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**Investigation of Leadership Attitudes, Political Orientation,
and Need for Achievement (n Ach)**

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The political implications of organizational systems have recently drawn sustained interest. To add to the limited knowledge in this area, the present study examined the relationship between attitudes toward participative leadership and political orientation. In addition, the differences between both leadership attitudes and political orientations of high and low n achievers were investigated. Eighty-seven engineers completed the Attitudes Toward Management Practices Questionnaire (Haire, Ghiselli, & Porter, 1966), the Mehrabian Achievement Scale (Mehrabian, 1968), and the political scale of the Organizational Success Questionnaire (Bass, 1968). As predicted, the data indicated a negative ($r = -.16$), although nonsignificant ($p < .14$), relationship between attitudes toward participative leadership and political orientation. In addition, as predicted, high n achievers were found to be more authoritarian in their leadership attitudes ($t(85) = -2.18, p < .02$) and more political in their orientation ($t(85) = 1.58, p < .06$) than low n achievers.

An Investigation of Leadership Attitudes,
Political Orientation and N Achievement

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Running head: Leadership Attitudes, Political Orientation and N Achievement

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The general purpose of the present study was to investigate the manner in which achievement-related motives serve to influence leadership attitudes and political orientation. Although previous studies have sought to relate achievement motivation (n Achievement) to leadership (Stogdill, 1974), the political implications of this relationship have only recently emerged as an independent area of research interest (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1976). Indeed, Porter (1976) has noted that organizational politics is "one of the most important but least discussed and researched topics in the field of organizational psychology and organizational behavior" (p. 1). Simply defined, organizational politics consists of behaviors designed to enhance individual self-interests. It refers to the use of authority and power to influence the direction of goals, plans and other organizational parameters. Political behavior is generally considered to take place to some extent in all organizations (Tushman, 1977).

While the findings of past research into the relationship between leadership activities and achievement motivation have been, at best, equivocal (cf. Beer, Buckhout, & Levy, 1957; Pepinsky, Hemphill, & Shevitz, 1958; Vertreace & Simmons, 1971), recent studies (Misumi & Seki, 1971; Sorrentino, 1973, 1974) demonstrate that achievement motives do serve to influence the leadership process. Regarding the relationship between leadership activities and political orientation, other than the work of Siegel (1973), no known quantitative evidence has been reported concerning specific political attitudes which might be related to identifiable leadership behaviors. Using Christie's (1970) scale of Machiavellian orientation (MACH V), Siegel (for a sample of 36 managers and 73 MBA students) reported a negative ($r = -.20$), although non-significant, relationship between leadership attitude and MACH V scores, i.e., the more participative the leadership attitude the less Machiavellian the orientation.

The present study was directed toward clarifying the largely unexplored link between leadership attitudes and political orientation through an investigation of the influence of n Achievement. In doing so it sought to generalize and extend earlier findings by testing the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. An inverse relationship will exist between attitudes toward participative leadership and political orientation;

Hypothesis 2. Individuals with a high tendency for n Achievement will score more authoritarian in leadership attitudes than subjects with a low tendency for n Achievement;

Hypothesis 3. Individuals with a high tendency for n Achievement will score higher in political orientation than subjects with a low tendency for n Achievement.

Hypothesis 1 was derived from the work of Siegel (1973). Hypothesis 2 was based on the findings of Misumi and Seki (1971) and Sorrentino (1973, 1974). Hypothesis 3 is an extension of the work of McClelland (1953) and his associates. It is well established that high n Achievers seek gratification through the accomplishment of tasks which provide an opportunity for successful competition with standards of excellence (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). It

has also been shown that high n Achievers are unable to remain satisfied with success, but progressively establish higher and higher standards of personal excellence (Veroff & Feld, 1970, pp. 253-256). These findings may be combined to constitute a plausible explanation for political behavior on the part of individuals with high n Achievement. That is, it may be reasonably conjectured that the insatiable striving for success experienced by high n Achievers often manifests itself in a competitiveness conducive to the enactment of political behaviors.

Method

Subjects

The subjects for this research were 87 male civil engineers who were attending an annual two-day university conference on transportation planning and engineering design. Their ages ranged from 25 to 67, with a mean and median of approximately 39.

Instruments

Attitudes Toward Management Practices Questionnaire. Developed by Haire, Ghiselli & Porter (1966), this measure consists of eight items presented in Likert (1932) format. It is designed to distinguish respondents on the basis of the traditional-directive and democratic-participative approaches to leadership. Each item is interpreted using a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Scores are tabulated in such a manner that higher mean values indicate stronger endorsement of democratic-participative attitudes.

Mehrabian Achievement Scale for Males. This instrument is a self-report inventory constructed in conformance with Atkinson's (1957, 1964) conceptualization of achievement as being a function of both the motive to succeed (M_S) and the motive to avoid failure (M_F) (Mehrabian, 1968). Scores obtained on this scale ($M_S - M_F$) measure the tendency for n Achievement. In support of the scale's validity, Mehrabian (1969) has presented evidence that it correlates positively with other accepted measures of M_S and negatively with other accepted measures of M_F .

Organizational Success Questionnaire - Political Scale. Constructed by Bass (1968) to measure the "utility of the political approach," this scale requests that respondents indicate on a 5-point Likert (1932) scale how frequently ("never" to "always") the behavior of managers, staff members, or administrators ought to conform to each of six politically descriptive statements. An example of a typical statement is: "Openly compromise, yet privately divert or delay compromise plans so that their own aims will be pursued despite the stated compromise." A description of the development and reliability of this measure is provided by Bass (1968).

Each of the above instruments was presented in a separate segment of the questionnaire. This was purposefully done to decrease the incidence of common method variance (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) that might spuriously inflate correlations between measures from the same type of scale.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed with other materials upon each respondent's arrival for the initial plenary session of the conference. All participants remained completely anonymous. Before completion of the instruments, the general nature of the study was explained, although the research hypotheses and the specific variables to be analyzed were not mentioned.

Results

The first hypothesis predicted a negative relationship between attitudes toward participative leadership and political orientation. To test this proposition, a product-moment correlation was computed between scores on the Mehrabian scale and leadership scores for the total sample. Although in the predicted direction ($r = -.16$), the proposed relationship was not shown to be significant ($p < .14$).

Taken together, Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted that high n Achievers would score higher in political orientation and more directive in leadership attitudes. To test these propositions, subjects were divided at the median score on the Mehrabian scale into high and low n Achievement groups, $t(85) = 12.70$, $p < .001$. The results of Hypotheses 2 and 3 are summarized in Table 1. Since both hypotheses are specifically directional in nature, one-tail significant tests were utilized. The difference in leadership scores was significant; high n Achievers expressed greater authoritarianism in leadership attitudes than did low n Achievers. The difference in political orientation was marginally significant at the .06 level, indicating that high n Achievers tend to be more political in orientation than do low n Achievers.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Discussion

The results of this study serve to elaborate upon earlier findings concerning leadership, political behavior, and n Achievement. Specifically, data relevant to Hypothesis 1 indicated a negative ($r = -.16$, ns) relationship between participative leadership and political orientation, i.e., the less democratic the leadership attitude, the more political the orientation. This finding is consistent with Siegel's (1973) previously referenced work in the area of leadership attitudes and Machiavellianism.

Regarding Hypotheses 2 and 3, the data revealed that high n Achievers are both less democratic in their leadership attitudes and, at least, marginally more political in their orientation than low n Achievers. Such findings are theoretically consistent with findings of Misumi and Seki (1971) and Sorrentino (1973, 1974) and the conjecture previously advanced to explain the development of intracorporate political influences.

Table 1
Summary of Results - Hypotheses
Two and Three

Variable	Hypothesis 2 ^a Leadership Attitude	Hypothesis 3 ^b Political Orientation
High <u>n</u> Achievement		
<u>M</u>	25.98	9.90
<u>SD</u>	3.62	5.02
<u>N</u>	43	43
Low <u>n</u> Achievement		
<u>M</u>	27.63	8.32
<u>SD</u>	3.49	4.34
<u>N</u>	44	44
<u>t</u>	-2.18 (<u>p</u> < .02)	1.58 (<u>p</u> < .06)

Note -- All tests are one-tailed tests.

a The higher the score the more participative and less authoritarian.

b The higher the score the more political the orientation.

Clearly, the connection between leadership attitudes, political orientation, and n Achievement is in need of further investigation. Extension of the present research is suggested by Andrews (1976) who posits the existence of a link between individual n Achievement and other social processes. In support of this view, Andrews has provided evidence which shows that advancement in an organization is a joint function of individual n Achievement and dominant firm values. Thus, an extension of the present research to encompass a measure of organizational value orientation, or perhaps organizational climate, would seem theoretically desirable.

A further possible elaboration of the present research is provided by Sorrentino's (1973, 1974) extension of n Achievement theory to encompass leadership determinants. His findings suggest that additional differences may exist between high and low n Achievers in the areas of performance, confidence, and interest. Thus, future research into the influence of additional personality and situational characteristics would be consistent with Hollander and Julian's (1968, 1969) contention that the leadership process will be more clearly understood once the interactive relationship between personality and situational factors has been further specified.

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