

Leader-Follower Pacing Style Discrepancies and their Relationships with Individual Stress and  
Performance

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### Abstract

Workers have different pacing styles, which are defined as how workers distribute their effort over time to complete a task. Some workers prefer a high rate of initial effort, some choose a medium rate of consistent effort, and others enjoy a high rate of effort near the task's due date. Furthermore, shared mental models among workers help reduce stress and increase performance by keeping everyone on the same page. As a result, it is predicted that discrepancies between leader and follower pacing styles may be one unshared mental model that positively relates to individual stress, negatively relates to individual performance, and negatively relates to group performance. To test these hypotheses, previously collected data from a high fidelity aviation simulation lab will be analyzed. This lab includes a leader who manages several followers to safely coordinate flights. If the aforementioned hypotheses are supported, then pacing styles may be important to consider with Leader-Member Exchange Theory. This theory posits that leaders and followers share a relationship built upon growth through work. If the leader and follower have different approaches to work, though, the leader-follower relationship could be strained. To further understand the leader-follower dynamic, this study's variables are encouraged to be considered.

*Keywords:* leadership, pacing style, job stress, job performance

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People demonstrate different temporal pacing styles with work (Gevers, Rutte, & van Eerde, 2006). Some prefer to dive into work long before deadlines, some enjoy smaller workloads in consistent increments, and others complete most of the work near deadlines. This proposed research aims to identify if a difference between these pacing styles among leaders and followers relates to stress and performance. It is expected that greater leader-follower pacing style discrepancies will be related to greater individual stress, poorer individual performance, and poorer group performance.

To investigate this hypothesis, previously examined data from an undergraduate student aviation simulation lab will be examined. This lab involves three 2.5 hour long group simulations with 9-11 members in each group. These high fidelity simulations realistically replicate an aviation control center with a Flight Operations Coordinator leading the team.

Data will be analyzed with three simple linear regressions to predict individual stress, individual performance, and group performance from a leader-follower pacing style discrepancy score. This pacing style discrepancy score will be calculated by taking the absolute value of the average follower pacing style score minus the leader pacing style score.

If hypotheses are confirmed, implications to leader-member exchange theory could be considered. Leader-member exchange theory involves a relational transaction between the leader and follower through work (Gerstner & Day, 1997), and this transaction is complicated if both parties have a different pace with work (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011). Due to the ubiquity of leader-follower interactions in work, this research's utility justifies its execution.

## References

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