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A PATHWAY FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S EFFECTS: TESTING RELATIONS BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, IDENTIFICATION AND COMMITMENT

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A PATHWAY FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S EFFECTS:

TESTING RELATIONS BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP,

IDENTIFICATION AND COMMITMENT

(Spine title: A Pathway for Transformational Leadership's Effects)

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by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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entitled:

A Pathway for Transformational Leadership's Effects: Testing Relations between

Transformational Leadership, Identification and Commitment

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requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

The primary purposes of the present research were to determine the interrelationships among transformational leadership (TFL), identification, and affective commitment (AC), and also to test whether identification mediates the relationship of TFL to AC at three different foci. The first mediation model tested a dyad focus, the second a work-group focus, and the third an organization focus. In each mediation model, TFL was entered as the predictor, followed by identification with the focus of interest as the mediator, and AC to the same focus as the criterion. Strong support was found for the direct relationships among all the study variables, and for the three mediation models tested. In addition this study investigated whether relationship-oriented TFL behaviours (i.e., *intellectual stimulation* and *individualized consideration*) were superior to group-oriented TFL behaviours (i.e., *idealized influence* and *inspirational motivation*), when predicting identification with the leader. This study also examined whether group-oriented TFL behaviours were superior to relationship-oriented TFL behaviours when predicting identification with the work-group and organization. No evidence was found for the relative superiority of individual TFL dimensions in predicting forms of identification. Implications and directions for future research are proposed.

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A Pathway for Transformational Leadership's Effects: Testing Relations among

Transformational Leadership, Identification and Commitment

Research on transformational and transactional leadership (TFL and TSL,

respectively; Bass, 1985; Avolio, 1999) shows that the behaviours described in these

theories exert potent effects on follower attitudes and performance, as well as on

organizational outcomes (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Lowe, Kroeck, &

Sivasubramanian, 1996; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Despite the predictive validity of

these frameworks, however, we know little about the psychological mechanisms

whereby transformational leaders influence follower behaviour (van Knippenberg,

van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Such questions are now spawning

theorizing about (e.g., Kark & Shamir, 2002) and empirical testing of (e.g., Bono &

Judge, 2003) intermediate psychological variables that might explain the relationship

between TFL and follower attitudinal and performance outcomes. This study

investigates some of the proposed mechanisms that might account for TFL's

influence on followers, in particular examining whether identification mediates the

relationship between TFL and commitment.

This paper provides a brief description of TFL/TSL theory, its dimensions,

and evidence regarding its construct validity. Next, the three component model of

commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997) is described as a format for understanding

the nature of employee commitment, and the relationship of this model to TFL is

outlined. The term 'identification' is also introduced and defined in terms of its

relation to dyads and two types of groups (i.e., work-groups and organizational

collectives). Then, Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick's (2006) integrative model of

identification and commitment is described and used to justify testing the mediated model investigated in this study. Meyer et al.'s model predicts that greater identification may in turn result in greater levels commitment towards multiple social foci. This framework is used as a basis for investigating the possibility that leaders who generate higher levels of identification in followers may also, as a consequence of this elevated identification, foster greater commitment in these same employees. Accordingly, the mediated model tested in this study includes TFL as a predictor, commitment as a criterion, and identification as a mediator. It is also proposed that TFL could relate to identification and commitment variables at three foci, namely the dyad (i.e., including the immediate leader-follower relationship), the work-group, and the organization. Conceptual arguments and empirical evidence for the distinctiveness of the identification and commitment constructs are presented, to bolster support for a mediation framework which requires that these variables be unique. Finally, in an attempt to look more carefully at how the specific dimensions of TFL influence different forms of identification (i.e., dyad-level vs. identification with a group), some rationale for exploring the unique relations of TFL dimensions to identification is given. Hypotheses are presented where relevant.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory

The current conceptualization of TFL and TSL is organized into nine dimensions (five transformational, four transactional; Bass, 1998; Avolio, 1999). *Idealized influence (attributed)*, also referred to as attributed charisma, reflects followers' perceptions of the leader's power, confidence, and transcendent ideals (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1995, 1997). *Idealized influence (behaviours)*, or

behavioural charisma, includes demonstrated charismatic behaviours reflecting a leader's values, beliefs, sense of mission and purpose, and ethical orientation (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1995, 1997). *Inspirational motivation* involves encouraging followers to strive towards ambitious goals, while demonstrating confidence in their ability to achieve those goals (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Through *intellectual stimulation* leaders ask followers to question customs and assumptions, and to form creative solutions to problems (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Finally, with *individualized consideration,* leaders treat followers as unique people, and devote their attention and support to followers' specific needs (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

By contrast, four dimensions are considered to be transactional forms of leadership. *Contingent reward* links agreed upon objectives to rewards for followers, using positive reinforcement when those objectives are met (Bass & Avolio, 1993). *Management-by-exception* (MBE) employs corrective action only when followers make mistakes, regulating behaviour with negative reinforcement (e.g., corrective criticism, negative feedback; Bass & Avolio, 1993). This type of leadership can take two forms, an *active* form where leaders monitor follower behaviours for mistakes, or a *passive* form without any monitoring. A final dimension, termed *laissez-faire*, provides no intervention, positive or negative reinforcement, or feedback. It is in effect the absence of any kind of leader behaviour.

TFL has been widely researched and may be the most inclusive and supported leadership framework in the extant literature. Antonakis and House (2002) demonstrate how TFL subsumes many of the behaviours encompassed by Conger and Kanungo's (1988, 1998) charismatic theory, House and Shamir's (1993) self-concept-

based motivational theory of charismatic leadership, and Sashkin's (1988) visionary theory of leadership. Because of TFL's comprehensiveness, it may not be surprising that it predicts a wide variety of criteria across research settings. Behaviours encompassed by TFL have predicted positive attitude and performance outcomes in field studies (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Bono & Judge, 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999; Keller, 1992; 2006), lab studies (Howell & Frost, 1989; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996), archival studies (House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991), field experiments (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002), and meta-analyses (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramanian, 1996; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). This relationship to attitudes and performance remains robust when using subjective or objective performance criteria (Lowe et al., 1996), and when accounting for various moderators (e.g., research design, research setting, and level of leader; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Despite these encouraging findings, researchers have criticized the factor structure of the TFL paradigm for its lack of distinctiveness among dimensions. Apart from the original validation studies of Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1995) and Bass and Avolio (1997), and a recent analysis by Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramanian (2003), no studies have supported the nine-factor TFL/TSL model. Several authors have found that a single factor represents TFL well, and have concluded that the model lacks discriminant validity among dimensions (Judge & Bono, 2000; Carless, 1998; Tejeda, Scandura, & Pillai, 2001; Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995). For example, Carless found that a model defining TFL as three separate factors (i.e., idealized influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation) demonstrated

the same fit indicies as a model that defined TFL as hierarchical, where dimensions share a common and strong relationship with one higher order factor. In their meta-analysis, Judge and Piccolo (2004) found in a comparison between a 'charisma' variable and a composite TFL variable (i.e., including all TFL dimensions), that neither differed significantly in the magnitude of outcome prediction.[1] Judge and Piccolo also found that controlling for other leadership dimensions by investigating unique predictive effects with regression, substantially undermined the validities of TFL and TSL dimensions. For example, the overall validities across several criteria dropped 45% for TFL (from $\rho=.44$ to .24), 72% for contingent reward (from $\rho=.39$ to .11) and 76% for laissez-faire (from $\rho=-.37$ to -.09), when investigating unique effects only. These results suggest considerable overlap among TFL/TSL dimensions, and discredit the contention that the model consists of distinctive behavioural dimensions.

In contrast to such disconfirming evidence, other researchers have supported the distinction among TFL's and TSL's components. As already mentioned, some studies have defended the hypothesized nine-factor model in its entirety (Antonakis et al., 2003; Avolio et al., 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Others have found more limited evidence for dimensional discrimination. For example, Avolio, Bass, and Jung

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[1] It is not clear from Judge and Piccolo's (2004) account how they determined their 'charisma' variable, although they imply that 'charisma' is synonymous with the *idealized influence* dimension of TFL. It should be noted that *charisma* as defined by charismatic theorists (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) and *idealized influence* as defined in TFL (Bass & Avolio, 1997) bear subtle differences. Charismatic behaviours (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) include setting high expectations, which is similar to the vision-setting quality of TFL, although the challenging nature of the vision is not emphasized in the items of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; the measure often used to gauge TFL). Despite this, descriptions of transformational leaders can include ambitious goal-setting, or vision-setting behaviour (Antonakis & House, 2002). Also, charismatic leadership involves scanning the environment, a tactical dimension that is not included in TFL, although Antonakis and House (2002) have proposed expanding TFL theory to include strategic leadership behaviours such as this. Whether the above mentioned 'purely charismatic' behaviours were included in Judge and Piccolo's analysis is unknown, although studies looking strictly at charismatic leadership seem to have been included in the meta-analysis (e.g., Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000; Pillai & Meindl, 1998).

(1999) found evidence for a six-factor model consisting of idealized influence/inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception (active only) and passive-avoidant leadership dimensions. Results from Bass (1985), Hater and Bass (1988), and Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) have also distinguished between several of the hypothesized dimensions. Thus, the evidence criticizing the discriminability of the TFL/TSL factor structure stands in contrast to published studies supporting distinctiveness among several dimensions.

Attempting to explain the conflicting evidence for the model's construct validity, Antonakis et al. (2003) suggested that many of the discrepancies in findings regarding the TFL/TSL factor structure have been due to attempts to validate the MLQ with pooled, non-homogeneous (i.e., in terms of sample characteristics) samples (e.g., Bycio, Hacket & Allen, 1995). Some of the ways in which a sample might be considered non-homogeneous would be using various industrial or cultural settings, or aggregating ratings of leaders from different organizational levels or genders. Antonakis et al. argued that validating the MLQ without homogeneous samples may be a critical mistake in the theory building process.

Additionally, Antonakis et al. (2003) noted other problems with studies testing the factor structure of the MLQ. They claimed that much of the research failing to find the proposed nine-factor structure (e.g., Tepper & Percy, 1994) tested limited models, often omitting items or whole scales from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; i.e., the scale typically used to measure TFL/TSL) in their investigations. Antonakis et al. also explained that exploratory factor analyses have

often been used inappropriately to test the nine-dimension structure of TFL/TSL, whereas confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) would be more suitable for testing an existing model.

To investigate their claim that methodological and sample-specific variation accounts for differences in factor structure findings, Antonakis et al. (2003) tested the nine-dimension TFL/TSL factor structure using CFA while controlling for contextual variables. They found that when grouping data into homogeneous sets that eliminated some moderating contextual variables (e.g., environmental risk, leader hierarchical level, and leader-follower gender), that the nine-factor model fit the data well. When the contextual moderators were no longer controlled for, the fit indicies deteriorated. This suggests that contextual variables could affect the obtained factor structure in a given sample, and that the nine-dimension structure may still be tenable.

Based on this review the focus of this study will be on TFL, and to a lesser degree TSL, and how this framework relates to employee attitudes. This paradigm is selected because it encompasses other charismatic theories, it has robust predictive validity, and it has received some support for its hypothesized factor structure. Accordingly, TFL/TSL is used as a starting point to discuss how leadership behaviours might impact the psychology of followers.

Transformational Leadership and the Three-Component Model of Commitment

If the TFL/TSL model is workable, one important metric of its effectiveness might be follower commitment. In support of this proposition, theory suggests that commitment is an antecedent to the enactment of positive work behaviours (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer et al., 2006), and meta-analysis provides

evidence for commitment's relationship to job performance, attendance and citizenship behaviours (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). This section describes one well-supported commitment framework, the three-component model, and its relationship to TFL.

The three-component model (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) defines commitment as a force that *binds* an individual to a course of action relevant to one or more targets. This model suggests that individuals can experience mindsets representative of three unique forms of commitment. Employees can maintain a commitment to a person, a group, or a course of action because they want to (affective commitment; AC), because they feel they ought to out of obligation (normative commitment; NC), and/or because they wish to avoid the costs associated with severing the commitment (continuance commitment; CC). Meta-analytic evidence supports the discriminant validity of the three-component conceptualization, and finds each mindset predicts important work-related outcomes differentially (Meyer et al., 2002).

In addition to taking multiple forms, commitment can also be directed to more than one focus. The foci of these commitments can include the leader, the work-group, or the organization. Several studies confirm that employees distinguish multiple foci of commitment at work, and that these diverse commitments predict work outcomes in unique ways (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Redman & Snape, 2005; Stinglehamber, Bentein, & Vandenberghe, 2002; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglehamber, 2004). Thus any study using commitment variables to investigate the TFL influence process should adopt a multiple foci approach.

A growing body of empirical evidence has found that TFL relates to AC, particularly AC to the organization and work-group foci. TFL has predicted AC to the organization in numerous empirical studies (e.g., Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Whittington, Goodwin, & Murray, 2004; Connell, Ferres, & Travaglione, 2003; Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Vandenberghe, Stordeur, & D'hoore, 2002). One investigation found a significant correlation between TFL and AC to the work-group (Arnold, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001), while two others successfully predicted work-group cohesion (a variable conceptually similar to AC) (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Pillai & Williams, 2004). Theoretical accounts have also proposed that TFL influences work-group cohesion (Atwater & Bass, 1994; Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). Although the association of TFL to AC to the leader has not been tested, a relationship between the two might be expected based on support for the TFL-AC correlation at the work-group and organization foci.

Based on the preceding arguments, the following hypotheses are offered:

Hypothesis 1a: Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' AC to the organization.

Hypothesis 1b: Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' AC to the work-group.

Hypothesis 1c: Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' AC to the leader.

Leadership and Identification

In addition to commitment, identification is another potentially important consequence of TFL. Recent theorizing proposes that transformational, charismatic,

or effective leadership in general exert their influence by activating follower self-concepts and levels of identification with the leader or group of interest (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; House & Shamir, 1993; Howell & Shamir, 2005; Kark & Shamir, 2002; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993; Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998). To better understand the relationship of leadership to identification, the latter construct will be defined here in more precise terms.

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) outlines how individuals use social categories to define who they are. SIT proposes that the self-concept is comprised of personal and social identity. *Personal identity* includes a person's idiosyncratic qualities (e.g. traits, interests, abilities, body attributes; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). By comparison, *social identity* comprises the social categories to which an individual feels they are a member (e.g., profession, nationality, sports team; Pratt, 1998). Following this, SIT defines *social identification* as the perception of belongingness to a group, or the defining of oneself based on perceived membership in a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Identifications with the work-team or organization are thus specific types of social identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Mael & Tetrick, 1992). Leaders' ability to fuse followers' self-interest with collective interest, in other words to foster social identification, has been proposed as a central tenet in several accounts of TFL and charismatic leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978; House, 1977; Shamir et al., 1993).

It is important to note that researchers increasingly define group identity as a multidimensional construct (Cameron, 2004; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Jackson, 2002; Van Dick, 2001; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004). A distinction between multiple facets of identification was made early in the development of SIT, when Tajfel (1978) defined group identity as "... that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63). This definition reflects three possible aspects of social identity. The first dimension is a knowledge or awareness that one is a member of a group (i.e., self-categorization). The second component is an assessment of the value to the individual of membership in a particular group (i.e., evaluation). The third facet is the degree of emotional significance associated with membership in a group (i.e., affect). Several studies using CFA have differentiated among these dimensions when measuring social identification (Cameron, 2004; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Jackson, 2002; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002; Van Dick et al., 2004), lending support to this conceptualization.

Though not as often discussed in the SIT literature in general, another form of social identification between a leader and a follower may arise at the *dyadic* level of interaction. This form of identification is often referred to as *personal identification*[2], and involves defining oneself in terms of another person (rather than in terms of a group, as in social identification). For example, a son could define himself based on

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[2] *Personal identification* should not be confused with *personal identity*. As noted above, *personal identity* refers to the individual qualities or characteristics (e.g., traits, interests, abilities, body attributes) that constitute how an individual characterizes him or herself. *Personal identification* involves defining oneself based on a dyadic relationship with another person (e.g., 'part of who I am, or how I see myself, is associated with my relationship to this person').

the characteristics of his father, or a follower could do the same relative to his/her leader. In addition, Ashforth and Mael (1989) note that an individual could identify with an occupied role relationship as part of a dyadic affiliation, as when someone defines themselves based on an assumed husband/wife role, or a doctor/patient role. In each of these cases, self-definition based on another person or role represents identification at the dyad-level, or between two people rather than between a person and a group.

An important distinction between personal and social identification is that personal identification typically includes a role-modeling component, whereas social identification does not. Several authors define personal identification in terms of 'currently' characterizing oneself based on another person, but also in terms of the desire to emulate, or to *become* more similar to someone else. For example, Kelman's (1961) concept of 'classical identification' states that identification with an individual is predicated on the desire to appease, emulate, or vicariously gain the qualities of another person (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). More recently, several authors (Kark & Shamir, 2002; Kark, Shamir & Chen, 2003; Pratt, 1998) also suggested that dyadic identification could arise from the desire to approximate the behaviours of another. Therefore, personal identification is construed as a basic form of social identification, where individuals define themselves based on another social entity (in this case a person). Personal identification can also refer to a role modeling process where an individual aspires to become more like someone else.

It is also noteworthy that recent measures of the personal identification construct, like many measures of social identification, reflect the multidimensional

conceptualization of identification highlighted above. For example, Kark et al.'s (2003) study of bank branch managers measured personal identification using items assessing the cognitive (i.e., "the values of the branch manager are similar to my values"), evaluative (i.e., "it is important for me to see myself as an employee of this bank manager"), and affective (i.e., "I am proud to tell others that he/she is the manager of my branch") dimensions of identification. A similar measure of identification with military platoon leaders which also reflected these three facets was used by Shamir et al. (1998) (note that the Kark et al. measure was based in part on that used by Shamir et al.). Therefore, the multidimensional nature of identification including cognitive, evaluative and affective components of identification has been recognized in research on personal and social identification.

Just as prominent leadership theories highlight a role for social identification in the leadership influence process, so too do they regard personal identification as an important conduit through which leader influence can be transmitted to followers. Kark et al. (2003) showed how charismatic theory (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) and self-concept-based charismatic theory (Shamir et al., 1993), both of which are similar to TFL (Antonakis & House, 2002), propose identification with the leader as a mechanism of leader influence. For example, Conger and Kanungo suggested that personal identification arises as a result of the leader's referent power, while Shamir et al. (1993) posited that identification with the leader occurs due to role-modeling, where followers shape their beliefs and behaviour according to the standard set by the leader.

In addition to theoretical arguments for identification's role in the leader influence process, several empirical studies have found that TFL/charismatic leadership behaviours predict both personal and social identification. Kark et al. (2003) found that follower perceptions of managers' TFL behaviour significantly predicted personal identification in a sample of bank employees. In another study, Shamir et al. (1998) found that leaders displaying behaviours spanning TFL and charismatic leadership (i.e., supportiveness and an emphasis on collective identity) engendered greater identification with and trust in the leader among followers (the trust and identification with the leader measures were combined in this study). In terms of identification with the collective, Kark et al. also found that TFL predicted social identification, while Conger et al. (2000) found a significant relationship between charismatic leadership and social identification. Also, Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, and Popper (2000) concluded that leaders who demonstrated behaviours encompassed by TFL and charismatic leadership (i.e., emphasis on collective identity, emphasis on shared values, and inclusive/supportive behaviours) engendered greater social identification among followers. Shamir et al. (1998) also found that TFL/charismatic behaviours (i.e., supportiveness and emphasis on collective identity) predicted social identification with the work-group. Finally, Epitropaki and Martin (2005) found that TFL behaviours were significant predictors of social identification with the broader organizational collective. Thus, based on its consistent relationship to TFL and to charismatic leadership (a construct closely affiliated with TFL), identification in its various forms appears to be an important variable when considering the process of how leaders influence followers.

Before proposing hypotheses relating TFL to identification, and as alluded to in the paragraph above, it is noteworthy that SIT researchers have argued for (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and found empirical evidence for (Richter, West, Van Dick, & Dawson, in press; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005) the idea that employees can identify with multiple social targets. Indeed, organizations provide their members with at least two significant group memberships, the organization and their immediate work-group. SIT research generally divides social identification into these two forms, often finding these foci produce unique relationships with consequence variables (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005). Despite the growing evidence that employees can identify with their work-groups and organizations simultaneously (Richter et al., in press), and the continuing theoretical justification for a role of identification in the leadership influence process, I have found no studies that tested the impact of TFL on both of these foci of employee social identification. Therefore this study recognizes these two forms of social identification, examining the relation of TFL to both. Also, based on recent evidence for TFL's/charismatic leadership's relation to identification at a dyad focus (Kark et al., 2003; Shamir et al., 1998), this study scrutinizes TFL's link to identification with the leader.

> *Hypothesis 2a:* Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' identification with the organization.
>
> *Hypothesis 2b:* Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' identification with the work-group.

Hypothesis 2c: Transformational leadership will positively and significantly relate to followers' identification with the leader.

A Framework for a Mediated Model of Leadership Influence: Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick's (2006) Integrative Model of Identification and Commitment

Based on the above summary of commitment and identification, and their relationship to TFL, how might these variables develop as a result of TFL? More specifically, what should be AC's relationship to identification, a variable also predicted by TFL? Some insight is offered by Meyer et al.'s (2006) integrative model of identification and commitment, in which they suggest that identification with a social target is one possible antecedent to the development of AC towards that same target (see also Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004). If we combine such a model with leadership research findings showing TFL predicts (personal and social) identification, a series of steps can be mapped out describing the creation of commitment as a consequence of TFL. Therefore, one possible way to describe the influence of leaders on followers is to propose that TFL fosters (personal and/or social) identification, which in turn increases the likelihood of followers experiencing AC toward the leader, the work-group, or the organization (see Figure 1 for a pictorial summary of the proposed mediation model).

This framework assumes the distinctiveness of the identification and commitment constructs. Numerous authors have submitted conceptual arguments that identification is distinct from commitment, and that the former is an antecedent to the
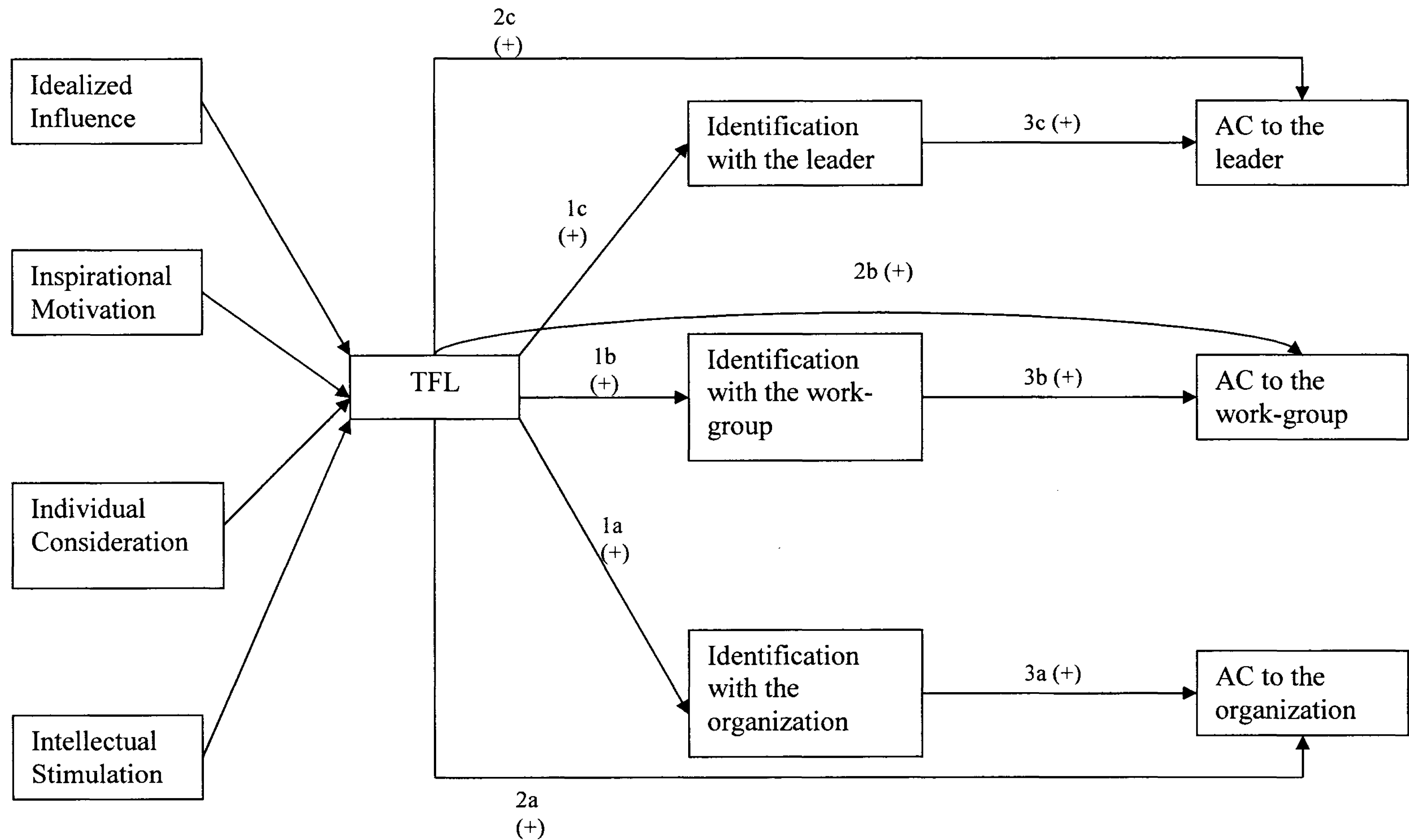
Figure 1. Proposed mediation model including transformational leadership as an antecedent, affective commitment as a consequence, and identification as a mediator. The model incorporates three foci, the dyad, the work-group, and the

latter (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Becker, 1992; Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer et al., 2006; Pratt, 1998; van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Among the conceptual arguments supporting identification as a predecessor of commitment, Ashforth and Mael (1989) claimed that individuals tend to engage in activities that support their adopted identities, and as a result they also behave in ways that benefit the institutions that represent those identities. As such, they suggested that one consequence of identification with an organization is behavioural commitment towards that institution. Becker (1992) also asserted, based on the work of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), that identification with other individuals or groups can involve the development of attitudes towards those targets (e.g., commitment). Further arguments for the conceptual distinction between the constructs are reviewed by Meyer et al. (2006). Empirical support for the distinction between the two constructs also comes from factor analysis (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Gautam, Van Dick, & Wagner, 2004; Harris & Cameron; Mael & Tetrick, 1992; van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

The mediation framework depicted in Figure 1 also assumes that identification will predict commitment. This relationship has been verified in experimental (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004), cross-sectional (Foreman & Whetten, 2002), and meta-analytic studies (Riketta, 2005). In addition, researchers have found that identification variables tend to predict best when matched with other variables at the same level of specification (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005). Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are offered:

Hypothesis 3a: Identification with the organization will be positively and significantly related to AC to the organization.

Hypothesis 3b: Identification with the work-group will be positively and significantly related to AC to the work-group.

Hypothesis 3c: Identification with the leader will be positively and significantly related to AC to the leader.

Justification for Testing a Mediation Model of Transformational Leadership, Identification, and Commitment

If support for the above hypotheses is found, this pattern of correlations would satisfy the requirements to test a mediated relationship between TFL and AC, with identification as a mediator, at three separate foci (e.g., dyad, work-group, organization). Justifying the examination of a mediation model typically requires 1) the predictor (X; i.e., TFL) significantly predict the criterion (Y; i.e., AC), 2) X significantly predict the mediator (M; i.e., identification), and 3) M significantly predict Y (while controlling for X; Baron & Kenny, 1986; see Figure 2). In a more parsimonious set of criteria, Preacher and Hayes (2004) argued that mediation exists if, 1) there is a relationship to be mediated (i.e., the relationship between X and Y, while *not* accounting for M, is non-zero; $c \neq 0$), and 2) the indirect effect (i.e., of X on Y through M) is statistically significant in the direction hypothesized. So, according to Preacher and Hayes, the preconditions for testing for mediation are simply that a direct relationship between X and Y exists. Therefore, if the relationships described in Hypotheses 1-3 are significant, this would meet the three Baron and Kenny criteria, as well as the single Preacher and Hayes condition, and justify testing for mediation at each of the three foci studied. (The second Preacher and Hayes criteria for establishing mediation can be estimated using a test of indirect effects, which will be
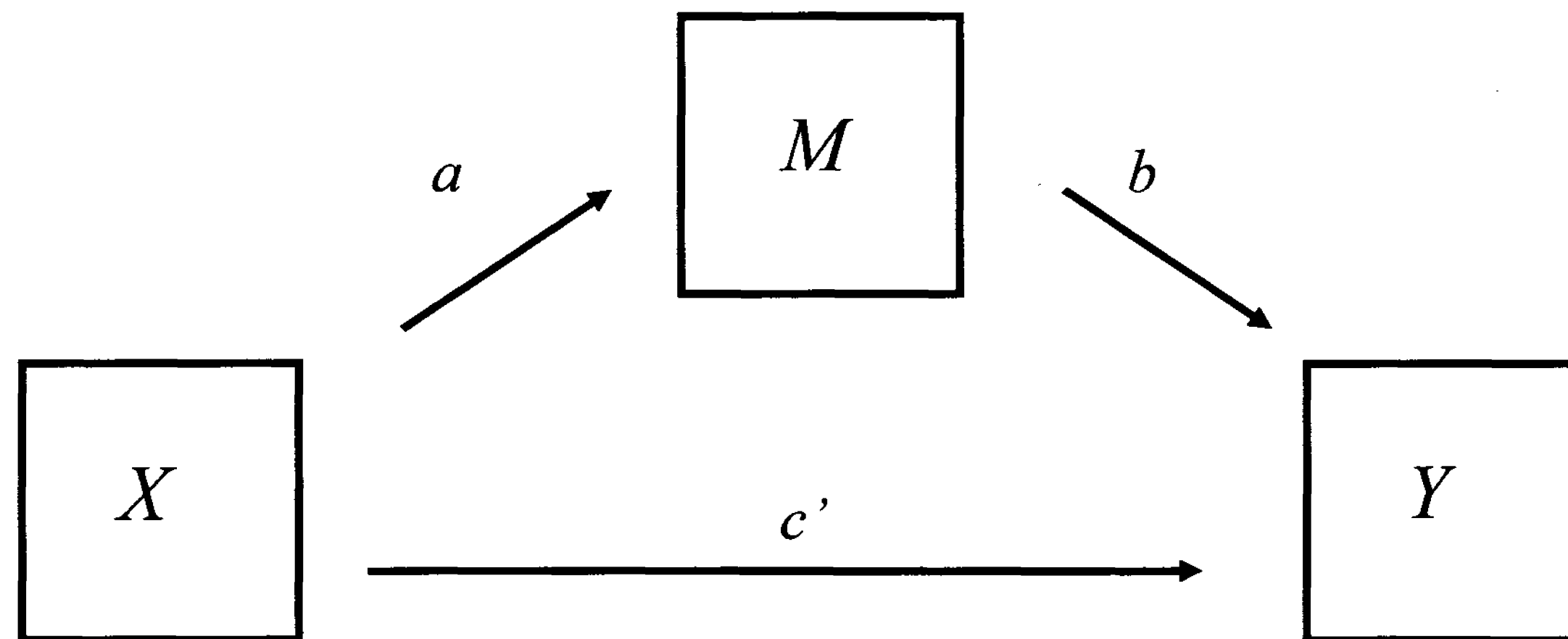
Panel A:
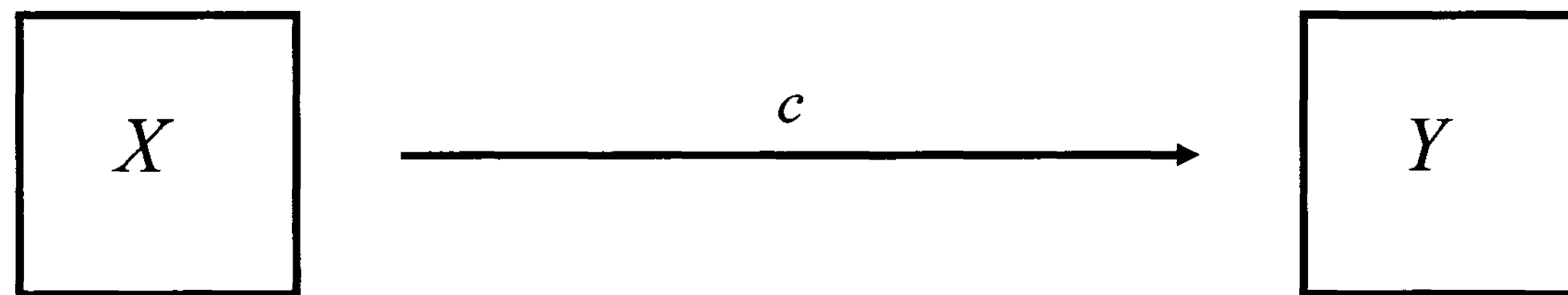
Panel B:

Figure 2. An Illustration of direct and indirect effects. Panel A: An illustration of a direct effect. *X* affects *Y*. Panel B: An illustration of a mediation model. *X* affects *Y* through *M*.

employed in this study.) Therefore, if the above Hypotheses are supported, it is reasonable to expect that identification at each focus will mediate TFL's impact on AC at the corresponding focus.

More generally, several studies also support the role of identification as a mediator between leadership behaviour and follower attitudes. Kark et al. (2003) found that personal identification mediated the relationship between TFL and dependence on the leader, while social identification mediated the relationship between TFL and empowerment (operationalized as self-efficacy, collective self-efficacy, and organization-based self-esteem). Meanwhile, Conger et al. (2000) found that social identification mediated the relationship between charismatic leadership and empowerment. In another study, De Cremer and van Knippenberg (2004) found that social identification mediated the interactive effect of leader self-sacrifice and displays of self-confidence on perceptual/attitudinal measures of leadership effectiveness. In a similar study, social identification mediated the interactive effect of leader self-sacrifice and leader procedural fairness on follower cooperation (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002). Based on these arguments, and pending the satisfaction of the preconditions to test a mediation model, the following hypotheses seem warranted:

Hypothesis 4a: Identification with the organization will be a significant

mediator of the TFL-AC to the organization relationship.

Hypothesis 4b: Identification with the work-group will be a significant

mediator of the TFL-AC to the work-group relationship.

Hypothesis 4c: Identification with the leader will be a significant mediator of the TFL-AC to the leader relationship.

Mapping Transformational Leadership Dimensions onto Identification Dimensions.

The above mentioned hypotheses involve using TFL, a variable created by aggregating across all its dimensions, as a predictor of identification and commitment. Decomposing this construct, however, might produce unique relationships to identification's different forms. Such is the argument of Kark and Shamir (2002), who hypothesized that specific TFL dimensions will relate most to certain forms of identification. They suggested that personal and developmental TFL behaviours (i.e., *individualized consideration* and *intellectual stimulation*), that either show concern for the follower or display interest in the follower's growth and development, will activate the part of the follower self-concept connected with personal relationships, and foster identification with the leader. Conversely, Kark and Shamir argue, behaviours that direct followers' attention to the needs of the collective (e.g., *inspirational motivation* and *idealized influence*) will activate the part of the follower self-concept connected with group membership, and foster social identification. Supporting this proposition, Shamir et al. (1998) found that leader supportive behaviour predicted followers' identification with, and trust in, the leader. In the same study, charismatic leader behaviours also accounted for unique variance in identification with the unit, above and beyond that accounted for by leader supportive behaviours. In another study Kark (2000) found that the personal and developmental TFL behaviours correlated more strongly to identification with the