

2021

## Predicting Objective Career Success: An Examination of Leadership and Proactive Personality

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PREDICTING OBJECTIVE CAREER SUCCESS:  
AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP AND PROACTIVE PERSONALITY

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology  
in the College of Psychology  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term

2021

Thesis Chair: Dr. Victoria Pace

## **ABSTRACT**

The overall purpose of this study is to examine whether proactive personality and leadership style (transactional and transformational) of university students help predict their academic and professional success. Students from the University of Central Florida were recruited through SONA to participate in an online Qualtrics survey. Proactive personality was measured using the Proactive Personality Scale developed by Crant and Bateman (1993). Leadership was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) created by Bernard M. Bass (1985). Academic success was measured using GPA. Professional success was measured by the given promotions (raises) a student experienced in their specific job divided by the number of months worked. No significant correlational relationship was found. Future studies should exclude freshmen, increase sample size, only allow those who have experienced a promotion/raise to participate, and further examine participants' accurate self-image.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study aims to determine whether university students' proactive personality and leadership style (transformational and transactional) help predict their academic and professional success. This study will help determine if students' personality and leadership style is shown to correlate with success at school and in student employment. These same individual factors could help suggest job applicants who might be on the fast track for professional career success. If relationships are demonstrated, those in positions of hiring recent graduates could potentially implement the scales used in this study to help make hiring decisions.

### **History of Prominent Leadership Theories and Research**

The Great Man Theory is one of the oldest leadership theories. It originated in the 19th century by Thomas Carlyle. The idea of the Great Man Theory is that leaders are born, not made. An example of this theory can be seen today in countries with a family dynasty that has ruled for decades (Riggio, 2018). The Great Man theory focuses on the leader, while the next theory, the Bases of Social Power, recognizes the interplay between leader and followers.

The Bases of Social Power theory, developed by French and Raven in 1959, identifies five types of power: referent power, expert power, reward power, coercive power, and legitimate power. French & Raven (1959) used the letter "P" to represent a person, and the letter "O" to represent another person, a group, a norm, or a role. The Bases of Social Power is described by French & Raven (1959) as the interrelation between O and P which is the origin of that power. The following lists the bases of O's power "(a) reward power, based on P's perception that O has the ability to mediate rewards for him; (b) coercive power, based on P's perception that O has the ability to mediate punishments for him; (c) legitimate power, based on the perception by P that O

has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him; (d) referent power, based on P's identification with O; (e) expert power, based on the perception that O has some special knowledge or expertness" (French & Raven, 1959, p.151). The Bases of Social Power theory identifies the different types of power held by leadership, while the following theory, the Ohio State leadership studies, identified two types of leaders in their research.

Researchers at Ohio State University and Michigan University performed some of the groundbreaking early research in leadership. Through the Ohio State Leadership Studies research, two types of leaders were identified: initiating structure leader and consideration leader. Initiating structure leader is a leader who is focused on the work situation of completing tasks, reaching deadlines, and maintaining workplace standards. A consideration leader is a leader who encourages communication, actively listens, and demonstrates a genuine concern for the well-being of their subordinates (Riggio, 2018).

In a similar approach, the Michigan Leadership Studies focused on the behavioral characteristics that made effective leaders. They identified two behavioral characteristics: task-oriented behaviors and relationship-oriented behaviors. Leaders who demonstrate task-oriented behaviors focus on setting work standards, like the initiating structure leader found in the Ohio State leadership studies. Leaders that demonstrate relationship-oriented behaviors are concerned with their employees' well-being and include them in the decision-making process (Riggio, 2018). The Michigan leadership study's focal point is on leadership behaviors, whereas the next theory introduces leadership management style.

In 1960 Douglas McGregor identified two different leadership management styles: Theory X and Theory Y in his book *The Human Side of Enterprise*. McGregor (2018) defines a



Theory X leader as an authoritative micromanager who believes their employees dislike their jobs. Theory X leaders believe that their employees have no ambition and need rewards to entice them to work. McGregor (2018) describes a Theory Y leader as someone who has an optimistic view of their employee's capabilities and attitudes. In Theory Y, employees are viewed as self-motivated and responsible. McGregor explains that the difference between Theory X and Theory Y is that Theory X treats adults like children, and Theory Y treats adults like mature adults, therefore concluding that Theory Y is a healthier form of leadership (McGregor, 2018). Although Theory X and Theory Y imply differing interactions between leaders and employees based on the theory the leader holds, the following theory expands that to show that a single leader may have different relationships with their various employees.

The Leader-Member Exchange Theory was introduced by Dansereau Jr., Graen, and Haga (1975), and focuses on the relationship between a leader and an individual group member. This theory states that relationships between leader and employees are not all equal. Some leaders develop stronger relationships with some employees (in-group) than other employees (out-group) in the workplace. Dansereau Jr., Graen, and Haga conducted a longitudinal study to understand the relationship-making process between leader and employee. This study conducted a four-part interview with 60 managers. The study concluded that when a leader has a negative impression of an employee or the employee does not trust the leader, this negatively affects work performance, attendance, and job satisfaction. When a leader has a positive impression of an employee and the employee also holds a positive impression of the leader, this results in positive work performance, attendance, and job satisfaction ( Dansereau Jr., Graen , & Haga, 1975). This study also concluded that leaders could establish a "leadership" relationship (relationship without

authority) with some of their employees as well as a "supervisor" relationship (authority influenced relationship) with other employees. The leader-member exchange theory focuses on the relationship between leader and employee. The upcoming theories introduce transactional and transformational leadership and laissez-faire leadership.

In 1978, James M. Burns published the book *Leadership*, which introduced transformational and transactional leadership. In 1985, following Burn's publication, Bernard Bass published the book *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, in which he built off Burn's 1978 publication on transformational and transactional leadership and included laissez-faire leadership. In this publication, Bass created the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Laissez-faire leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership will be further examined in the following paragraphs.

According to Bass, Waldman, and Einstein (1987), Laissez-faire leadership (also known as non-transactional leadership) is when a leader does not exemplify any leadership. This form of leadership is least effective compared to transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, Waldman, & Einstein, 1987). An example of laissez-faire in the workplace is when a leader does not demonstrate any form of guidance to their employees.

According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership is the most common form of leadership. Transactional leadership is defined by Burns (1978) as an agreement between leader and subordinate in which there is an exchange of work for rewards, such as salary and job security. Transactional leadership is a reinforcement strategy in which followers learn what they must do to earn rewards and avoid punishments (Bass et al., 1987). Bass and Avolio (1998) divided transactional leadership into two components: *Contingent Reward* (CR), and

*Management by Exception (Active)* (MBEA). *Contingent Reward* (CR) describes a leader who corrects or rewards followers based on their performance. *Management by Exception* (MBEA) occurs when a leader is actively on the lookout to correct mistakes of their subordinate's tasks. An example of transactional leadership in the workplace would be when employees are confident with the appraisal system and its ability to distribute rewards such as a promotion or raise (Bass et al., 1987).

Transformational leadership is described by Burns (1978) as a leader who captivates the whole person of their followers, creating a relationship between leader and follower that results in mutual stimulation. An example of transformational leadership is when a leader stimulates followers to work toward organizational goals because they want to, not because they must.

Bass defines transformational leadership as a theory of leadership where a leader inspires their followers to work toward a common goal for the organization's betterment and success, therefore stimulating high performance and job satisfaction (Bass et al., 1987). According to Bass (1985), as cited in Bass & Avolio (1998), transformational leadership consists of four components: *idealistically influential* (II), *inspirationally motivating* (IM), *intellectually stimulating* (IS), *individually considerate* (IC).

The first component is *idealistically influential* (II). This component arises when subordinates are confident in their leader and the leader sets high moral and ethical standards. These actions result in the followers seeking to identify with and mirror their leader.

The second component of transformational leadership is *inspirationally motivating* (IM). This component exists when a leader mentally challenges their followers to develop an understanding of their shared actions and purpose.

The third component is *intellectually stimulating* (IS). According to this component, followers are encouraged to use their innovation and creativity to take on a broader scope of opportunities. This component helps organizations adopt effective strategies and let go of outdated strategies.

The last component is *individually considerate* (IC). This component describes a leader who provides their followers with genuine support and mentorship while simultaneously accepting each followers' differences.

This study will use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X short) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). This version of the MLQ measures the same leadership components mentioned above and is the recommended version of the MLQ for research, according to its authors (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

### **Proactive Personality**

Proactive personality gained traction in the early 1990s due to researchers Michael Crant and Thomas Bateman. Their study *The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates* introduced a measure of proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Bateman and Crant defined proactive personality as "a dispositional construct that identifies differences among people in the extent to which they take action to influence their environments" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 103). Crant describes proactive people as individuals

who identify and act on opportunities, show initiative, and persevere until the change they are working for occurs (Crant, 2000). Crant describes individuals who are not proactive as individuals who do not act. Less proactive individuals are passive, reactive, and adaptable to situations instead of changing the outcome (Crant, 2000). The proactive personality construct will be tested for its ability to predict academic and work success because it describes individuals who take the initiative and aim to reach goals. Those who are proactive set goals and take the initiative. These characteristics should help predict academic and work success because they play a part in the motivation to complete required tasks in order to succeed. This study will also test whether leadership is associated with academic and work success. The characteristic of leadership should help predict academic and work success because those who demonstrate leadership are most likely committed individuals, which is an important characteristic in academic and in work success. The relationship between proactive personality and leadership will be explored next.

### **Proactive Personality and Leadership**

Different studies have analyzed the relationship between proactive personality and leadership. For example, Bateman and Crant (1993) surveyed 282 undergraduate students using the proactive personality scale and found a positive correlation between proactive personality and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership was measured by having the students identify which of their peers would be transformational leaders (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Deluga (1998) measured proactive personality and charismatic leadership (closely related to transformational leadership) of American presidents. The difference between charismatic leaders and transformational leaders is that charismatic leaders attract followers because of their

characteristics. In contrast, transformational leaders gain followers who are loyal and eager to follow the vision the leader has expressed (Riggio, 2018). This study found that presidential proactivity was a significant predictor of charismatic leadership (Deluga, 1998). Another study conducted by Crant and Bateman (2000) surveyed 156 managers and bosses of a Puerto Rican financial services organization. The study's purpose was to determine if there was a relationship between proactive personality and charismatic leadership. The authors found that proactive personality was positively associated with charismatic leadership. These studies show a positive relationship between proactive personality and leadership in the workplace and in academics.

Proactive personality and transformational leadership will be used in this study as potential predictors of objective career success. Objective career success will be further explored in the following section.

### **Objective Career Success Defined**

Objective career success is represented by salary, history of promotions, history of job title hierarchy (Blickle, Schütte, & Wihler, 2018). Promotions and raises will be used in this study to measure objective career success. GPA will be used as a measurement of academic success.

### **Proactive Personality and Objective Career Success**

A study conducted by Seibert, Grant, and Kraimer (1999) surveyed business and engineering graduates in order to see if there was a relationship between proactive personality and measures of objective and subjective career success. The researchers measured proactive personality using Bateman and Crants (1993) Proactive Personality Scale. Subjective career

success was measured using the five-item career satisfaction scale created in 1990 by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley. Objective career success was measure by self-report of salary and promotion. It was found that proactive personality was positively associated with two forms of objective career success, salary and the number of promotions.

A study conducted by Crant (1995) used a proactive personality scale to survey 131 real estate agents. The study results showed that proactive personality was predictive of objective career success (Crant, 1995).

### **Leadership and Objective Career Success**

Baethge, Rigotti, and Vincent-Hoeper (2017) surveyed employees from an IT company on the relationship between transformational leadership and subjective and objective career success measures. The researchers measured objective career success in the survey, asking questions regarding career advancement, leadership responsibilities, more professional responsibilities, and salary growth. The study found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and objective career success for more career-determined an employee is.

### **Hypotheses and Rationale**

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between employees' own transformational and transactional leadership and their objective career success. The study also examined the relationship between proactive personality and objective career success. Objective career success in this study was measured by dividing the number of promotions/raises by the number of months working. This study's transformational and transactional leadership was measured

separately using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X short) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995).

The study examined whether transformational and transactional leadership and proactive personality were indicators of success potential in pre-professional and entry-level candidates. The purpose of this study was to assist early identification and development of management potential of college graduates. If hypotheses were supported, those positions of hiring recent college graduates could use the scales in this study to assist in the selection hiring process.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' transformational leadership scores on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the promotion ratio.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' transactional leadership scores on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the promotion ratio.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' scores on the Proactive Personality Scale and the promotion ratio.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' scores on the Proactive Personality Scale and GPA.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' transformational leadership scores on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and GPA.



Hypothesis 6: There will be a positive correlation between individuals' transactional leadership scores on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and GPA.

## **METHODS**

Before conducting the study, four subject matter experts (SME) were surveyed. The purpose of the survey was to understand what individuals with promotion and raise responsibilities in the workplace look for when promoting employees. The survey questions and responses are found in Appendix A. The SMEs were asked what factors help determine whether to promote or award a raise to an employee. Their responses included keywords such as commitment, competence, initiative, ability to influence, and responsibility. The keywords "ability to influence" and "initiative" sparked my curiosity which led to finding Bateman and Crant's (1993) proactive personality scale publication. In this publication, proactive individuals are described as having the ability to influence their environment. The term leadership also came to mind when examining the SME's keywords. This term led to finding the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the definitions of leadership from Bernard Bass (1985). This process resulted in choosing leadership and proactive personality as the thesis research topic.

### **Participants**

The participants' eligibility criteria to take the survey was a minimum of six months of employment experience at the same job with 20+ hours per week working. The participants were over the age of 18. Self-employed students were not eligible to take the survey. The students accessed the study through the University of Central Florida's Psychology Department's online study access: <https://ucf.sona-systems.com/>. All participants received 1 SONA credit towards their course requirements.

To ensure that students were actively engaged in answering the survey questions, questions were placed throughout the study that instructed them to pick a specific answer. An example of this is "For this question, please choose the answer Strongly Disagree." Participants who missed more than one of these questions were removed from data analyses. There was a total of 105 participants. After analyzing which participants missed more than one of the filter questions, 92 participants were left. The data from these 92 participants were used in the study.

The 92 participants in this study were students from the University of Central Florida, 41 males and 51 females. When asked about their race, 64 participants identified as White, 10 participants identified as Black or African American, 1 participant identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, 7 participants identified as Asian, 1 participant identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 9 participants identified as Other. The average reported age was 20 ( $M=20$ ,  $SD=4.3$ ). When asked about year of school, 48 identified as freshmen, 15 identified as sophomores, 18 identified as juniors, and 11 identified as seniors ( $M=1.91$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ).

For hypotheses one, two and three, only those who reported experiencing at least one promotion/raise were included in the correlational analysis. This resulted in 53 participants in the analyses pertaining to GPA. There were 21 males and 32 females. The average age was 20 ( $M=20.58$ ,  $SD=5.48$ ). There were 27 freshmen, 8 sophomores, 11 juniors, and 7 seniors ( $M=1.96$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ). When asked about their race, 42 identified as White, 5 identified Black or African American, 2 identified as Asian, 4 identified as Other.

For hypotheses four, five, and six, freshmen were excluded from the analysis due to the chance they were reporting their high school GPA. Therefore, hypotheses four, five, and six only

included responses from sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This resulted in 44 participants in the analyses pertaining to GPA. There were 20 males and 24 females. The average age was 22 ( $M=22, SD=5.7$ ). There were 15 sophomores, 18 juniors, and 11 seniors ( $M=2.91, SD=.77$ ). When asked about their race, 27 identified as White, 6 identified Black or African American, 1 identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 identified as Asian, 6 identified as Other.

## Measures

**Work Experience.** A researcher-designed-scale covered questions about the student's employment history, employment duration, and the number of promotions/raises they had experienced in their job. The work experience questions are found in Appendix B.

**The Promotion Variable.** Participants were asked to provide how many months they worked at their specified job, and the number of promotions/raises they experienced. Promotions in this study represented promotion of job title or salary raise. The purpose of collecting this information was to identify the ratio of how many promotions or raises a student had experienced to the given number of months they had worked. The equation used to determine the ratio is found below.

$$\textit{number of promotions (raises)} \div \textit{number of months working}$$

The ratio was used to measure objective career success. Pearson correlational analyses were performed to examine if there was a relationship between the ratio of objective career success (promotion variable) and proactive personality, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership.

Out of the 92 participants, 53 experienced promotion in their selected work experience, while 38 did not. Only the 53 respondents that reported a promotion were used in the Pearson correlational analyses involving the promotion variable. For the 53 participants that experienced promotion, the average number of promotions experienced was two ( $M=2.45$ ,  $SD=2.00$ ). The frequency distribution table displaying the reported promotions for all participants can be found in Table 3.

**The GPA Variable.** The GPA variable was measured with and without freshmen. This was done because of the strong possibility that freshmen reported their high school GPA, not college GPA, due to being in their first semester of college. The GPA descriptive frequency analysis of freshmen resulted in 48 participants (21 males, 27 females). The average GPA of freshmen was 3.6 ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=.36$ ). The frequency distribution table for freshman reported GPA can be found in Table 4.

In the study's GPA Pearson correlational analyses, only the sophomore, junior, and senior responses for GPA were used. The GPA descriptive frequency analysis excluding freshman (only including sophomores, juniors, and seniors) reported a total of 44 participants (20 males, 24 females). The average GPA excluding freshman was 3.4 ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=.37$ ). The frequency distribution table displaying reported GPA without freshman can be found in Table 5.

**Year of School Variable.** Participants were asked to report what year of school they were in ( $M=1.9$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ). The percentage of participants in each school year category reported are as follows: 52.2% were freshmen, 16.3% were sophomores, 19.6% were juniors, and the remaining 12% were seniors.

**The Proactive Personality Scale.** This 17-question scale was developed by Crant and Bateman (1993). This scale's purpose is to measure proactive personality. In this sample of participants, the internal reliability was excellent, with a coefficient alpha of .89. This scale was measured using the 7-point Likert Scale (1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree, 4-Neither Agree or Disagree, 5- Somewhat Agree, 6- Agree, 7- Strongly Agree), to determine how well the respondent could identify with the presented questions. The descriptive frequency analysis for this scale can be found in Table 6 ( $M=5.5$ ,  $SD=.78$ ). The survey can be found in Appendix C.

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.** This 45-item questionnaire was developed by Bernard M. Bass and Bruce Avolio (1995). This questionnaire was used to measure both transformational and transactional leadership. Cronbach's alpha (reliability) for this scale was as follows for this study: *Intellectual Stimulation* (IS) (.78), *Individualized Consideration* (IC) (.78), *Inspirational Motivation* (IM) (.83), *Idealized Attributes* (IA) (.75), *Idealized Behavior* (IB) (.70), *Contingent Reward* (CR) (.80), *Active Management-by-Exception* (MBEA) (.64). Scores in IS, IC, IM, IA, and IB were related to transformational leadership. Scores in CR and MBEA were associated with transactional leadership. A descriptive frequency analysis of this scale resulted in a mean of 161.71 and a standard deviation of 18.65 ( $M=161.71$ ,  $SD=18.65$ ). Sample questions from the MLQ are found in Appendix D.

**Demographic scale.** A self-designed demographic scale includes questions on age, gender, college year, and ethnicity, with GPA as an indicator of academic success. This scale is found in Appendix E.

## **Procedure**

Participants were informed that the study was online and accessed through the SONA system. Participants were told that the survey was about the relationship between work-relevant behaviors and outcomes. The online survey's duration averaged 30-45 minutes.

The survey was sequenced in the following order: Work Experience, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Proactive Leadership Scale, The Demographic Scale.

## RESULTS

Each hypothesis was tested using a bivariate Pearson correlation analysis. Pearson correlation data for the first, second, and third hypotheses can be found in Table 1: *Pearson Correlation Matrix Analysis of Promotion with Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and Proactive Personality*. Pearson correlation data for the fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses can be found in Table 2: *Pearson Correlation Analysis of GPA with Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and Proactive Personality*.

The first hypothesis stated that the correlation between transformational leadership and the promotion ratio would be positive. The results indicated that the correlation was negative and not significant ( $r(48) = -.13, n.s.$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

The second hypotheses stated that the correlation between transactional leadership and the promotion ratio would be positive. The results indicated that the correlation was positive and not significant ( $r(49) = .07, n.s.$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

The third hypothesis stated that the correlation between scores in proactive personality and the promotion ratio would be positive. The results revealed that the correlation was negative and not significant ( $r(50) = -.05, n.s.$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Due to the large number of freshmen participating in the survey (52%), the correlational analysis of GPA was run without the responses of freshmen. This was done because those in their first semester of college do not have a set GPA until the end of the semester. This study was surveyed in the middle of the Fall semester; therefore, freshmen taking the survey did not have a college GPA. It might be that freshmen used their high school GPA, so to ensure consistency,



they were excluded from the correlational analyses pertaining to GPA. This resulted in omitting 48 freshmen from the GPA correlational analyses, which resulted in 44 participants data used in the GPA correlational analyses.

The fourth hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between scores in proactive personality and GPA. The results indicated that the correlation was positive and not significant ( $r(42)=.06, n.s.$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

The fifth hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between scores in transformational leadership and GPA. The results indicated that the correlation was positive and not significant ( $r(41) =.08, n.s.$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

The sixth hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between scores in transactional leadership and GPA. The results indicated that the correlation was positive and not significant ( $r(42)=.14, n.s.$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Cronbach's alpha for the MLQ was calculated by separating the transactional and transformational leadership items. Transactional leadership items had a Cronbach's alpha of .71, and transformational leadership items had a Cronbach's alpha of .90. Additionally, the proactive personality items had a Cronbach's alpha of .91. The Cronbach's alpha for each of these measures were all relatively high, which is indicative of the measures having high reliability.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results indicated that there were no significant relationships found between any of the variables examined. Hypotheses two, four, five, and six were not significant, but the direction predicted in these hypotheses was supported. However, for hypotheses one and three, the direction of the correlation was not supported. Hypotheses one predicted there would be a positive correlation between transformational leadership and promotion. Hypothesis three predicted there would be a positive correlation between proactive personality and promotion. The analysis results showed a negative correlation for both transformational leadership and proactive personality with promotion. This could be because participants viewed transformational leadership and proactive personality as less important when it comes to career success when compared to transactional leadership. The participants' average age was 20, therefore transactional leadership is most likely the most common form of leadership they have engaged in. Transactional leadership is the type they most likely have experienced in the classroom. The students work on assignments to earn a grade. Another common form of transactional leadership would be working in restaurants or in retail. The participant comes to work to provide a service in exchange for monetary gain.

### **Limitations**

None of the hypothesized relationships were supported. Though disappointing, it raises many questions as to why this came to be.

First, it is possible that the GPA correlational analyses testing hypotheses four, five, and six were affected because the data used for these analyses consisted of only responses from

sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This accounts for 44 participants of the total study data, as the remaining 48 participants were not used in this analysis since they were freshmen. As mentioned in the above results section, freshman reported GPA was excluded from the analysis because they had not yet received a UCF GPA. As such, it is expected that the freshman who participated in the study were reporting their high school GPA rather than their college GPA. Due to the exclusion of the freshmen's reported GPAs, the number of participants used in the GPA bivariate correlational analyses was less than half of the data, ranging between 43 and 44 participants. When the significance of a hypothesis is being analyzed, it is greatly affected by the strength of the correlation and the number of participants. Future studies should examine these hypotheses with a much larger sample and exclude first-year students from the collection of data.

Another possible limitation in this study is that the participants could have a vague understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. This limitation would directly affect all the hypotheses. Given that the majority of participants were relatively young, they did not have many years of work experience. Due to their limited work experience, the participants may not have a deep understanding of proactive personality, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership. This would suggest that first-year students unintentionally answered the questions inaccurately, which would subsequently compromise the data and findings, ultimately resulting in misleading inferences. This limitation could be solved by having the participants' bosses/ supervisors answer the survey based on *their* impressions of the participant. This is suggested because the bosses/supervisors of the participants have most likely observed the levels of proactive personality, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership they have demonstrated in their respective work environments. Future studies should compare the

survey results from the participants and their respective bosses/supervisors to determine if student participants display an accurate self-image.

Another limitation in this study was the survey format prefacing the scales. When introducing the proactive personality scale and the MLQ, the participants were instructed to answer how accurately they identified with the statements provided. None of the scales were prefaced by asking the participant to answer the scales based on their experience working or experience as a student. This results in a gray area of the state of mind (work experience, student, other) the participant was basing their responses. This could be prevented in future studies by prefacing the scales with instructions to base answers on specific experiences or roles as students, workers, or both.

Another limitation was the limited number of participants used in the Pearson correlation analyses of hypotheses one, two, and three measuring promotion. The promotional variable was calculated by dividing the number of promotions by the number of months working. Only 53 participants (58% of total participants) reported at least one promotion, while the remaining 38 participants (41% of total participants) reported zero promotions. With 41% of the promotion/raises reported as zero, the Pearson correlational analyses of hypotheses one, two, and three worked with a limited number of participants to determine if there was a significant relationship between promotion and the other measured constructs. This could be avoided in future studies by requiring participants to have experienced at least one promotion or raise in their specified work in order to participate in the study.

The final limitation was briefly mentioned earlier in the discussion, which was the small number of participants. The initial goal was to include 200 participants. Due to a limited recruitment pool of only using UCF's SONA, this study only obtained 92 responses. Increasing the sample size would increase the probability of finding a significant correlation.

In summary, future studies should take the limitations and suggestions identified and replicate this study with a large sample pool in hopes of finding significant relationships. Future studies should exclude freshmen from participating and increase the number of participants participating in the study. Additionally, the participants' bosses/supervisors should also partake in the survey on behalf of the participant, then responses of the participant could be compared to those of the bosses/supervisors to observe differences. Future studies should also instruct the participants on which experience or role they should base their responses to the scales measured. Lastly, future studies should consider only permitting those who have experienced at least one promotion/raise in their specified work to participate in the study.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the unanticipated limitations of this study have paved the way for future research studies. Determining how these constructs relate to college students' academic and career success is worthwhile to examine as it could help identify high-potential college job applicants who might be on the fast track for professional career success.

**Table 1**

*Pearson Correlation Matrix Analysis of Promotion with Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Proactive Personality*

		Promotion Variable	Transform Sum	Transactional Sum	ProactiveP Sum
Promotion Variable	Pearson Correlation	1	-.128	.071	-.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.375	.622	.706
	N	53	50	51	52
TransformSum	Pearson Correlation	-.128	1	.622**	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375		.000	.000
	N	50	50	49	50
TransactionalSum	Pearson Correlation	.071	.622**	1	.335**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.622	.000		.017
	N	51	49	51	50
ProactivePSum	Pearson Correlation	-.054	.628**	.335**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.706	.000	.017	
	N	52	50	50	52

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlation Analysis of GPA with Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Proactive Personality*

		Q8_RGPA	Transform Sum	Transactional Sum	ProactiveP Sum
Q8_RGPA	Pearson Correlation	1	.080	.144	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.610	.351	.699
	N	44	43	44	44
TransformSum	Pearson Correlation	.080	1	.725**	.747**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.610		.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43
TransactionalSum	Pearson Correlation	.144	.725**	1	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.351	.000		.000
	N	44	43	44	44
ProactivePSum	Pearson Correlation	.060	.747**	.651**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.699	.000	.000	
	N	44	43	44	44

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

**Table 3***Frequency Distribution Table for Reported Number of Promotions*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	38	41.3	41.8	41.8
	1	25	27.2	27.5	69.2
	2	10	10.9	11.0	80.2
	3	5	5.4	5.5	85.7
	4	5	5.4	5.5	91.2
	5	5	5.4	5.5	96.7
	7	1	1.1	1.1	97.8
	8	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	10	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.1		
Total		92	100.0		



**Table 4***Frequency Distribution for Freshman Reported GPA*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.06	1	2.1	2.2	2.2
	3.00	2	4.2	4.4	6.7
	3.14	1	2.1	2.2	8.9
	3.20	1	2.1	2.2	11.1
	3.30	1	2.1	2.2	13.3
	3.40	2	4.2	4.4	17.8
	3.50	11	22.9	24.4	42.2
	3.60	1	2.1	2.2	44.4
	3.63	1	2.1	2.2	46.7
	3.70	2	4.2	4.4	51.1
	3.75	3	6.3	6.7	57.8
	3.80	5	10.4	11.1	68.9
	3.85	1	2.1	2.2	71.1
	3.90	2	4.2	4.4	75.6
	4.00	11	22.9	24.4	100.0
	Total	45	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	6.3		
Total		48	100.0		

**Table 5***Descriptive Frequency of Reported GPA With Only Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.50	1	2.3	2.3	2.3
	2.90	5	11.4	11.4	13.6
	3.00	3	6.8	6.8	20.5
	3.10	1	2.3	2.3	22.7
	3.20	3	6.8	6.8	29.5
	3.30	6	13.6	13.6	43.2
	3.34	1	2.3	2.3	45.5
	3.40	5	11.4	11.4	56.8
	3.50	3	6.8	6.8	63.6
	3.60	3	6.8	6.8	70.5
	3.70	3	6.6	6.8	77.3
	3.75	1	2.3	2.3	79.5
	3.80	2	4.5	4.5	84.1
	3.85	1	2.3	2.3	86.4
	3.89	1	2.3	2.3	88.6
	3.90	1	2.3	2.3	90.9
	4.00	4	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	44	100.0	100.0	

**Table 6***Descriptive Frequency Distribution of the Proactive Personality Scale*

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q. 1	3.85	1.59
Q. 2	6.14	0.85
Q. 3	6.01	0.97
Q. 4	4.98	1.35
Q. 5	5.73	1.18
Q. 6	6.25	1.11
Q. 7	5.67	1.25
Q. 8	5.63	1.22
Q. 9	5.70	1.34
Q. 10	5.50	1.13
Q. 11	5.98	0.93
Q. 12	5.33	1.43
Q. 13	5.43	1.32
Q. 14	5.84	.975
Q. 15	5.53	1.30
Q. 16	5.14	1.44
Q.17	6.12	1.00

**Table 7***Descriptive Frequency Table of MLQ items*

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q. 1	3.84	1.07
Q. 2	3.72	1.09
Q. 3	2.25	1.14
Q. 4	3.55	1.11
Q. 5	2.15	1.28
Q. 6	3.51	1.15
Q. 7	1.49	0.92
Q. 8	3.93	1.02
Q. 9	4.25	0.79
Q. 10	3.42	1.17
Q. 11	3.66	1.07
Q. 12	1.67	0.90
Q. 13	4.07	0.86
Q. 14	4.12	1.00
Q. 15	3.49	1.19
Q. 16	3.99	0.95
Q. 17	2.74	1.24
Q. 18	4.03	0.83
Q. 19	4.29	0.85
Q. 20	2.08	1.16
Q. 21	4.32	0.75
Q. 22	3.49	1.08
Q. 23	4.27	0.86
Q. 24	3.33	1.14
Q. 25	3.89	0.94
Q. 26	3.98	0.93
Q. 27	3.25	1.07
Q. 28	2.09	1.08
Q. 29	4.14	0.85
Q. 30	4.02	0.84
Q. 31	4.08	0.82
Q. 32	3.98	0.95
Q. 33	1.80	1.06
Q. 34	3.82	1.05
Q. 35	4.31	0.74
Q. 36	4.19	0.80
Q. 37	4.21	0.62
Q. 38	4.18	0.83

Q. 39	3.63	1.06
Q. 40	4.03	0.84
Q. 41	4.31	0.75
Q. 42	4.11	0.86
Q. 43	4.29	0.74
Q. 44	4.03	0.82
Q. 45	4.22	0.84

---

## **APPENDIX A: SME SURVEY**

**Subject Matter Expert (SME) Survey (9 items)**

**Q1 - What is your job title?**

Manager - New Business Initiatives

---

Regional Manager

---

Company president

---

VP of Operations

**Q2 - What is your tenure/time working as a manager with hiring responsibilities**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	3 years to 5 years	25.00%	1
2	6 years to 10 years	0.00%	0
3	10 years to 20 years	25.00%	1
4	20+ years	50.00%	2
	Total	100%	4

**Q3 - In what industry were you responsible for hiring?**

Technology, Food & Beverage, Merchandise, Catering

---

Meat Wholesale

---

Food

---

Travel

**Q4 - How do you determine what factors tend to lead to raises for some employees and not others?**

People who demonstrate initiative, know how to communicate the right message to the right people, come up with solutions instead of only problems.

---

With a close working relation for getting to know better each person

---

Responsibility, Knowledge, Stress, Labor market

---

1-on-1 meetings and discussion with the rest of the management team

**Q5 - What factors do you look for when deciding to promote an employee?**

What factors do you look for when deciding to promote an employee?

---

Ability to read an audience, competence with job scope, able to clearly articulate a point of view, and ability to influence at a variety of levels within the organization.

---

Commitment, responsibility, honesty. Interest in team effort.

---

Knowledge, Training, skills

---

Attitude and Performance based on the company's KPIs

**Q6 - What is your age?**

---

#	Answer	%	Count
1	20-29	25.00%	1
2	30-39	0.00%	0
3	40-49	0.00%	0
4	50-59	75.00%	3
5	60+	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	4

---



**Q7 - What is your gender?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	75.00%	3
2	Female	25.00%	1
	Total	100%	4

**Q8 - What is your race?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.00%	0
2	Asian	0.00%	0
3	Black or African American	0.00%	0
4	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
5	White	100.00%	4
	Total	100%	4

**Q9 - What is your highest education level?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Ph. D	0.00%	0
2	Master's degree	50.00%	2
3	Bachelor's degree	50.00%	2
4	Associate's degree	0.00%	0
5	High school diploma	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	4

## **APPENDIX B: WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Work Experience (3 items)**

1. Are you employed and/or have had a minimum of six month's work experience? \*If you are unemployed but have had a minimum of six months of work experience in the same job, please use the job experience in which you have worked the longest when choosing your answers.

Yes

No

2. How many months have you worked at your current job (or previous job)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. How many promotions or raises have you received since you started working at this job?\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## **APPENDIX C: PROACTIVE PERSONALITY SCALE**

**Proactive Personality Scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993) (17 items)**

1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
2. I feel driven to make a difference in my community, and maybe the world.
3. I tend to let others take the initiative to start new projects. (R)
4. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.
5. I enjoy facing and overcoming obstacles to my ideas.
6. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
7. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.
8. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.
9. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.
10. I excel at identifying opportunities.
11. I am always looking for better ways to do things.
12. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
13. I love to challenge the status quo.
14. When I have a problem, I tackle it head-on.
15. I am great at turning problems into opportunities.
16. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.
17. If I see someone in trouble, I help out in any way I can.

## **APPENDIX D: MULTIFACTOR LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1985)**

This is a licensed to use questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire's specific content cannot be printed. Here are three sample questions from the MLQ approved by the publisher Mind Garden to share. The permission form from Mind Garden to share these items is found in Appendix F.

As a leader...

1. I talk optimistically about the future.
2. I spend time teaching and coaching.
3. I avoid making decisions.

## **APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**



**Demographic Questions (5 items)**

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other

2. What is your age in years? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your GPA? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your race?

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. What year of school are you in?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate Student

**APPENDIX F: MLQ PERMISSION FORM**

For use by Isabella Guerrero only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on July 15, 2020



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**Sample Items:**

As a leader ....

- I talk optimistically about the future.
- I spend time teaching and coaching.
- I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating....

- Talks optimistically about the future.
- Spends time teaching and coaching.
- Avoids making decisions

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