of the future center.
- In the end of the session the participants received questionnaires.

Leadership style and SRF

	TFL		TRS	
	T1	T2	T1	T2
Promotion	7.0	6.8	7.1	6.7
Prevention	4.8	4.6	4.7	5.3

The transformational did not change significantly followers' SRF while the transactional leader did affect followers' SRF in the predicted direction.

*The marked area is significant (!)

Correlations between SRF and Outcomes

	Situational Promotion	Situational Prevention	Leadership style
Motivation	.28**	.11	.08
Satisfaction with leader	.41**	.00	.29**
PA	.30**	-.04	.09
NA	.04	.36**	-.43** mediation
Details (self Report)	.36**	-.00	.11
Creativity (self report)	.41**	-.14	.15
Innovation (self report)	.44**	-.16	.16
Accuracy (performance)			
Sum of ideas (performance)			

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Study 3



A Field Study

Correlations between SRF and Outcomes

	Situational prevention	Situational promotion
3. TFL group	-.18^a	.11
4. TSF group	.35**	.01
5. Motivation	.26*	.19^a
6. Affective commitment	-.00	.43**
7. Continuance commitment	.24*	.01
8. Normative commitment	.03	.37**
8. Detail (self-report)	.24*	.02
9. Creativity (self-report)	.14	.18^a
10. Innovation (self-report)	.02	.06

^a $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Mediating Effects of SRF

	Attention to detail		Continuance commitment	
	Model A	Model B	Model A	Model B
MBE – Active Leadership	.21*	.15	.15^a	.07
Situational Prevention		.19^a		.21*

a $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Discussion

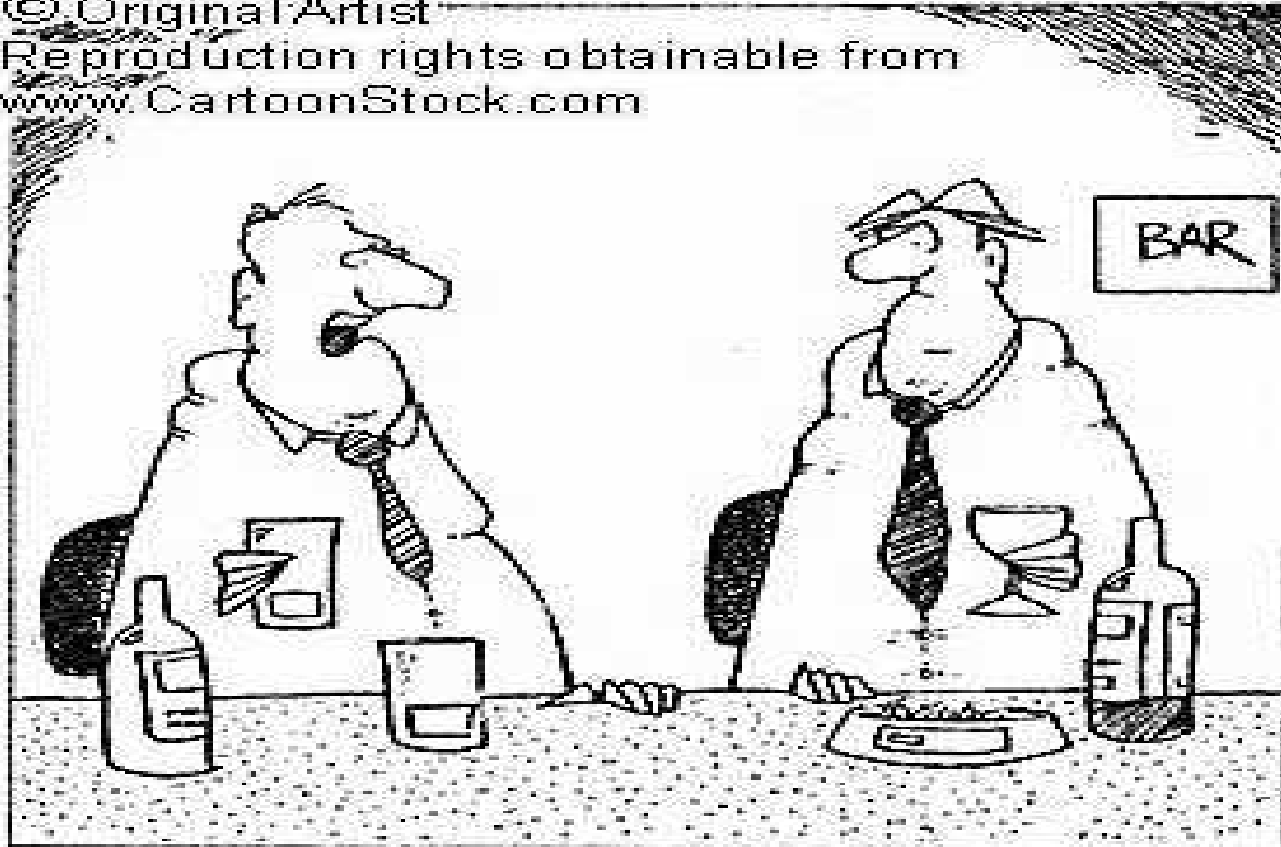
- ❑ Leadership style can effects followers' SRF and related outcomes.
- ❑ It seems that the leadership style is likely to affect the prevention focus more than the promotion focus.
- ❑ This effect could be explained by the fact that prevention focused individuals rely more on external forces, while promotion focused individuals rely mainly on internal aspirations and therefore are less likely to be affected by situational factors (e.g. leadership style)

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- ❑ People may be more attuned / sensitive to a context that highlights threats, danger and the fear of not meeting their expectations, than to a context that highlights wishes, ideals and aspirations due to the negativity bias.
 - ❑ The situation of a laboratory experiment may give prominence to the ability of leaders to prime prevention SRF.

Future directions

- ❑ In a qualitative study of leadership vision and the role of managers in sense-making at the time of the explosion of the hi-tech bubble in Israel – a similar pattern was found. Promotion disappeared and prevention was highlighted.
- ❑ It is interesting to further explore how and in what situations leaders can effect more strongly followers' promotion orientation.

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WELL YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY
"HERE TODAY GONE TOMORROW"
OR IN THE CASE OF DOTCOMS "HERE
TODAY GONE SHORTLY AFTER LUNCH"