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# The role of personal values in the charismatic leadership of corporate managers: A model and preliminary field study

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## Abstract

This study used multi-source field data collected in five organizations to examine linkages among managers' personal value system (i.e., intensity of openness to change, traditional, collectivistic work, self-transcendent, and self-enhancement values), charismatic leadership of managers, and three outcome measures. Two-hundred and eighteen managers provided self-reports of their personal values and ratings of their followers' extra effort and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Nine-hundred and forty-five subordinates rated the focal managers' charismatic leadership. Superiors of the focal managers provided ratings of managerial performance 2 months after collecting the managers' and subordinates' ratings. Results indicated that traditional, collectivistic work, self-transcendent, and self-enhancement values related positively to charismatic leadership, which predicted managerial performance and followers' extra effort and OCB. Managerial performance moderated the relationships between leaders' values, charismatic leadership, and followers' outcomes.
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## 1. Introduction

"Leaders embrace values; values grip leaders. The stronger the value systems, the more strongly leaders can be empowered and the more deeply leaders can empower followers."—James MacGregor Burns (2003, p. 211).

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Is leadership inherently value-laden? Are values associated with a leader's style and outcomes? Scholars have often pondered these questions and discussed the importance of personal values as desirable modes of behavior in the study of charismatic leadership, frequently referring to their role in influencing leaders' and followers' behavior and attitudes toward performing above and beyond the call of duty (Bass, 1985; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns, 2003; Egri & Herman, 2000; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; House, 1977). Both Bass and House have argued that charismatic leaders hold strong convictions and use them as guideposts for behavior and vision that motivates followers to perform beyond expectations. Bass and House's thoughts are echoed in the emerging literatures on positive psychology and authentic leadership which highlight values as corresponding to character strengths demonstrated through behaviors that put ideals into action (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Although values appear to play a key role in charismatic leadership processes and outcomes, they have been examined in only a few studies, with the notable exception of those published in a special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* (Volume 12, Issue 2) on values and leadership (e.g., Lord & Brown, 2001; Thomas, Dickson, & Bliese, 2001). However, these studies have not specifically focused on charismatic leadership despite calls for research to examine such issues (Bass, 1999; Burns, 2003). Recent criticisms of the charismatic leadership literature note that more attention needs to be paid to the role of values and intentions in the charismatic leadership process (Yukl, 2002). It remains unclear which values within a leader's value system are most closely associated with the degree of charisma displayed by the leader.

Reviews of the values literature (e.g., Meglino & Ravlin, 1998) have called for examinations of values associated with behavioral and performance outcomes using organizational field samples. Researchers have not explored the role that a manager's performance plays in moderating the relationships between the values espoused by leaders, charismatic leadership, and its motivational effects on followers. Organizations struggling to more fully engage employees in their work may benefit from what is learned through such exploration. These important issues provide motivation for the present study.

This study examines relationships between aspects of a leader's personal value system, charismatic leadership, managerial performance and two outcome measures of followers' performance beyond expectations. To examine these relationships, data were drawn from a sample of managers from five technology-driven organizations. Compared to managers working in other contexts, managers of technology organizations interact with associates in turbulent contexts and often work under extreme challenges, time constraints, and stress levels (Sosik, Jung, Berson, Dionne, & Jaussi, 2004). This context should allow for studying how a leader's values relate to charismatic leadership and its outcomes, and whether these relationships differ for low- versus high-performing managers (Yukl, 2002). This field study uses multisource data collection and controls for socially desirable responding to provide empirical tests of core aspects of House's (1977) model of charismatic leadership, which is discussed in more detail below.

## 2. Charismatic leadership and values

Charismatic leaders exercise diffuse and intense social influence over others through their beliefs and unique behaviors (House, 1999; Weber, 1947). Charismatic influence stems from the leader's values, personality characteristics and behavior, follower attributions, the context, or some combination of these factors. Charismatic leaders are self-confident, dominant, extraverted, and possess strong convictions in