Who is an Ideal Organizational Leader in Iran? Examining the Content, Structure, and Consequences of Iranian Implicit Leadership Theories (IILTS)

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Abstract

Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) are individuals' perceptions of the traits and behaviors characterizing leaders. Four studies investigated the reliabilities and different types of validities for a scale developed to measure Iranian Implicit leadership Theories (IILTs). Study 1 used a qualitative method to extract the implicit theories of ideal leadership after interviewing 27 experts. The IILTs are represented by a first-order eight-factor model (Inspiring, Supportive, Accountable, Emotionally Mature, Decisive, Self-protective, Deceptive and Narrow-minded), and a second-order two-factor model (Prototypes and Anti-prototypes). In Study 2, exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factor structure and further refine and examine the internal consistencies of the discovered factors. The analysis proved the factor structure of IILTs. Study 3 tested the convergent and discriminant validities of the developed scale for IILTs, and the results supported the validity of the developed scale. Study 4 investigated incremental and criterion validities via using two variables of LMX and job satisfaction. These studies provide convergent evidence that IILTs is a valid scale to be used in research. Ultimately, future research venues and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords

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Introduction

Based on the categorization theory (Rosch, 1978), the classification and categorization of the stimuli in the environment is a pivotal task of all organisms. Aligned with this theory, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) accentuates the tendency of individuals to categorize themselves and others in diverse clusters (Liu et al., 2020). Lord and his colleagues pioneered introducing categorization theory in the organizational context to show that individuals tend to classify people as leaders and non-leaders (Lord et al., 2020). Capitalizing upon follower-centered leadership paradigm (Shamir, 2007), followers perceive leadership through cognitive frameworks or implicit leadership theories (ILTs), specifying traits and behaviors characterizing leaders (Shen, 2019).

Research has demonstrated that implicit leadership theories (ILTs) are impacted by culture, religion, age, and gender (Da'as & Zibenberg, 2019; Epitropaki et al., 2013). Although there are some universal traits attributed to effective leaders in different cultures, some contextually specific traits and characteristics still exist (Chhokar et al., 2008; House et al., 2004; Dastmalchian et al., 2001). House et al. (2004, p.59) concluded, "Religion, beliefs, and the cultural norms experienced by dominant elites are often predecessors to leadership positions." Having roots in western research and literature, implicit leadership theories have very sporadically investigated the eastern part of the world (for an exception see Ling et al., 2000). Therefore, the developed scales of implicit leadership theories are supposed to be applied in the eastern contexts with hesitation. As evidence, in a study of leadership behavior of managers in Iraq, Ayman and Chemers (1983) demonstrated that Iraqi, European, and U.S. samples show different factor structures of ILTs. Additionally, A'yuninnisa et al. (2020) showed that Indonesian ILTs have some unique factors that are different from those of the West (e.g., morality).

According to Offerman et al. (1994), not only can implicit leadership theories provide a foundation for leadership studies, but also they construct a framework on which explicit leadership theories can stand. Individuals' ILTs may form their judgment about leaders based on which they respond to them, which has implications for outcomes in leader-follower contexts. Research has demonstrated that

implicit leadership theories can impact the ratings of leaders' effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1989), followers' self-efficacy (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019), perception of leadership style (Sy, 2010), Leader liking (Nye & Forsyth, 1991), interpersonal attraction (Vogel et al., 2018), task performance (Topakas, 2011), leader-member exchange, followers' organizational commitment, well-being and job satisfaction (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019; Tsai et al., 2017).

The contributions of this research are threefold. First, to the best knowledge of the author, this study is the first to develop a valid and reliable tool to measure Iranian Implicit Leadership Theories (IILTs), thereby bridging the gap for a contextually robust tool to measure them. Second, Iran has maintained its national culture through closing its boundaries to the citizenship of non-Iranians. Therefore, it is likely that, apart from global ILTs, some unique contextual features of ILTs are added, adding to the ILTs literature. Third, there is very sparse research about ILTs and its antecedents and consequences in Iran, although international studies have proved the importance of ILTs (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Offermann & Coats, 2018; Lord et al., 2020).

This study mainly endeavors to unearth the prototypes and anti-prototypes of ideal leaders, thereby developing a scale for future research in the realm of ILTs in Iranian contexts. In order to reach this goal, different types of validities and reliability of the developed scale were tested in four studies. In the first study, IILTs were extracted; in the second study, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to test the structure of the extracted factors. In the third study, several relevant and widely used measures in the literature of implicit leadership theories (i.e., ILTs measure (Offermann et al., 1994), Chinese Implicit Leadership Theories (CILTS: Ling et al., 2000) and GLOBE study's measure (House et al., 2004) were used to test convergent and discriminant validities. Finally, two types of construct validities (i.e., criterion and incremental validities) were tested.

Literature Review
Definition and Underlying Theories
Based on the top-down cognition theories (Lord & Maher, 1991), information complexity causes individuals to apply cognitive simplifying mechanisms or schemas to cope with it (Fiske & Taylor,

1991). In organizational settings, individuals reduce the complexity of recognizing the people around through classifying them as leaders and non-leaders (Offermann & Coats, 2018; Lord & Maher, 1991). As time passes, a reservoir of traits and abilities characterizing leaders is built up in the minds of individuals, and it is used as a benchmarking system to specify people as leaders and non-leaders. This fundamental categorization is so fast, automatic, and spontaneous, and it is initiated when it is stimulated by the target (Boldenhausen & McCrae, 1998). Lord et al. (2020) mentioned that this categorization is done based upon several virtual cues (such as race, ethnicity, appearance, gender, and age) and social roles (such as leader or follower).

The psychodynamic theory provides an initial foundation for ILTs. This theory mainly focuses on "human organisms in the world of interactions" (Bucci, 2000). This theory divides cognitive processes into three groups of conscious, semi-conscious, and unconscious. Freud (1985) gave life to the idea that the unconscious part of the mind is the active part of cognition. Lord et al. (1984) concluded that ILTs reflect the structure and content of unconscious cognitive processes utilized to distinguish leaders from non-leaders. By applying cognitive theory (Beck, 1979), followers use their memory and prior experience to specify the current leaders' traits and abilities. This theory gives a structure to coding, processing, storing, and retaining information, and it also elaborates on the two systems of memory in cognitive processing– implicit and explicit (Schacter, 1987). Implicit memory uses a large volume of prior experience; however, explicit memory is limited to consciously coded and retrieved experience. To justify that ILTs are the products of both memory types, Baddeley (1982) contends that cognitive processes in a "mental workplace" have limitations that cause people to apply both kinds of memories to use prior experience and preferable memories to appraise the characteristics of leaders.

People build some fuzzy and inaccurate theories from their social environment, which influences the way they interpret events (Lord et al., 2020). As a result, these theories provide an interpretive framework that leads an individual to specific goals, activities, reactions, or specific interpretations from events (Dweck, 1996). These frameworks are called "schemas." According to these schemas,

individuals interpret, categorize, and look at new experiences. These fluid mental models develop some prototypes for a specific category, and the level of congruence between reality and these categories causes inclusion or exclusion of the reality in these categories (e.g., individuals in the groups of leaders).

Implicit Ideal Leadership Theories & Implicit Leadership Theories

The building blocks of implicit leadership theories are prototypes, which represent or specify the most common attributes among the members of a category (Robinson & Fiset, 2019). Two types of prototypes are central-tendency and goal-oriented. While central tendency-based prototypes represent the most common characteristics of a category, ideal prototypes are the characteristics perceived as most central to the purpose of a category (Burnett et al., 2005; Lynch et al., 2000). Some scales measure typical leaders' prototypes and anti-prototypes such as Offermann et al.'s (1994) scale or Chinese Implicit Leadership Scale (Ling et al., 2000) because they ask about the characteristics of leaders. However, some other researchers garnered the traits specifying ideal or effective leadership such as the scale developed by the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004). In their research, van Quaquebeke et al. (2011) demonstrated and emphasized that only the congruence between goal-oriented prototypes and the recognized characteristics of leaders can predict the quality of followers' responses to their leaders. Heeding this point, this research focuses on ideal leadership prototypes so the scale can be more useful for the future researchers exploring the consequences of ILTs on the followers' outcomes.

Explored Components of ILTs

Lord et al. (1984) pioneered the generation of a list containing 59 leader attributes and developed Akron Leadership Questionnaires (ALQ). This questionnaire encompasses 25 two-word behavioral statements such as "neglects details," "integrates information," and "emphasizes feelings," which were grouped under the labels of prototypic, anti-prototypic, and neutral. In the same research, some traits were also pooled by the participation of undergraduate students. Offerman et al. (1994) developed a measure with eight dimensions of ILTs grouped under the labels of prototypes (sensitivity, dedication, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, and strength) and anti-prototypes (tyranny and masculinity). After some

modifications, Epitropaki and Martin (2004) reduced the number of traits and found six prototypes of sensitivity, intelligent, dedication, dynamism, and anti-prototypes of tyranny and masculinity. In the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004), six global dimensions encompassing 21 positive and 8 negative leader attributes were introduced. Ling et al. (2000) developed Chinese Implicit Leadership Theories scale with four first-order factors (personal mortality, goal effectiveness, interpersonal competency, and versatility). Although there are some overlaps between the developed scales, distinctive traits are sometimes unraveled in some specific countries and cultures (Lord et al., 2020). It is open to argument that in Iran, with the dominance of religion and a unique culture, some novel and distinct traits might be formed as the prototypes and anti-prototypes.

Generalizability of ILTs
In terms of generalizability, ILTs have both universal dimensions that are common in different cultures and contexts, and context-specific dimensions that are idiosyncratic (Dastmalchain et al., 2001; House et al., 2004). The trajectory of ILTs research has reached a point at which focusing on context-specific dimensions should be a priority. It is already shown that context can cause variations in ILTs (Foti et al., 2008; Lord et al., 2020). Looking backward, research in the realm of ILTs was conducted in the countries that experienced globalization and their cultures - as determining factors (Gerstner & Day, 1994) - have lost their exclusive forms and have become global. However, in some countries, such as Iran, after several decades, the culture of the people has not undergone significant changes. Thus, identifying the context-specific content and structure of IILTs in the current research affords cross-context comparisons, thereby giving the researchers who are interested in IILTs the opportunity to fortify the validity of their results through having a more accurate and robust tool to measure ILTs in Iran.

ILTs, Job Attitudes and Hypotheses
Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)
As a grand theory, LMX has a dyadic approach towards the relationship between leaders and followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019). According to this theory, managers and supervisors establish close relationships with a few followers and

put them into their "inner circle." Therefore, these followers can benefit from bonuses, positive experiences, and privileges. In other words, a high-quality relationship with the leader can lead to more support, more responsibility, more autonomy, and even better health (Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019).

Since the beginning of research on ILTs in organizational settings, various studies have investigated the relationship between ILTs and LMX. Engle and Lord (1997) showed that although supervisor-subordinate ILTs congruence does not predict the quality of dyadic relationship, the supervisor's and subordinates' ILTs significantly impact LMX quality. They also revealed that leader-follower Implicit Performance Theories (IPTs) congruence is related to LMX. Later, Epitropaki and Martin (2005) and Epitrpaki (2000) showed that the congruence between followers' ILTs and the recognition of those attributes for their current leader significantly impacts the quality of Leader-Member Exchange. In a different study, Topakas (2011) used Latent Congruence Modeling and supported the impact of Implicit–Explicit ILT congruence on Leader– Member exchanges. In a recent study, Khorakian and Sharifirad (2019) showed that the congruence between followers' ILTs and those for their immediate supervisor influences LMX positively. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothes*is* 1a: The congruence between followers' leadership prototypes (based on IILTs) and the recognition of those attributes for their current leader will positively impact the quality of LMX.

Hypothes*is* 1b: The congruence between followers' leadership anti-prototypes (based on IILTs) and the recognition of those attributes for their current leader will negatively impact the quality of LMX.

Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) and Follower's Job Satisfaction
Job Satisfaction
Leadership plays an important role in follower satisfaction (Işik, 2020). Indeed, leaders can support or exert pressure and stress on the followers, which in turn increases or decreases followers' job satisfaction. Epitropaki and Martin (2005) demonstrated that the congruence between implicit and explicit ILTs indirectly influences several employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and well-being. Therefore, followers' prototypical and anti-prototypical perceptions of a leader may impact followers' job attitudes. Effective

leaders establish high-quality relationships with followers and at least satisfy interpersonal needs, and such satisfaction can boost up followers' job satisfaction (Sharifirad & Hajhoseiny, 2018; Li et al., 2018). On the contrary, those leaders who are not effective may lower the quality of interaction and this in turn decreases job satisfaction. Hence, it is hypothesized:

Hypothes*is* 2a: The congruence between followers' leadership prototypes (based on IILTs) and the recognition of those attributes for their current leader will positively impact followers' job satisfaction.

Hypothes*is* 2b: The congruence between followers' leadership anti-prototypes (based on IILTs) and the recognition of those attributes for their current leader will negatively impact followers' job satisfaction.

The Outlines of Studies
This research adopted the procedure used by Epitropaki and Martin (2004) and Offermann et al. (1994) to develop IILTs because the validation process is extensive and rigorous. Reaching a short and practical scale to maximize the suitability for research is important in this research. Moreover, this study utilizes standard and commonly used procedures to develop the scale (Hinkin, 1998). To give an outline, the journey to develop the valid scale of IILTs starts with a qualitative study to generate and categorize a pool of codes representing the characteristics of an ideal leader into themes (Study 1).

In the second study (Study 2), after identifying the themes of IILTs, in order to further refine the themes, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to identify the factor structure and examine the internal consistencies of the discovered factors. EFA is a multivariate statistical method, which is employed to define the underlying factors (constructs) among diverse observed variables (items) (Goretzko et al., 2019) and to determine the highly interrelated items as the explored dimensions. This method is utilized, first, to uncover the correlative relationships existing among manifest variables and, second, to model these relationships with one or more latent variables (Goretzko et al., 2019). In this study, this method is used to quantitatively verify the categories of themes in Study 1. In Study 3, the structure of IILTs is cross-validated and convergent and discriminant validities are tested by using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

The last study (Study 4) investigates the pertinent consequences of ILTs (i.e. LMX and job satisfaction) to assess criterion and discriminant validity. Criterion validity is applied to test the extent to which a developed scale gives the same results as the gold standard (Zaki, 2017). This type of validity is very useful and is utilized to develop an instrument that can lead to getting earlier answers or giving earlier predictions than the available measures.

Study 1
The Generation of IILTs
In the first study, the inductive method with the strategy of phenomenology was applied. The inductive method is an appropriate selection when there is not enough prior research to help build the content in contexts (Hinkin, 1995). Inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to frame it by preexisting coding frames, or individually-biased analytic preconceptions. To reach data, semi-structured interviews were administered to unearth the participants' perceptions of an ideal leader. In terms of strategy, phenomenology is the best fit due to the exploration of human life experience about leadership as a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016). In terms of the analysis tool, theme analysis was applied to extract IILTs. Theme analysis was selected since it has the power to identify, describe, and categorize the opinions gained through discussion. This method can result in a rich description of the interviewees' views and attitudes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was chosen over grounded theory since the goal of this paper was not theory building. In the analysis of the interviews, codes were single-word adjectives rather than statements because this method is proved to be more acceptable (Gill & Hodgkinson, 2007).

Method
Participants
In the first study, 27 middle managers and employees from different businesses (education, banking, manufacturing, health, insurance, and retail) were interviewed to have a good level of generalizability for the findings. The participants were selected based on 1) high organizational tenure to increase the probability of working with different supervisors, and 2) having a good deal of theoretical

knowledge of management to minimize the misunderstanding of questions and to maximize the reservoir of leadership traits through their readiness to make them explicit.

Participants' demographics were as follows: 15 males (56% of interviewees) and 12 females, the average age of 40.73 years (SD= 10.15), the average tenure of 9.4 years (SD= 6.8), and 3.6 (SD= 2.15) average years of working with their current supervisor. In Table 1, the demographic information of the sample is shown.

Method
Procedure
The participants were met in person and were interviewed at specific appointments. The interviews took 35 to 78 minutes and the designed questions had the goal of extracting data about participants' social construction of ideal leadership encompassing personal qualities and attributed (or not attributed) behaviors to ideal leaders. According to the suggestion of research (Shondrick et al., 2010), for the first time, this research tried to ask some questions about the participants' good and bad memories with their leaders to make them use their episodic memories, which can enrich the findings. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was met (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After interviewing 25 participants, saturation happened. Nevertheless, two more interviews were done to ensure the acceptable range of respondents.

Table 1. The Demographics of Participants

Factors	Options	Number of participants
Gender	Male	15
	Female	12
Education	Master's degree	10
	Bachelor's degree	15
	Associate diploma	1
	Diploma	1
Age	25-35	3
	36-45	10
	46-55	12
	56-65	2
Tenure	1-6	3
	7-12	10
	13-18	8
	19-24	3
	25-30	3

Coding and Analysis Strategy
The interviews were translated into English by an expert and the transcripts were given to three independent coders. After receiving three sets of coding, the reliability of the codes was computed and yielded an acceptable coefficient of 0.82 (Cohen, 1960). Following first order code generation, the frequencies of the codes were calculated to measure the extent to which the codes were supported.

Results
After theme analysis, 45 traits were extracted. Then three faculty members who had been doing research on leadership reviewed them to support initial face and content validation. Among these themes, 33 of them were prototypes and 12 of them were anti-prototypes of an ideal leader.

Discussion of Study 1
Through interviews and qualitative research, this study demonstrated that, in Iran, an ideal leader possesses diverse characteristics such as being Inspiring, Supportive, Accountable, Emotionally Mature, and Decisive as prototypes and does not show to be Self-Protective, Deceptive, and Narrow-minded. These positive and negative characteristics included some sub-themes that are shown in Table 2.

Study 2
Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
In the second study, to conduct triangulation, exploratory factor analysis was used to uncover the correlative relationships existing among the variables and, second, to model these relationships with one or more factors (Goretzko et al., 2019). This helps test the validity for the factor structure and the groupings of the subthemes developed for IILTs in Study 1 (Castro et al., 2010). Therefore, this study aims at identifying, testing, and refining the structure factors of IILTs quantitatively via exploratory factor analysis.

Method
Participants
The 45 traits acquired from Study 1 were used to develop the scale of IILTs. After distributing an online questionnaire among the employees

in different industries (education, insurance, banking, information technology, food service, and retail), 231 complete questionnaires were collected. The demographics of the participants were as follows: 112 (48%) females, the average age of 41.23 (SD = 10.88), the average tenure of 8.92 years *(SD = 7.93)*, and the average working hour of 43.3 hours (SD = 8.55) in a week. Individuals were employed in a range of groups: professional (42%), managerial (34%), sales (21%), and technical (3%).

Procedure
Using social media channels, the researchers asked the members of several professional channels to complete a survey about their perception of an ideal leader. Only those who had more than two years of experience were considered. Two dichotomous samples (90 individuals) were selected. For the first sample, each participant was given money as compensation, whereas the second sample (141 individuals) received no money. The orders of the questions for these two groups were different. A ten-point Likert scale (from 1 = not at all characteristic to 7 = extremely characteristic) was used to ask the participants how well the characteristics derived from Study 1 described an ideal leader. Since implicit theories are "lay" theories, the participants received no definition for leadership (Offermann et al., 1994). The responses of the two samples were tested for similarity. The t-test showed no difference in the responses of the participants in the two groups. Therefore, the responses of both samples were aggregated and used in the analysis.

Results
An acceptable sample size was used to conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this study, EFA with oblique factor rotation was utilized to specify the number of factors. After multiple rounds of rotation, 27 items reached the loadings above 0.3 for which eigenvalues were above one. After the scree test (Cattell, 1966), eight-factors for IILTs were acquired and accepted because of their high level of interpretability, high internal consistency, and a large share of variance (85%). The numbers of items per factor were within the range of 2 to 5, which is consistent with the findings of prior studies (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

Table 2 shows factors, variables of the factors, reliabilities, factor loadings, means, communalities, and standard deviations.

Discussion of Study 2

Table 2. Factors, Communalities, Item Means, and Standard Deviation

Factors	Variables	Factor loading	Communalities	M	SD
Inspiring (.78)	Charismatic	.73	.52	7.25	1.91
	Motivational	.81	.66	8.23	1.53
	Energetic	.78	.61	7.72	1.70
Supportive (.85)	Friendly with employees	.74	.53	7.58	1.58
	Grateful of employees	.74	.74	7.98	1.94
	Empowering	.73	.73	8.13	1.67
Accountable (.78)	Progress- oriented	.84	.71	8.33	1.39
	Trustworthy	.72	.63	7.68	2.33
	Committed	.84	70	8.02	1.57
Emotionally mature (.75)	Knowing employees well	.77	.60	8.15	1.34
	Emotionally and logically balanced	.81	.65	8.11	1.54
	Skillful in communication	.85	.71	8.05	1.72
Decisive (.75)	Having high power of decision making	.81	.88	8.46	1.26
	Determined	.81	.64	7.56	1.84
	Dutiful	.74	.51	8.00	2.08
	Having a high level of work knowledge	.72	.52	8.11	1.83
Self-protective (.78)	Autocratic	.73	.54	2.41	2.45
	Self-centered	.82	.62	3.47	2.62
	Discriminating	.77	.51	1.87	1.94
	Conflict inducer	.81	.53	2.33	2.44
Deceptive (.85)	Apple polisher	.82	.67	1.93	1.92
	Liar	.87	.76	1.65	1.65
	Hypocrite	.72	.54	1.71	1.61
Narrow-minded (.82)	Narrow-minded	.84	.67	1.89	2.08
	Prejudging	.86	.67	1.99	1.97
	Prejudiced	.68	.53	1.78	1.81

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the scale reliabilities for each factor. N = 231

This study aimed to investigate the factor structure of the variables extracted from Study 1. According to the results of the EFA, the extracted factors are aligned with the themes extracted in Study 1.

This is an indication of well-selected themes as variables and factors (see Table 2).

Study 3
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
This study has two objectives: 1) establishing cross validation for the scale developed in the second study, and 2) examining convergent and discriminant validities. To test discriminant validity, the relationships between the factors in IILTs and the three previously developed scales to measure ILTs are investigated. These scales are ILTs (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), Chinese Implicit Leadership Theories (Ling et al., 2000), and the measure used in the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004).

Method
Participants
In this study, the designed online questionnaire was distributed among the employees working in 10 organizations in diverse areas of education, insurance, healthcare, and banking. Finally, 218 complete online questionnaires were received. The demographic information of the participants was as follows: 109 (51%) females, the average age of 37.54 (SD = 9.87), the average tenure of 5.67 years (SD = 7.55), and the average workweek of 42 hours (SD = 8.12). Individuals were employed in a range of groups: professional (62%), managerial (21%), sales (10%), and technical (7%).

Measures
IILTs were measured with the scale developed in the second study. The scale adapted by Epitropaki and Martin (2004) was administered to measure ILTs. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six dimensions of ILTs were within the range of 0.78 and 0.93. Chinese Implicit Leadership Theories were measured with the scale developed by Ling et al. (2000). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four dimensions ranged from 0.81 to 0.89. Moreover, the traits of effective leaders were assessed with the GLOBE study's measure (House et al., 2004). For this scale, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.71 to 0.86.

Procedure
The package of IBM SPSS Amos 22 was used to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in order to test the validity of the

8-factor IILTs. To investigate maximum likelihood, four indices of normed chi-square measure (χ^2/df), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) were calculated (Zhang et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion of Study 3
First-Order Eight-Factor Model
Based on the prior studies, it is hypothesized that, first, the responses of the participants to the IILTs are explained by an eight-factor model. Second, for each item, the loading of its factor is not zero and, third, the eight factors are correlated and finally the measurement errors of factors are uncorrelated. In order to test the first hypothesis, the null model is an eight-factor model with uncorrelated items. The first model is a one-factor model with all the factors combined into one variable. The third model is a two-factor model with prototypes and anti-prototypes as two general variables of the factor. Table 3 shows the fit indices of the null and alternative models. The figures in this table demonstrate that the eight-factor model fits the date best. (χ^2(296) = 626.35, p <.01, (χ 2/df =2.11, CFI = .95, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .07). Table 4 presents the inter-correlations, reliabilities, means, and standard deviations of the IILTs.

Second-Order Two-Factor Model
Since there are significant correlations between first-order factors, it is hypothesized that there is a second-order multiple-factor model (Noar, 2003). Based on the available literature on ILTs, it is likely that the first-order factors are represented by prototypes and anti-prototypes. In other words, two broader factors may constitute the structure of IILTs. Prototypes represent leaders' characteristics, whereas anti-prototypes make leaders distinct from non-leaders. For example, intelligence (as a prototypic characteristic) represents leaders, whereas tyranny (as an anti-prototypic characteristic) characterizes non-leaders (Offermann et al., 1994).

One level factor structure for the dichotomy of prototypes and anti-prototypes does not show a good fit for the data (see Table 3); however, the grouping of the first order factors into prototypes and anti-prototypes with two levels of first order and second order factors is acceptable. The data fitness indices are χ^2 (315) = 802.35, p <.01, (χ

^{2}/df =2.55, CFI = .97, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .07, RMSEA =.07. For this model, the difference between the model with 10 factors (eight first-order factors and two second-order ones) and eight first-order factors is significant and is equal to $\Delta \chi^2$ (19) = 175.99, p <.01. This result stipulates that the best structure is a model with eight first-order model. However, the fit indices accentuate the plausibility of the second-order two-factor model. Overall, both models are plausible and are considered as fit models. Hence, the results bolstered both eight first-order factor model and the two second-order factor models. The ultimate model is schematically shown in figure 1.

Table 3. Fit Indices for Five Different Models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Null	1828.872	351	5.21					.17
One factor	1457.212	324	4.50	371.66**	27	.48	.43	.14
Two correlated factors	1254.357	323	3.89	202.86**	1	.57	.53	.11
Eight correlated factors	626.3497	296	2.11	628.01**	27	.95	.93	.07
Second order CFA model	802.3492	315	2.55	175.99**	19	.97	.95	.07

Note. CFI = comparative fit index. TLI = Tucker-Lewis index. RMSEA = root-mean-square of approximation.
CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.
** p <.01. N = 218.

Table 4. Inter-Correlations, Reliabilities, Means, and Standard Deviations of IILTs Factors

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Inspiring	(.91)							
2. Supportive	.58**	(.84)						
3. Accountable	.41**	.61**	(.81)					
4. Emotionally mature	.49**	.53**	.57**	(.81)				
5. Decisive	.57**	.48**	.22**	.49**	(.82)			
6. Self-protective	-.21**	-.21*	.30**	-.38**	-.16	(.78)		
7. Deceptive	-.15	.03	.08	-.09**	.04	.38**	(.82)	
8. Narrow- minded	-.23**	-.37**	.12	-.38**	-.28**	.58**	.42**	(.80)
Mean	7.93	8.14	6.64	8.30	8.15	2.40	3.93	1.76
Standard Deviation	1.32	.99	.93	.97	1.16	1.38	.93	1.16

Note. Numbers in parentheses show Chronbakh's alpha. N = 218.
* p <.05
** *p <.01*

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

In this section, two types of validity are tested: convergent and discriminant validities. Both types of validity are tested for 1) the eight-factor IILTs and 2) three most used scales for ILTs (See Table 5). Convergent validity was tested through calculating the factor loading of each item on its specified factor. Significant scores proved convergent validity (Arasli et al., 2020). The critical ratios for all factor loadings were significant and ranged from 5.89 to 18.39 (p < .001) with the standard loadings within the range of 0.64 and 0.94 (Figure 1). In terms of discriminant validity, the correlations between the latent factors did not exceed the threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 1998).
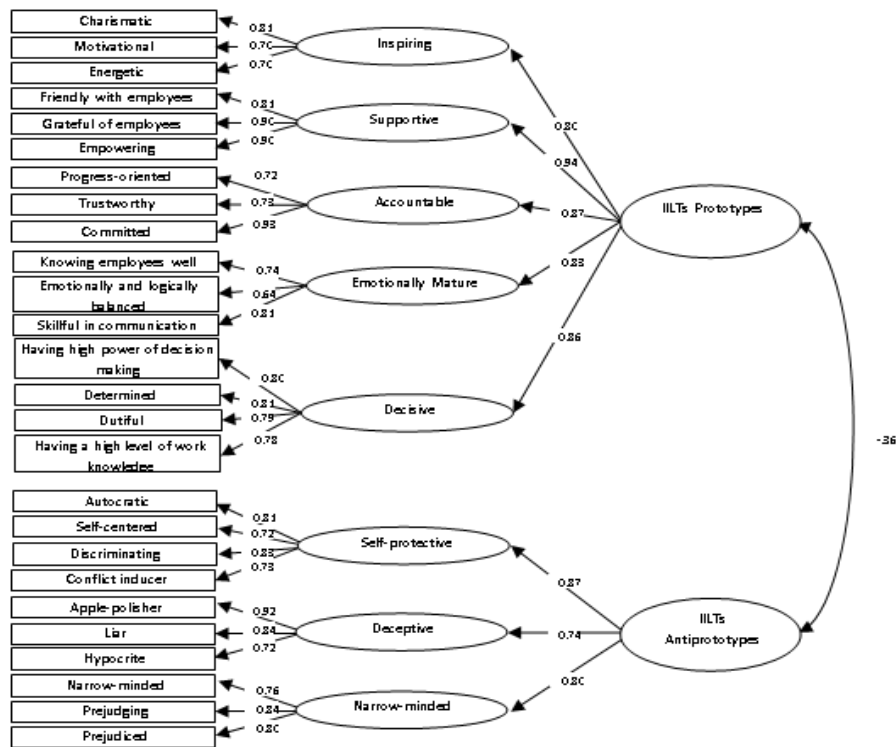

Fig. 1. Second-Order Factor Model of Iranian Implicit Leadership Theories (IILTs)
All factor loadings and the correlation between leader prototype and antiprototype are significant at p < .01. χ^2 (315, N = 218) = 802.35, χ^2/df = 2.55, comparative fit index = .97, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .95 root-mean-square error of approximation = .07.

As further support for discriminant validity, the confidence intervals (two standard errors) for the correlations between subscales did not include 1.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Three scales to measure ILTs were used to test the convergent and discriminant validities of IILTs. These scales included ILTs developed by Offermann et al. (1994) and adopted by Epitropaki and Martin (2004), Chinese Implicit Leadership Theories (CILTs) by Ling et al. (2000) and finally Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theories (CLTs) developed by House et al. (2004). It is hypothesized that since there are some differences and similarities between ILTs in the world (House et al., 2004), IILTs are correlated with some (or all) of the factors in other scales (convergent validity). However, these correlations are not high (discriminant validity) since the factor structure of the scale is different. Table 5 shows that the correlationships between factors are moderate, which supports the hypothesis (Kline, 2020).

Table 5. Correlations Between IILTs, ILTs, CILTs, and CLTs

IILTs Subscales / Variables	Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004)								Culturally endorsed Leadership Theories (CLTs (House et al., 2004)					CILTs (Ling, Chia and Fang, 2000)				
	Sensitivity	Intelligence	Dedication	Dynamism	Tyranny	Masculinity	L-Proto	L-Anti	Charismatic/ Value-based	Team oriented	Self-protective	Participative	Humane oriented	Autonomous	Personal mastery	Goal effectiveness	Interpersonal competency	Versatility
1. Inspiring	.21*	.38**	.05	.43**	-.32**	.24**	.34**	01.	.23**	.27**	-.41**	.45**	.55**	.23**	.45**	.16*	.34**	.11*
2. Supportive	.54*	.22**	.21**	-.04	-.05	-.04	.40**	-.44**	.25**	.12*	-.34**	.27**	.15*	.13**	.06	.29**	.39**	.28**
3. Accountable	.34**	.25**	.20**	.57**	-.55**	.02	.08	-.35**	.12*	.12*	-.33**	.52**	.55**	.25**	.48**	.08	.53**	.15*
4. Emotionally mature	.34**	.49**	.58**	.50**	-.42**	.22**	.45**	-.27**	.25**	.40**	-.52**	.25**	.25**	.11*	.51**	.34**	.29**	.34**
5. Decisive	.42**	.54**	.49**	.61**	-.21**	.14*	.52**	-.47**	.34**	.18**	-.13*	.37**	.13*	.11*	.55**	.45**	.10*	.20**
6. Self-protective	-.37*	-.34**	-.47**	-.26**	.47**	.17*	-.55**	.06	.19	-.12*	.66**	-.17**	-.06	.14**	-.47**	-.12**	-.13**	-.25**
7. Deceptive	-.44**	-.48**	-.52**	-.27**	.14**	-.07	-.60**	.54**	-.22*	-.47**	.38**	-.18*	-.24**	.09	-.45**	.22*	-.17*	-.29**
8. Narrow-minded	-.25**	-.61**	-.32**	-.33**	.22**	.12*	-.47**	.22	-.29*	-.29**	.28**	-.21**	-.44**	.32**	-.61**	-.08	-.33**	-.36**
7. L-Proto	.35**	.36**	.30**	.39**	-.30**	.10*	.32**	-.11*	.24*	.20**	-0.35**	0.34**	0.31**	0.15*	0.38**	0.26**	0.33**	0.22**
8. L-Anti-Proto	-.32**	-.42**	-.40**	-.27**	.25**	.07	-.52**	.22**	-.11*	-.27**	0.44**	-0.17*	-0.21**	0.17*	-0.48**	0.10*	-0.21**	-0.30**

Note. L-Proto = Leadership Prototype. L-Anti-Proto = Leadership Antiprototype. IPT = Implicit Performance Theories.
N =218.
* p < .05.
** p <.01

Study 4
Construct Validity of IILTs
The last study has two goals. First, this study tries to shape an initial nomological network of IILTs by exploring the relationships between IILTs and theoretically relevant variables and to cast light on the consequences of IILTs in the dyadic relationships between leaders and followers. It is important to mention that the focal point is followers' IILTs. Based on the research regarding ILTs (e.g., Topakas, 2011), the two-factor structure of prototypes and anti-prototypes was considered to analyze the relationships. Second, criterion and incremental validities were tested for the scale in this study to provide more support for construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Hinkin, 1998). Criterion validity, a sub-category of construct validity, focuses on the extent to which a construct is related to other variables, based on the literature and theory (Hinkin, 1998; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). In order to test the other facet of construct validity (i.e., incremental validity), two related constructs of ILTs and IPTs were chosen.

To test criterion validity, based on the ILTs literature, two variables of leader-member exchange quality and follower job satisfaction were selected (see Junker & Van Dick, 2014). Moreover, investigating the relationships between these variables and IILTs can give us the power to compare nomological networks. Data were collected twice for the fourth study. The data were used to test criterion validity by examining the relationships between IILTs and 1) leader-member exchange quality and 2) follower job satisfaction. To test incremental validity, Implicit Performance Theories (IPTs) was controlled.

Method
Participants
The sample consists of 142 employees from different industries (e.g., education, professional services, healthcare, food service, retail) located in the southern parts of Iran. The demographics of the participants are 58 % male with the average work hour of 42 hours (SD= 8.33) a week. Their age ranged from 26 to 53, averaging 34.84 years (SD = 12.72), with the average tenure of 8.54 years (SD = 5.67). Individuals were employed in a range of groups, namely professional (55%), managerial (21%), sales (13%), and technical (11%).

Procedures

Employees completed a pen and pencil survey consisting of the IILTs, IPTs, LMX, and job satisfaction scales.

Measures

IILTs were measured with the same scale developed in Study 2. To measure congruence, Venn diagram technique adopted by van Quaquebeke et al. (2011) was used. In this technique, two circles - black and white - were introduced to the participants as the indicators of their ideal leaders' characteristics and their current supervisors' characteristics. For each characteristic, they were asked to show how much the two circles overlapped. This overlap for a specific characteristic indicated how much the participant's supervisor possessed the specific characteristic assumed for an ideal leader (Figure 2). One of the main merits of this approach is shortening the long lists of characteristics to assess ideal and actual ratings for each characteristic, which would necessitate polynomial regression (cf. van Quaquebeke et al., 2011).
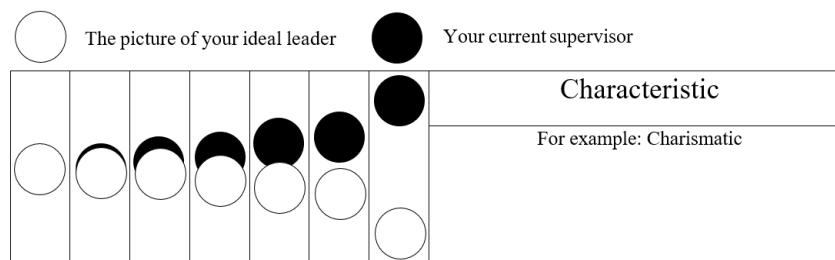

Fig. 2. Venn Diagram Answer Format to Measure the Level of Congruence Between the Participants' Views About and Ideal Leader and Their Perception About Their Current Supervisor According to Specific Characteristics

To measure IPTs (Engle & Lord, 1997) as the control variable, the shortened version of Wernimont's (1971) scale was administered. LMX-7 scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) was used to measure the quality of the relationship between a leader and followers. Job satisfaction was measured with the four-item scale developed by Quinn & Shepard (1974). All items were measured by using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Results

Table 6 shows the means, correlations, reliabilities, and standards deviations. The figures demonstrate that all the prototypes of IILTs are positively correlated with LMX and job satisfaction. In contrast, leader's anti-prototypes are negatively related to follower's job attitudes. To summarize, criterion validity was bolstered by the results and the hypotheses were supported.

After controlling for IPTs, incremental validity was tested by calculating the partial correlations between the congruence between followers' ILTs (prototypes & anti-prototypes) and their ILTs (prototypes & anti-prototypes) for their current supervisor, LMX, and job satisfaction. The results are shown in Table 7. As the figures in the table show, criterion validity is supported and leaders' prototypes and anti-prototypes show additional shares of variance for all followers' outcomes even when IPTs are controlled. Overall, after controlling IPTs, the incremental validity was accentuated.

Table 6. Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for Followers' IILTs, IPTs, and Criterion Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Leader-member Exchange	(.78)				
2. Followers' job satisfaction	.48**	(.85)			
3. IPTs	.13*	.08	(.74)		
4. Implicit–explicit IILT prototype congruence (followers' ratings)	.44**	.61**	.22**	(.81)	
5. Implicit–explicit IILT antiprototype congruence (followers' ratings)	-.35**	-.40*	-.08	-.28*	(.88)
M	4.33	3.94	3.55	4.01	2.11
SD	1.28	1.01	1.22	1.45	1.67

Note. N = 142
* p < .05
** p <.01

Table 7. Partial Correlations for IILTs and Criterion Variables

Criterion	Controlling for IPTs	
	Implicit–explicit IILT prototype congruence (followers' ratings)	Implicit–explicit IILT anti-prototype congruence (followers' ratings)
1. Followers' LMX	.35**	-.22**
2. Followers' job satisfaction	.28**	-.30**

N =142
** p <.01

General Discussion

This study aimed to develop a valid and reliable scale for Iranian Implicit Leadership Theories (IILTs). The results showed that IILTs scale is best developed by eight first-order (Inspiring, Supportive, Accountable, Emotionally Mature, Decisive) and two second-order factors (prototypes and anti-prototypes). In Study 1 and Study 2, the content and structure of IILTs were investigated and in Study 3 and Study 4, content, convergent, discriminant, criterion, and incremental validities were tested. All the tests corroborated that the scale has an acceptable level of construct validity (Hinkin, 1995). Additionally, in the last study, leader-member exchange quality and job satisfaction were chosen based on the literature to figure out if and how the prototypes and anti-prototypes of IILTs are associated with followers' outcome. The results were in line with the findings of other studies (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019; Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019).

Iranians have experienced many national and international challenges and crises. Economic issues arising due to international sanctions have been very palpable to all people. From one perspective, these events have made people wait for someone to rescue them from this swamp. From another perspective, the Iranian culture has caused them to deem charismatic leaders as their desirable ones (Dastmalchian et al., 2001). Decisiveness, as a prototype for ideal leaders, is also an important part of the scale developed by Offermann et al. (1994). Yukl and Gardner (2020) believe that emotional maturity is an invariable characteristic of effective leaders. Moreover, Iranian culture is not assertive and is based on discretions in relations (Javidan & Dastmalchian, 2003), which underscores courtesy and traditions. Given that, when conflicts occur, leaders should be adept at controlling their emotions to maintain their influence on their followers. This prototype is not seen in the scales developed yet. This may demonstrate that ideal leaders should pay much attention to elevating their emotional intelligence along with their mental power. Smart people in Iran may fail to be seen as an ideal leader if they cannot control their emotions. In terms of anti-prototypes, self-protectiveness is also found to be an international characteristic of non-leaders (House et al., 2004). Ignoring authenticity and honesty, when revealed, can remove the badge of ideal

leadership from people. This means that, from one point of view, leaders should be supportive and try to show accountability and to inspire others, and from another point, in case there are some forces to tell lies and conceal the truth, they might keep their emotions under control to manage the situation well. The essence of a high level of competency to reach a compromise between the two causes leadership to be tough in the Iranian culture.

The GLOBE Study showed that an effective leader is supportive, dictatorial, planners, familial, humble, faithful, and receptive, which has roots in historical-cultural background of Iran (Dastmalchian et al., 2001). In comparison with their findings, the results of this research both accentuated the extracted traits and introduced some unique implications due to the events happened during almost twenty years after the GLOBE Study in Iran. Firstly, the prototypes and anti-prototypes of an ideal leader have become more similar to the global ILTs (the "etic" features are similar to qualities such as being charismatic/value based, self-protective, and non-participative); however, there are some "emic" culturally specific features - such as emotional maturity and narrow-mindedness. Secondly, based on international reports admittedly the rank of Iran in corruption perpetration has increased from 18 to 30 from 2007 to 2017 (Transparency International, 2017). It alludes to the more sensitive insights of individuals regarding the anti-prototypes of ideal leaders, which was not highlighted in the GlOBE study twenty years ago. This indeed has roots in the high scores of humane orientation in Iran. Thirdly, it is quite interesting that faithfulness, which was clearly connected to religiosity and patriotism in the GLOBE Study, has not attracted attention of individuals to label ideal leadership. It might be due to the evidence that some ostensibly religious authorities and managers have not succeeded in their leadership in organizations, and religion has been used as a tool in the hands of Machiavellian people to reach their illegitimate goals. Moreover, research has shown that religiosity is positively related to two undesirable variables for ideal leadership- narcissism (Daghigh et al., 2019) and low intelligence (Zuckerman et al., 2020). Fourthly, although family and paying attention to it was a prototype of an ideal leadership 20 years ago, the prototypes of this study show no sign of individuals' attention to this

feature. This might be due to more acceptance and appreciation of those who have gone abroad for education for example and have shown their competency in organizational leadership after returning to Iran. This might have marginalized the idea that patriotism and home-orientation are confined to the boundary, and the outcome of the leadership should be prioritized in the consideration of effective leadership. Fifthly, in the last twenty years, the level of financial anxiety has risen dramatically since the value of Iran's currency has reached its nadir- more than twenty times less than that in 2001. Lack of certainty in the realm of economy is far more than clear, and this has caused the culture of future orientation (i.e. related to planning) to supersede "today orientation" to go through prevailing crises. This might be the reason why in IILTs, planning for the future is not in the center of attention. In contrast, the competency of leaders to know employees and the business to make good decisions to go through the crises and to progress are the main attributes of ideal leaders.

Future Research and Limitations
IILTs are an answer to the impact of culture, religion, and situational factor on followers' ILTs. Although research on ILTs has reached maturity, the content and structure of ILTs in different cultures need more hesitation and research. Having roots in Western leadership, ILTs may not be an impeccable match for those of Eastern individuals. There is very sparse research regarding implicit leadership theories in Iran. Using a wide range of participants, this research endeavored to develop a scale for the researchers to conduct high quality research with a valid and reliable measurement tool.

Future research may adopt the method used in this research to develop Iranian Implicit Followership Theories. Having context-specific scales can decrease bias and increase the validity of results. It seems fruitful to investigate the effects of the congruence between leaders and followers' IILTs on new outcomes such as followers' self-efficacy and performance. Moreover, including and investigating both ILTs and IFTs in one study can give a more comprehensive picture of how the interactions of implicit theories function in organizational settings (Lord et al., 2020).

Focusing on the determining factors widening or narrowing the gap

between implicit leadership theories and recognized attributes for the actual leader can unfold the reasons behind high or low-quality relationships between leaders and followers (Lord et al., 2020). First, attachment style is one of those factors which can be empirically studied (Keller, 2003). Second, implicit personality theories, which offer the dichotomy of entity theories and incremental theories, may cause differences in the appraisal of ideal leaders because perceiver's implicit theories may influence the way they make social inferences (Jones & Thibaut, 1958). Therefore, different approaches towards personality may impact the congruence between followers' implicit leadership theories and their recognition for the actual leader.

Very little research has investigated the negative consequences of the mismatch between implicit and explicit leadership theories. It is already shown that LMX is positively impacted by the match between implicit and explicit leadership theories (Topakas, 2011). However, the unanswered question is what negative consequences their mismatch may have. It is likely that incivility and ostracism grow as the outcomes of this mismatch.

Research about self-concept has shown that the perceptions about others also trigger self-perception. In other words, when an individual evaluates others with specific features, it may automatically cause the person to think of themselves in that area (Dunning & Hayes, 1996). In terms of implicit leadership theories, it is hitherto unknown if and how "self- addressed" implicit leadership theories can influence the behavior and perception of leaders. Based on self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), depression and anxiety can be the consequence of comparing oneself with the ideal and the ought self.

This study has several limitations. First, the codes were initially acquired from the interviews with a limited number of employees. However, it was tried best to interview with those who are good representatives of a broader range of employees in organizations. Second, in the studies of this research, the participants were from a wide range of organizations and this may lead to confounding results since some extraneous factors may interfere. Since implicit leadership theories may vary in different contexts (Foti et al., 2008; Offermann & Coats, 2018), this research tried to develop a scale which can contribute to ILTs in Iran. Different research has so far reached the

conclusion that some features of ILTs are global and some are culturally exclusive (e.g., Dastmalchian et al., 2001). The literature of ILTs has reached a maturity regarding global features characterizing leaders and effective leaders (e.g., House et al., 2004; Offermann & Coats, 2018). Paying attention to specific cultures and contexts should be among the topics at the forefront of ILTs research to increase the validity of the results since implicit theories are the theories produced by all people, and using few and international scales may not be accurate enough due to variations in cultures, religions, and regions. Third, ILTs can be defined at three levels. Theorists argue that implicit leadership theories may be examined at three hierarchical levels (for a review, see Epitropaki et al., 2013). In this research, IILTs are at the superordinate level (i.e., ideal leaders). Future research can focus on discovering IILTs of followers about specific types of leaders (e.g., military, business, minority, religious, etc.).

Practical Implications
Implicit leadership theories have some implications for human resource management. First, leaders and followers nowadays are assessed by some tools such as forms, electronic systems, and surveys. The point is that their rates are based on the perception of followers about the leaders. In such a situation, implicit leadership theories are highlighted (e.g., Lord et al., 2020). Salaries are often changing and one of the factors contributing to this variance is leaders' or followers' performance. As such, ILTs should be identified in order not to have biased evaluations of their performances. Lack of accuracy in performance ratings emanating from ILTs can trigger the feelings of injustice in personnel and impact their affective and cognitive factors negatively. Second, leaders are decision makers, and they mobilize employees to reach organizational goals (Yukl, 2013). Having influence on and good relationships with followers play important roles in pushing them towards achieving their tasks. Research has already shown that ILTs impact LMX positively (Epitropaki & Maritn, 2005). Consequently, training leaders to shape ILTs during time and show traits and behaviors matching followers' ILTs can boost up the quality of relationships and boil down to more organizational success.

Thirdly, implicit leadership theories play a pivotal role in leadership development (Lord et al., 2020). Jumping headlong into organizing courses and workshops focusing on general and international features of leadership and overlooking the features exclusive to the context (e.g., emotional maturity in Iran) may make the outcome barren. It is incumbent upon researchers to extract implicit theories and introduce them to the managers in diverse cultures and places, while it is the onus of managers to be aware of the cognitive processing of followers, use these theories to increase their influence on followers, and conjure a picture of a leader in the minds of followers. This can finally benefit organizations through impacting followers' job attitudes.

Finally, the three factors of gender, age, and culture can form specific ILTs, which may render discrimination and marginalization at workplace. Female leaders and older employees are likely to suffer most from these implicit processes. Decreasing this suffering entails training followers to reframe their thoughts in accordance with reality. According to Sy (2010), in order to form evaluators' ILTs, the first phase can be inviting employees to think about their implicit leadership theories and examining the validity of them to ascertain if they are based on reality or imagination. If they are based on erroneous contemplation and assumptions, then some corrective steps are supposed to be taken to reduce biases.

Conclusions

To conclude, ILTs are context variant (Foti et al., 2008; Offermann & Coats, 2018). The most famous and broadly conducted research in different cultures (i.e. the GLOBE Study) has demonstrated that although some ILTs are global, some context specific features of ILTs also exist. Although there are some common features among the developed scales in the West and East, the relatively preserved culture in Iran and significant differences with other countries motivated the author to develop a scale for Iranian contexts. This scale can increase the validity of the results of research done in Iran. Since the literature of ILTs has reached a maturity level at which common features are well-explored, it is about time some research explore differences in ILTs in different cultures. This research took a step towards this goal.

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