



## Two to Tango? A cross-cultural investigation of the leader-follower agreement on authoritarian leadership

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the leader–follower agreement on authoritarian leadership influences the quality of communication experience with the leader across three countries: Taiwan, Turkey, and the U.S. We also examine the mediating role of the quality of communication in linking agreement on authoritarianism to subordinate in-role and extra-role performance. Our sample consisted of 674 Taiwanese, 409 Turkish, and 294 American employees and their leaders. The results demonstrate that in the U.S., the leader–follower agreement on this negative form of leadership has positive effects on the quality of communication. In Turkey, however, the leader–follower agreement on high levels of authoritarian leadership has a negative effect on interpersonal interactions. In Taiwan, agreement or disagreement on authoritarian leadership is not as important as in the U.S. or Turkey. We also found that the quality of communication experience was a significant mediating mechanism between the leader–follower agreement and follower performance in all three countries.

### 1. Introduction

Parallel to the rise of authoritarianism throughout the world (Berberoglu, 2020), an increasing amount of research has concentrated on the dark side of leadership in recent years (Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, & Lester, 2018). Most of these studies have focused on authoritarian leadership (AL) (Schaubroeck, Shen, & Chong, 2017), which is defined as a leadership style that highlights asserting authority and control over followers while demanding unquestioned obedience (Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, & Farh, 2004; Farh & Cheng, 2000). AL is especially prevalent in Asian, Latin American, or Middle Eastern contexts that are characterized by a large power distance. While this leadership style is suggested to be controversial in countries characterized as WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) (Hiller, Sin, Ponnopalli, & Ozgen, 2019), such leaders do exist, and maintain their positions in these countries. As such, the dark side of leadership has been of interest to many researchers in Western contexts, as well.

There are a number of labels that describe an array of negative leadership behaviors, from abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) to despotic leadership (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008), and petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1997) to destructive leadership (Einarsen, Aasland, &

Skogstad, 2007). The idea behind these leadership forms is the notion of social control, where the leader shows his/her dominance over followers; the followers, in return, stay submissive and obedient to the authority figures (Li, Chen, Zhang, & Luo, in press). Yet, AL as a well-established leadership style/construct represents a more formal way of controlling employees and “is rooted in leaders’ legitimate power” (Li et al., in press, p. 4). While other forms of negative leadership mostly rely on informal control where leaders without legitimate status influence followers through personal coercion, authoritarian leaders obtain their power from the organizational hierarchy to assure obedience. As such, authoritarian leaders, via behaviors related more strongly to the chain of command and line of directions, pressure their employees to follow the rules. In spite of a considerable amount of research on the negative consequences of AL, it is not clear whether and when followers are receptive and respond willingly to these leaders and then perform well, in return. To address this issue, we offer the self-other (i.e., leader–follower) agreement as an explanation which is defined as the level of congruence between leaders’ and their followers’ evaluations of specific leader behaviors (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; 1997).

It is important to study the level of agreement between leaders and followers in the context of AL, because this leadership style entails social

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control and a power-oriented interactional approach (Zhang, Huai, & Xie, 2015), and hence, there may be more instances where followers see their leaders different than how leaders see themselves. In other words, controlling and threatening behaviors displayed by authoritarian leaders tend to result in dominance over employees and one-way communication in interactions which may not be appreciated by employees (Graham, Dust, & Ziegert, 2017). In these cases, feelings of comfort, responsiveness and overall dyadic interactional quality may suffer (Graham, Mawritz, Dust, Greenbaum, & Ziegert, 2019). Therefore, we aim to tackle following questions in this paper: If followers and leaders provide similar ratings on authoritarian leader behaviors, does this improve the quality of their communication and the performance of the followers? Or, if they are incongruent or dissimilar in their ratings of AL, do they communicate poorly, resulting in low follower performance?

In order to enhance our understanding of AL, we delve into three issues: First, self-other agreement literature argues that leaders who rate themselves similar to their followers are self-aware leaders who are better able to manage their work attitudes and behaviors; these leaders can recognize their followers' needs and emotions, and respond accordingly (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; 1997; Berson & Sosik, 2007; Fleener, Smither, Atwater, Braddy, & Sturm, 2010; Sosik, 2001). That is, leader and follower ratings that are in-agreement indicate mutual understanding, empathy, and kindness. A lack of agreement between leaders and followers, on the other hand, implies that partners are more likely to clash and experience less interpersonal reciprocity, creating increased feelings of frustration, irritation, and annoyance (Graham et al., 2017; 2019; Kiesler, 1996; Sosik, 2001). Despite the potentially significant consequences of authoritarianism on dyadic communication, previous studies mostly investigated the leader–follower agreement on only positive leadership styles (e.g., transformational or empowering leadership, or LMX) (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Coglisier, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009; Loignon, Gooty, Rogelberg, & Lucianetti, 2019). Indeed, it is imperative to study the level of agreement in the context of AL because authoritarian leaders mostly build a domination–submission hierarchical relationship with subordinates. Standing above and at a distance, they engage in one-way, downward communication with subordinates (Zhang, Huai, & Xie, 2015). Yet, followers may not see things the same way as their leaders and may not be receptive to these leaders' controlling styles (Graham, Dust, & Ziegert, 2017). Therefore, this hierarchical relationship may harm “affect, responsiveness and equivalence in their social interactions” (Eckert, Ekelund, Gentry, & Dawson, 2010, p. 265). To this end, our primary goal in this paper is to contribute to the self-other agreement literature by studying a negative leadership style, namely AL.

Second, previous research has highlighted national culture as one contextual variable that may influence the self-other agreement on leadership (Atwater, Waldman, Ostroff, Robie, & Johnson, 2005; Atwater, Wang, Smither, & Fleener, 2009). These studies found that leader–follower agreement was not very important in Europe, whereas both self and others' ratings on leadership were significant predictors of many job outcomes in the U.S. It is especially crucial to look into the effects of agreement on AL, whose effects may be controversial in various cultures. In high power distant cultures (e.g., Turkey, Taiwan), leaders are distanced from lower levels, and subordinates are more receptive to authoritarianism. In low power distant cultures (e.g., the U.S.), employees are less receptive to authoritarian practices because they are accustomed to egalitarian relationships in the workplace. Yet, we do not know whether the premise about the importance of agreement in the U.S. is also valid on negative leadership, or how the similarity between leaders and followers in ratings of AL influences follower outcomes in high power distant contexts. To speak to recent calls in the literature (Atwater et al., 2005, 2009), we examine the effects of the leader–follower agreement on AL across three countries with different management philosophies, namely *Taiwan*, *Turkey*, and *the U.S.*

Third, although the direct effects of negative leadership styles on job

outcomes are well-established (Chan, Huang, Snape, & Lam, 2013; Wu, Huang, Li, & Liu, 2012), how AL influences follower outcomes is an important question. Recent research calls for studying the processes and the mechanisms linking AL to employee outcomes (Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh & Cheng, 2014; Cheng et al., 2004; Schaubroeck et al., 2017). As a culturally relevant phenomenon to leadership and one of the most pertinent consequence of leader–follower agreement (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006), we examine the degree of the *quality of communication experience (QCE)* with the leader (Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010) as a mediating mechanism in the current study. Although previous research acknowledged the relationship between leadership and communication (Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997), it is surprising that the role of leader–subordinate communication in relationship building has often been implicitly assumed or overlooked altogether in the leadership literature (Bligh & Kohles, 2014; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Communication with a leader may be especially problematic for followers who have perceptions that are incongruent with their leaders (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Partners tend to respond to each other well when they have similar ratings of leadership, whereas asymmetry in their evaluations creates psychological distance, which impairs effective communication and mutual understanding (Boyd & Taylor, 1998). Hence, it is an important contribution to study how leader–follower agreement on AL influences subordinates' perceptions of QCE with the leader, which in turn, predicts follower in-role and extra-role performance.

While studying the effects of agreement on follower outcomes in three different cultural settings, we rely on Atwater and Yammarino's (1992, 1997) self-other agreement model which refers to the level of agreement between leader's and other's (i.e., follower's) evaluations of leader behaviors. This model argues that leaders want to achieve congruence between their own assessments and their followers', and consequently, try to minimize possible discrepancies to improve their effectiveness (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; 1997; Wohlers, Hall, & London, 1993). This rationale underlying self-other agreement originates from the adaptive self-regulation (Sosik, Potosky, & Jung, 2002; Tsui & Ashford, 1994) and control theories (Carver & Scheier, 1998) which claim that individuals continuously match their behaviors to some standards and goals. Therefore, the agreement between leaders' and others' ratings is commonly used to operationalize self-awareness in the leadership literature (Atwater et al., 2005; Berson & Sosik, 2007; Sosik, 2001). Following this rationale, one could predict that when authoritarian leaders have AL ratings congruent with those of their followers, the flow of socio-emotional resources in leader–follower interactions would be much easier. Employees would feel comfortable communicating with their leaders, because the disparity as well as the psychological distance between the dyadic members is small (Vidyarthi, Anand, & Liden, 2014). However, this may be the case only in Western contexts, where there is bidirectional communication, and fewer discrepancies between leaders and followers (Atwater et al., 2005). It is questionable to assume that such an agreement leads to positive outcomes in other contexts, where the relationships are more formal, impersonal, and superiority-based. Hence, the universality of this claim (i.e., the positive effects of congruence) across cultures with different values is not clear and needs investigation.

The present study contributes to the literature on leadership in three ways: First, by examining the self-other-agreement on the dark side of leadership (i.e., AL), it provides a more comprehensive and integrative approach in understanding this leadership style. Second, it investigates leader–follower congruence across different national cultures and advances our understanding of leader awareness in two high power distant countries (i.e., Taiwan and Turkey) and in one low power distant country (i.e., the U.S.). Third, it offers QCE as a mediating mechanism through which AL congruence influences subordinate in-role and extra-role performance. In doing so, we respond to recent calls in the leadership field for a better understanding of mechanisms by which leadership fosters or harms follower performance (Chan et al., 2013). Fig. 1

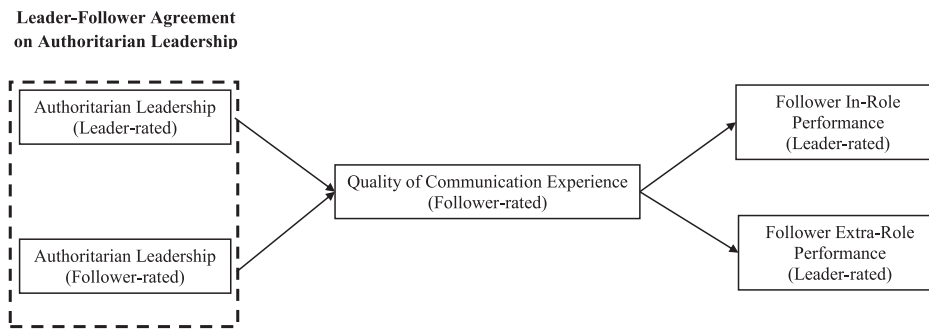


Fig. 1. Proposed framework across Turkey, Taiwan, and the U.S.

depicts our proposed model.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses development

### 2.1. Authoritarian leadership, the leader–follower agreement, and quality of communication experience

Authoritarian leadership is a leadership style that includes exercising discipline, authority, and control over followers (Aycan, 2006; Cheng et al., 2004; Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, & Lester, 2018). Authoritarian leaders exert power on their followers, and expect absolute conformity. Followers who encounter mistreatment from such leaders (e.g., rudeness, disrespect, and insensitivity) realize that being submissive and obedient in their interactions are the expected behaviors. Because the focus of AL is to gain control, these leaders are closed to communication and more likely to use a top-down approach. While studying the consequences of agreement between leaders and followers on this dark side of leadership, we rely on Atwater and Yammarino's (1992,1997) categories of self-other agreement model and propose the QCE with the leader as a subsequent relational process (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

First of all, QCE refers to individuals' perceptions about the exchange process with the other partner including the cognitive, behavioral, and affective elements (Liu et al., 2010). It denotes the exchange of ideas and emotions, as well as coordination and reciprocity between parties. Dyadic members who have a high QCE respond to each other's questions and concerns, and report positive feelings such as ease and pleasantness when interacting. A failure to respond to each other's offers and suggestions, a lack of empathy, and feelings of discomfort during interactions may indicate unfulfilled expectations in the relationship (Liu et al., 2010).

Second, self-other agreement model (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; 1997) asserts that leaders whose self-ratings are higher than their subordinates' are *overestimators* and the ones whose ratings are lower than those of their followers' are *underestimators*. Leaders whose self-assessments are high and similar to their followers' ratings are *in-agreement/high* leaders and the ones whose self-evaluations are low and similar to their subordinates' ratings are *in-agreement/low* leaders.

In general, in-agreement categories (both high and low) indicate relatively greater leader awareness than the categories of disagreement (overestimators and underestimators) (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; 1997; Fleenor, Smither, Atwater, Braddy, & Sturm, 2010; Sosik, 2001). Accordingly, when leaders and followers have similar perceptions, both parties were found to report higher mutual knowledge and understanding, openness, spontaneity, and interpersonal synchrony rather than feelings of tension, friction or frustration (Graham et al., 2017; 2019). Yet, asymmetry in partners' perceptions was found to create psychological distance, which results in defensive behavior by followers reducing self-disclosure and quality of communication (Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Parent-Rochelleau, Bentein, & Simard, 2020; Sosik, 2001). Incompatible dyads are more likely to clash and experience conflict, frustration, and irritation than like-minded partners who get along well

(Graham et al., 2017; 2019). In other words, communication in a dyad may suffer when followers have incongruent perceptions with those of their leaders (Uhl-Bien, 2006). However, these previous studies of self-other agreement have mostly explored positive leadership styles (e.g., transformational or empowering leadership) whose communicative implications are more straightforward. Not much is known about the consequences of agreement in the context of dark leadership behaviors which tend to vary across cultures with different levels of power distance (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004). Hence, it is an important contribution to study how the leader–follower agreement on AL influences subordinates' perceptions of the QCE with their leaders in different cultural contexts.

### 2.2. The role of national culture

We deliberately chose Taiwan, Turkey, and the U.S. as the cultural contexts of our study. We claim that the ranking of agreement categories (for their effects on QCE) will be similar in Taiwan and Turkey in contrast to the U.S. Taiwan and Turkey are similar to each other in terms of high authority and power distance (with respective power distance scores of 58 and 66), while the U.S. is low in hierarchy (with a power distance score of 40) (Hofstede, 2001). In low power distance countries like the U.S., having an accurate sense of 'self' is important (Atwater et al., 2005). The right to assert one's individuality and egalitarianism are widespread beliefs in these cultural settings. This brings about a business context where employees are able to communicate their suggestions to managers on a regular basis, and feel comfortable sharing ideas and participating in decisions. In such contexts, decision making generally involves considering followers' input as well as seeking information and feedback from them. Consequently, leaders have a greater likelihood of knowing their followers' perceptions, expectations, and opinions with some degree of accuracy (i.e., self-awareness) because open communication is encouraged in these contexts (Tsui & Ashford, 1994).

Supporting the above-mentioned contentions, Atwater et al. (2005) found that the self-other agreement was a significant predictor of leader effectiveness in the U.S., where managers are more likely to know how others rate their leadership attributes. In such egalitarian contexts, followers typically express their opinions about leaders' behaviors, and leaders in return are expected to align their behaviors accordingly. However, these findings in the U.S. are mostly based on positive leadership behaviors. Are these results also valid for negative leadership behaviors? One can argue that since AL represents dark leadership behaviors, when both parties report higher levels of authoritarianism, the QCE would suffer. Yet, we don't expect dyadic communication to deteriorate when dyadic members perceive the leader as authoritarian, as explained below.

First of all, as mentioned before, in low power distance contexts like the U.S., although authoritarian leaders display dominating behaviors, they are not as harsh (with an average score of 2) as leaders in the Eastern part of the world (with an average score of 3.10) (Harms et al.

2018). Hence, followers can still question their leader's behaviors and can express their discomfort with authoritarian leaders in the U.S. Second, in a business context where the self-other agreement is one of the main goals of training programs and HR policies, employees are not hesitant to share negative feedback with their leaders. This is the case in the U.S., where managers take this opportunity to improve themselves (Atwater, Brett, & Charles, 2007). Therefore, we expect the highest level of communication in the U.S. to occur when both parties are in-agreement. When leaders are self-aware (both in in-agreement/high and in-agreement/low conditions), we expect followers to perceive them as more candid, open, and responsive during communication because these leaders are concerned with improving employees' perceptions of themselves.

However, as compared to agreement categories, in over- and underestimation conditions, the perceived QCE will be impaired because both conditions imply misalignment and a lack of self-awareness in this egalitarian and feedback-oriented culture. We also suggest that followers will experience higher quality communication with overestimators than with underestimators. This is because, followers do not perceive their leaders to be exhibiting authoritarian behaviors in the overestimation condition, while they perceive them as more controlling and dominating in the underestimation condition. Thus, we propose that:

**Hypothesis 1. a:** *In the U.S., QCE will be highest for subordinates of in-agreement/low authoritarian leaders, second for in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders, third for overestimators, and lowest for underestimators.*

In high power distance cultures, however, people who are low in the hierarchy show respect and deference to upper levels, and participate less in the decision-making process. There are more constraints on how different levels interact and, therefore, feedback seeking and providing are unlikely to occur (Atwater et al., 2009). Gathering information from the lower levels is seen as a sign of weakness. Because direct communication is less valued and face-saving is more important in these contexts, there is no rapport between leaders and followers (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004). Followers are less willing to speak up and express themselves, resulting in the employee silence behavior (Duan, Bao, Huang, & Brinsfield, 2018). Due to a strong top-down hierarchical orientation in these settings (Tsui & Ashford, 1994), leaders are more likely to care about the perceptions of their superiors or peers than those of their subordinates (Atwater et al., 2009).

In Turkey and Taiwan, because of a high power distance between upper and lower levels of the hierarchy, those higher in the hierarchy are distanced from lower ones (Mansur, Sobral, & Goldszmidt, 2017; Wang, Mao, Wu, & Liu, 2012). Authoritarian leaders in these contexts are less likely to provide information or involve employees in decisions and more likely to use one-way communication (Chan, 2014; Harms et al., 2018). Even in these cultural contexts, the effects of AL have been shown, generally, to be negative. Because leaders tend to be distant from their followers and often hold negative opinions of their subordinates, they have lower levels of leader-member exchange and poorer communication with their subordinates, and exhibit higher levels of emotion suppression (Chiang, Chen, Liu, Akutsu, & Wang, in press; Zhang et al., 2015). As they are unlikely to listen, these leaders are not watchful of their dominant and oppressive styles, which may further diminish their QCE with their subordinates. Therefore, we expect to see problems and conflicts in dyadic communication when subordinates report high levels of leader authoritarianism (i.e., underestimator and in agreement/high conditions) in Turkey and Taiwan. We argue that when subordinates see their leaders as authoritarian, and although they see this as acceptable in these high power distance contexts, in a communication setting they will feel uncomfortable interacting with them and be reluctant to raise concerns or suggestions. This kind of superior–inferior interaction will impede candid communication between the two parties. Therefore, we posit that followers will report the lowest QCE in in-agreement/high and the second lowest QCE in the

underestimation condition.

However, we expect to see relatively higher levels of QCE in in-agreement/low and overestimation conditions because followers do not see their leaders as restrictive and authoritarian in these categories. Indeed, Atwater et al. (2005) found that, in countries other than the U.S., subordinate ratings are more important than leader ratings in predicting leadership effectiveness. Accordingly, it is not the perceptions of leaders, but those of followers that matter in the non-U.S. contexts. Based on this cross-cultural finding, we predict that even employees of overestimators will report relatively higher levels of QCE with their leaders since they are less likely to perceive their leaders as controlling and authoritarian in this overestimation condition. Hence, we expect to see the highest quality of communication in in-agreement/low condition and the second highest in overestimation condition where followers perceive their leaders as non-authoritarian, which results in easiness, comfort, and responsiveness in the dyadic communication:

**Hypothesis 1. b:** *In Turkey and Taiwan, the QCE will be highest for subordinates of in-agreement/low authoritarian leaders, second for overestimators, third for underestimators, and lowest for in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders.*

### 2.3. The leader–follower agreement on authoritarian leadership and performance: The mediating role of quality of communication experience

Our rationale to explain how the QCE mediates the relationship between the leader–follower agreement and follower performance is based on the idea that relationships are inherently communicative (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Employees who experience openness, trust, and comfort in communications with their leaders are likely to understand tasks and goals clearly, raise questions or provide suggestions, and get quick answers to their questions, all of which contribute to enhanced performance. Thus, the QCE serves as an important means through which leaders can support their employees and encourage positive employee reciprocation, such as enhanced in-role and extra-role performance (Bakar & McCann, 2016).

First, the QCE with the leader is expected to enhance follower in-role performance, which is defined as the completion of tasks and work role required by employees (Williams & Anderson, 1991). When the QCE is high, leaders are more likely to share information with followers about tasks and provide them with feedback (Bakar, Dilbeck, & McCroskey, 2010; Johansson et al., 2014). This clear and open communication with the leader help subordinates effectively and efficiently perform tasks and allows them to accurately evaluate their performance.

Second, a high QCE with the leader is expected to boost extra-role behaviors, which are defined as unwritten discretionary behaviors contributing to the effective functioning of the organization (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Leaders who establish high-quality interactions with followers are likely to praise followers for their efforts, encourage their professional development, and express empathy and sensitivity to their needs (Bakar et al., 2010; Sager, 2008), which in line with the social exchange perspective, cause followers to go the extra mile. Therefore, we expect the QCE to provide a strong foundation for positive employee reciprocation in the form of in-role and extra-role performance. Given that we have hypothesized the effects of congruence on the QCE and established positive relationships between the QCE and employee outcomes, we expect the QCE to carry these agreement effects to follower in-role and extra-role performance. Thus, regardless of national culture, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 2:** *The QCE will mediate the relationship between the leader–follower agreement and disagreement on AL and in-role and extra-role performance.*



### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample and procedure

Taiwanese data were collected from 675 full-time employees and 225 leaders from 383 organizations in sectors such as software development, manufacturing, construction, and finance. Participants were full-time employees enrolled in the Executive MBA and continuous education programs at a public university. Respondents were given the survey packages in prepaid postage envelopes to assure confidentiality. The overall response rate was 90%. Of the participants, 63% are female. The average age of the employees is 34.84 (SD = 8.33). The average tenure with the company and the leader is 6.39 (SD = 6.33) and 4.03 years (SD = 4.45), respectively. Seventy-two percent of employees have at least a bachelor's degree. The average age of the leaders is 41.7 years (SD = 8.48). Fifty-seven percent of them are male, and the average company tenure is 11 years (SD = 7.64).

Turkish data were collected from 409 employees and 72 leaders from 24 organizations operating in a diverse set of industries including construction, health, finance, and tourism. We contacted managers at the organizations and they provided us with the names of the employees who'd agreed to participate. Employees completed the surveys in their offices and returned them to research assistants. The overall response rate was 74.36%. Of the participants, 40% are female. The average age of the employees is 35 (SD = 8.79). The average tenure with the company and the leader is 7.06 (SD = 7.85) and 4.25 years (SD = 4.77), respectively. Eighty-seven percent of employees have at least a bachelor's degree. Of the leaders, 81% are male, the average age is 45.6 (SD = 7.12), and the average company tenure is 12.3 years (SD = 10.5).

The U.S. sample included 294 full-time employees who had enrolled in an Executive MBA program from a southern university as well as their leaders. Participants were from 150 organizations operating in sectors such as healthcare, retail, food, manufacturing, insurance, software development, and IT. The respondents were given the surveys in prepaid postage envelopes to assure confidentiality. Of the participants, 48% are female. The average age of the employees is 32 years (SD = 14.17). The average tenure with the organization and the leaders is 4.5 (SD = 6.00) and 3.5 years (SD = 5.00), respectively. Fifty-three percent of the employees have at least a bachelor's degree. The average age of the leaders is 44.5 years (SD = 12.3). Sixty-three percent of them are male, and the average company tenure is 10.4 years (SD = 8.8).

#### 3.2. Measures

We used the back-translation procedure to translate the English scale into Chinese and Turkish in the surveys. Native speakers of Turkish and Taiwanese checked the scales for wording, accuracy, and clarity of items. All items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree") unless otherwise noted.

##### 3.2.1. Authoritarian leadership rated by leaders and followers

AL was measured with six-item scale from Scandura (2017), which had been used in previous research (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, & Hu, 2020; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, Gumusluoglu, & Scandura, 2020). Five of the items of this measure were exactly the same as Chan et al.'s (2013) measure. Only one of the items ("makes decisions on my behalf") differed slightly from Chan et al.'s decision-making items. Leaders and followers answered the same six items but the referent and personal pronouns were changed in the two forms. Sample items for AL are "I (S/he) scold(s) him/her (me) when s/he (I) can't accomplish tasks," and "I (s/he) always behave(s) in a commanding fashion in front of employees."

##### 3.2.2. Quality of communication experience as rated by followers

QCE with the leader was measured by fifteen items from Liu, Chua, and Stahl's scale (2010). Followers evaluated the QCE with their leaders

on the three dimensions of communication, namely cognitive (clarity), behavioral (responsiveness), and affective (comfort). Sample items are "When he/she raises questions or concerns, I would try to address them immediately," and "I feel comfortable interacting with him/her."

##### 3.2.3. In-role performance of the subordinates as rated by leaders

Immediate leaders evaluated the in-role performance of their employees by three items from Wang and Takeuchi (2007) and Podsakoff and Mackenzie (1989). The items are "He/she meets all of my performance expectations," "He/she always completes the duties assigned to him/her," and "He/she fulfills all responsibilities required."

##### 3.2.4. Extra-role performance of followers as rated by leaders

This was measured by Lee and Allen's (2002) 8-item scale and included behaviors directed to individuals. Leaders rated the frequency (1 = never, 5 = always) with which each of their followers performed these behaviors. Sample items are "Adjusts his/her work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off," and "Shows genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations."

##### 3.2.5. Control variables

Employees' age, education, and tenure with the leader and the company were used as control variables, as they are known to correlate with the independent and dependent variables in our model. Previous research has shown that employees with longer tenure in an organization are better performers (Ng & Feldman, 2010a) and older employees tend to have more favorable attitudes toward their tasks, leaders, and organizations (Ng & Feldman, 2010b). Furthermore, we controlled for tenure with the leader to account for differences in the communication and relationship quality (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), and for education to account for possible differences across our three cultural groups (Rossberger & Krause, 2015). However, none of our control variables (except for age, which was correlated with extra-role performance) show significant correlations with the study variables (Table 1). In addition, we performed all the analyses both with and without control variables as suggested by Bernerth and Aguinis (2016). These analyses reveal identical results. Yet, to maximize the statistical power of our analyses and provide the most reliable findings, we report the results with control variables.

## 4. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables. We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis for each country to examine the construct validity of the variables. We examined a five-factor model (leader- and follower-rated AL, QCE, and leader-rated in-role and extra-role performance) for each sample. The overall model fit was acceptable across samples (Taiwan:  $[\chi^2_{(655)} = 1887.39, p < .01; \chi^2 / df = 2.87; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.91]$ ; Turkey:  $[\chi^2_{(655)} = 1895.01, p < .01; \chi^2 / df = 2.89; RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.88]$ ; the U.S.:  $[\chi^2_{(655)} = 1214.81, p < .01; \chi^2 / df = 1.85; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.90]$ ). All items loaded significantly on their respective factors (with the lowest t-value being 2.71 for Taiwan, 3.76 for Turkey, and 2.05 for the U.S.). None of the confidence intervals included the value of 1, and the variance extracted for each construct was greater than its squared correlations with other constructs, providing support for the convergent and discriminant validity of our variables.

Furthermore, we tested for measurement invariance across countries. Our multi-group CFA testing reveals a full configural invariance ( $\chi^2_{(1893)} = 4504.75, p < .01; \chi^2 / df = 2.38; RMSEA = 0.03; CFI = 0.91$ ), indicating that the five-factor model holds well across the three samples. We also employed the approximate (Bayesian) measurement invariance test (Cieciuch, Davidov, Schmidt, Algesheimer, & Schwartz, 2014; Kim, Cao, Wang, & Nguyen, 2017). Accordingly, model fit is assessed based on the posterior predictive probability (PPP) value and the confidence

**Table 1**  
Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlations for study variables.

Taiwan		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Age	34.84	8.31	–								
2	Education	2.76	0.90	–0.18*	–							
3	Tw/L	48.36	53.49	0.48**	–0.21*	–						
4	Tw/C	76.72	75.94	0.64**	–0.25**	0.60**	–					
5	L-AL	2.40	0.42	–0.03	–0.03	–0.10**	–0.05	(0.71)				
6	F-AL	2.44	0.26	0.10*	–0.06	–0.01	0.06	0.17**	(0.85)			
7	QCE	3.79	0.34	–0.09*	–0.01	0.04	–0.07	–0.07	–0.30**	(0.90)		
8	IRP	4.01	0.12	0.01	0.01	0.10**	0.09*	–0.10**	–0.11**	0.12**	(0.83)	
9	ERP	3.91	0.66	–0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02	–0.02	–0.08*	0.19**	0.54**	(0.85)
<b>TURKEY</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
1	Age	34.43	8.69	–								
2	Education	2.96	0.80	–0.13*	–							
3	Tw/L	51.01	57.26	0.48**	0.48**	–						
4	Tw/C	84.68	94.25	0.66**	0.66**	0.58**	–					
5	L-AL	2.42	0.78	0.02	–0.04	0.18**	0.11*	(0.65)				
6	F-AL	2.58	0.59	0.20**	–0.09	0.09	0.19**	0.23**	(0.78)			
7	QCE	3.86	0.19	–0.14**	0.07	–0.07	–0.25**	–0.18**	–0.41**	(0.93)		
8	IRP	3.93	0.18	–0.15**	0.17*	–0.16**	–0.16**	–0.22**	–0.04	0.10*	(0.86)	
9	ERP	3.84	0.19	0.01	0.19*	0.01	–0.02	–0.04	–0.11*	0.12*	0.48**	(0.88)
<b>U.S.</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
1	Age	31.74	14.17	–								
2	Education	2.75	1.03	0.09	–							
3	Tw/L	42.66	63.26	0.48**	0.09	–						
4	Tw/C	54.66	73.15	0.50**	0.10	0.86**	–					
5	L-AL	2.83	0.37	–0.16**	0.01	–0.06	–0.13*	(0.83)				
6	F-AL	2.74	0.38	–0.12*	–0.02	–0.01	–0.08	0.50**	(0.85)			
7	QCE	4.18	0.35	–0.01	–0.04	–0.03	–0.02	–0.07	–0.04	(0.89)		
8	IRP	4.29	0.08	0.10	–0.01	0.05	0.03	–0.03	–0.08	0.36**	(0.88)	
9	ERP	4.06	0.17	0.13*	–0.03	0.09	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.34**	0.50**	(0.86)

Note. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ . Reliabilities are reported in parentheses. N = 675 for Taiwan, 409 for Turkey and 294 for the U.S. Age: Age of the subordinate (in years), Tw/L: Tenure with the leader (in months), Tw/C: Tenure with the company (in months), L-AL: Leader-rated Authoritarianism, F-AL: Follower-rated Authoritarianism, QCE: Quality of Communication Experience with the Leader, IRP: Leader-rated In-Role Performance, ERP: Leader-rated Extra-Role Performance.

interval (CI) to evaluate the difference between the replicated and observed chi-square values. The Bayesian model is considered to fit the data well when the PPP is higher than zero (not significant), and the CI contains zero (Muthén & Asparouhov, 2013). We defined the mean of differences in loadings and intercepts across countries as zero, and the variance of these differences as 0.01 (Cieciuch et al., 2014; Van de Schoot et al., 2013). For four factors, except the QCE, the PPP was not significant, and 95% CI for the difference between chi-square values contained zero, meaning that the approximate scalar invariance models were acceptable. For the QCE, we increased the variance 0.02, as suggested by Cieciuch et al. (2014). With this adjustment, all five approximate scalar invariance models were acceptable (for leader rated AL: PPP = .16, 95% CI = [–0.59]–[0.07]; for follower rated AL: PPP = .13, 95% CI = [–0.65]–[0.18]; for QCE: PPP = .08, 95% CI = [–0.38]–[0.05]; for in-role performance: PPP = .17, 95% CI = [–0.34]–[0.04]; and for extra-role performance: PPP = .14, 95% CI = [–0.16]–[0.23]).

To examine the impact of common method variance in our study (CMV), we conducted CFA with and without a common latent factor (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Although the constrained model shows that adding the common latent factor has some impact on the factor loadings of the measured items, the changes in factor loadings were small (ranged from 0.02 to 0.19 in Taiwan; from 0.01 to 0.21 in Turkey; and from 0.01 to 0.18 in the U.S [except for QCE]). We corrected the factor loadings of QCE for the U.S. sample and used adjusted composite scores. The overall fit of the models with and without the common latent factor were almost identical, suggesting that CMV is not a major threat in our study.

4.1. Test of hypotheses 1a and 1b

We tested our Hypotheses 1a and 1b by using polynomial regression and surface response analyses as suggested by Edwards (2002). Turkish

and Taiwanese data are comprised of multiple followers per leader, which creates a nested structure. To deal with this ‘nestedness’ in our Turkish and Taiwanese samples, we employed cross-level polynomial regressions (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005) by using HLM to compute multi-level effects. The QCE was regressed on five polynomial terms, which are leader ratings on AL (X), follower ratings on AL (Y), square of leader ratings (X<sup>2</sup>), interaction between leader and follower ratings (XxY), and the square of follower ratings (Y<sup>2</sup>). All predictor variables were scale-centered. In Fig. 2, the congruence line (X = Y) is from the rear corner (where X = Y = 2) to the front corner (where X = Y = –2), whereas the incongruence line is from the left corner (where X = –2 and Y = 2) to the right corner (where X = 2 and Y = –2).

As one can follow in Table 2, the regression equations explained a significant amount of variance in the QCE in all countries (all the F and R<sup>2</sup> values were significant), which justified our interpretation of the test values and response surface graphs. In line with Hypothesis 1a, we found that the QCE was at the highest level for subordinates of in-agreement/low leaders, and at the second highest level for in-agreement/high leaders (a<sub>1</sub> = –0.05, t = –1.97, p < .05) in the U.S. However, followers of overestimators and underestimators reported similar levels of QCE (a<sub>3</sub> = 0.02, t = 0.35, p > .05), which were the lowest ratings among all combinations. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1a was partially supported. Furthermore, the curvatures along congruence and incongruence lines were significant (a<sub>2</sub> = 0.11, t = 3.02, p < .01, a<sub>4</sub> = –0.25, t = –3.43, p < .01). Along the incongruence line QCE was an inverted U-shape, such that QCE was lowest for a severe underestimator and started to increase as the underestimation became less severe; it then decreased significantly as overestimation increased (Fig. 2). Furthermore, along the U-shaped congruence line, QCE was highest for the in-agreement/low condition, started to decrease toward midpoint, and then increased again as the leader–follower agreement increased. That is, the level of QCE was high and similar for in-agreement/high and in-agreement/low

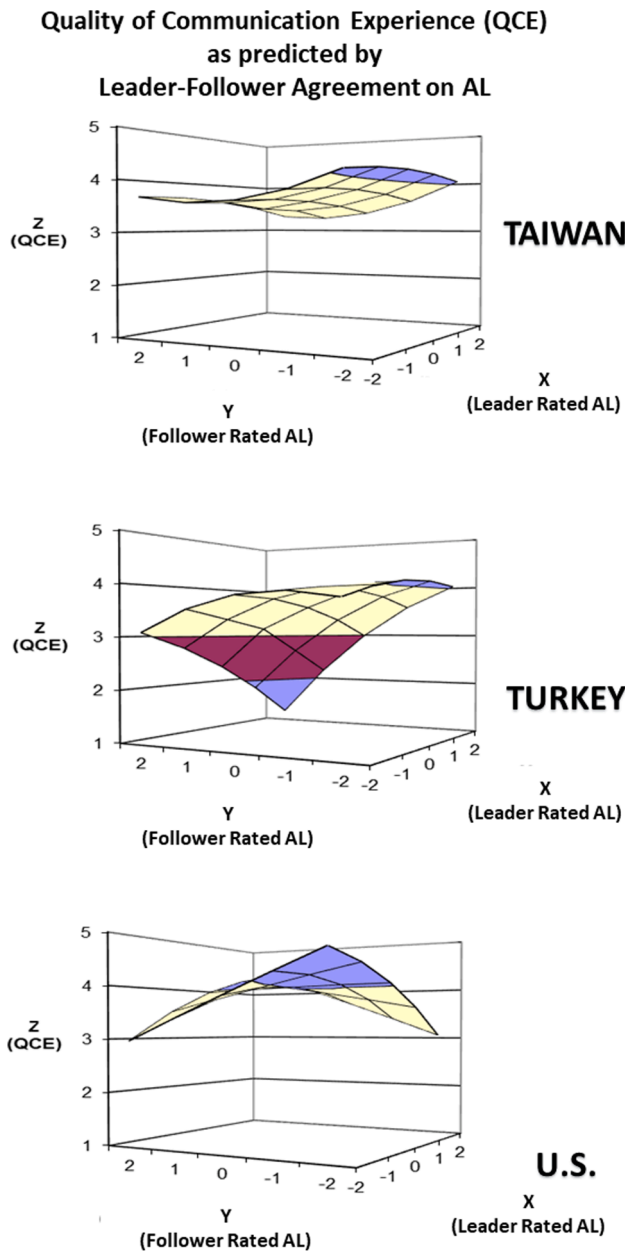


Fig. 2. Response surface analysis results.

AL conditions and showed a sharp decrease for overestimation and underestimation conditions.

In Taiwan, the slopes along the congruence and incongruence lines ( $a_1 = -0.19, t = -3.45, p < .01$  and  $a_3 = 0.10, t = 1.98, p < .05$ ) were significant, but not the curvatures. Supporting Hypothesis 1b for Taiwan, we found QCE to be highest for subordinates of in-agreement/low authoritarian leaders, second for those of overestimators, third for those of underestimators, and lowest for those of in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders (Fig. 2). In Turkey, however, the slopes along the congruence and incongruence lines ( $a_1 = -0.42, t = -5.09, p < .01$  and  $a_3 = 0.24, t = 2.91, p < .01$ ), as well as the curvature along the congruence line ( $a_2 = -0.22, t = -3.88, p < .01$ ), were/was significant. Response surface graphs show that QCE was at the highest level for overestimators, the second highest level for in-agreement/low leaders, the third highest level for underestimators, and the lowest level for in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders in Turkey (Fig. 2). Interestingly, along the congruence line, the level of QCE shows a very sharp decrease after the midpoint for the followers of in-agreement/high leaders,

Table 2

Results of cross-level polynomial regression analyses.

Variables	Taiwan		Turkey		U.S.	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Constant	3.65**	126.39	3.57**	88.54	4.03**	117.84
Age	-0.01	-1.01	0.01	0.80	-0.01	-1.28
Education	-0.01	-0.24	0.03	0.38	-0.01	-0.42
Tw/C	0.00	-1.57	-0.01	-2.78	0.00	0.07
Tw/L	0.01	2.55	0.01	0.89	0.00	-0.32
L-AL (X)	-0.05	-1.01	-0.09**	-2.84	-0.01	-0.11
F-AL (Y)	-0.17**	-4.35	-0.33**	-8.75	-0.03	-0.87
X <sup>2</sup>	-0.02	-0.95	-0.01	-0.98	-0.06	-1.71
X × Y	-0.02	-0.56	-0.12*	-2.37	0.18**	4.12
Y <sup>2</sup>	0.07**	3.66	-0.09**	-2.87	-0.01	-0.87
F	16.24**		23.46**		5.18**	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.11		0.23		0.08	
Adj.R <sup>2</sup>	0.10		0.22		0.07	
p10	0.01		0.02		0.01	
p11	0.96		1.04		0.99	
a <sub>1</sub> Slope along X = Y	0.19**	-3.45	2**	-5.09	-0.05*	-1.97
a <sub>2</sub> Curvature along X = Y	0.02	0.43	-0.22**	-3.88	0.11**	3.02
a <sub>3</sub> Slope along X = -Y	0.10*	1.98	0.24**	2.91	0.02	0.35
a <sub>4</sub> Curvature along X = -Y	0.06	1.21	0.02	0.21	-0.25**	-3.43

Note. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Age: Age of the subordinate (in years), Tw/L: Tenure with the leader (in months), Tw/C: Tenure with the company (in months), L-AL: Leader-rated Authoritarianism, F-AL: Follower-rated Authoritarianism, QCE: Quality of Communication Experience with the Leader.

although it is not so steep until the midpoint. Hence, we found partial support for Hypothesis 1b for Turkey.

Although we explained the results in terms of four agreement categories, it would be useful to look at the values of QCE on congruence and incongruence lines and assess the shape of the ridge as a non-linear surface.<sup>1</sup> According to Humberg, Nestler, and Back (2019), a response surface should meet four conditions to indicate a congruence effect. The first principal axis  $Y = p_{10} + p_{11}X$  should not significantly diverge from the line of congruence, thus  $p_{10}$  should not be significantly different from 0 (Condition 1), and  $p_{11}$  should not be significantly different from 1 (Condition 2). When  $p_{10}$  and  $p_{11}$  values for three countries were checked, results yielded that all values meet the condition 1 and 2 for all three samples (Table 2). Furthermore, the surface above the line of incongruence given by  $Z = b_0 + a_3X + a_4X^2$  should be in an inverted U-shape if the hypothesis proposes that the highest level of outcome will be obtained on the congruence line. In other words,  $a_4$  should be negative (Condition 3) and  $a_3$  should not be significantly different from 0 (Condition 4). In our study, we hypothesized that in the U.S., QCE will be the highest in in-agreement/low and the second highest in in-agreement/high conditions (H1a). Yet, in Turkey and Taiwan, we hypothesized that the QCE will be the highest for subordinates of in-agreement/low authoritarian leaders, second for overestimators, third for underestimators, and the lowest for in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders (H1b). When the inverted U-shape of congruence line was checked through  $a_3$  and  $a_4$ , the results reveal that it is significant for the U.S. sample but not significant for the Turkish and Taiwanese samples, supporting our hypotheses. Thus, it can be concluded that for the U.S. sample, QCE was at its highest level on the congruence line and on lower

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

**Table 3**  
Results of mediation analyses.

Taiwan	Dependent Variables			
	QCE	IRP	ERP	
Coefficient of the block variable	0.54**		0.11	–0.01
Coefficient of QCE ( $\gamma_{QCE}$ ) (mediator)	–	0.15**	0.15**	0.24**
Indirect effect of congruence on AL via QCE [95% bootstrapped confidence intervals]	–		0.09** [0.02 – 0.15]	0.13** [0.08 – 0.19]
<b>TURKEY</b>	<b>QCE</b>	<b>IRP</b>		<b>ERP</b>
Coefficient of the block variable	0.77**		–0.09	0.04
Coefficient of QCE ( $\gamma_{QCE}$ ) (mediator)	–	0.17*	0.17*	0.16*
Indirect effect of congruence on AL via QCE [95% bootstrapped confidence intervals]	–		0.13** [0.03 – 0.25]	0.10** [0.01 – 0.19]
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>QCE</b>	<b>IRP</b>		<b>ERP</b>
Coefficient of the block variable	0.20**		0.06	–0.15
Coefficient of QCE ( $\gamma_{QCE}$ ) (mediator)	–	0.54**	0.54**	0.45**
Indirect effect of congruence on AL via QCE [95% bootstrapped confidence intervals]	–		0.10** [0.01 – 0.34]	0.09* [0.01 – 0.32]

Note. Standardized coefficients are reported, \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .

AL: Authoritarianism, QCE: Quality of Communication Experience with the Leader, IRP: Leader-rated In-Role Performance, ERP: Leader-rated Extra-Role Performance

levels on the incongruence line, as proposed in H1a.<sup>2</sup>

4.2. Test of Hypothesis 2

To examine the mediating effect of QCE between the leader–follower agreement and subordinate performance (H2), we employed the block variable approach as suggested by Edwards and Cable (2009). Specifically, in order to obtain a single coefficient embodying the joint influence of the five polynomial terms (i.e., X, Y, X<sup>2</sup>, XxY, and Y<sup>2</sup>), we merged the five terms into a block variable, which was a weighted linear composite. We used the Conditional Process Analysis to evaluate the multi-level mediation model (Hayes, 2018) in the Taiwanese and Turkish samples. We used an online tool (Preacher & Selig, 2010) to assess the significance of cross-level moderated mediation. We estimated bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effects by bootstrapping 20,000 samples. The block variable approach does not alter the estimated coefficients and the total explained variance; it provides a better assessment of the direct and indirect effects of agreement in a mediation model (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

**Table 4**  
Summary of hypotheses and findings.

Hypothesis	Hypothesis description	Finding	Support for the hypothesis
H1a-The U.S.	LL > HH > Over > Under	The U.S.: LL > HH > Over = Under	Partial support
H1b- Taiwan & Turkey	LL > Over > Under > HH	Taiwan: LL > Over > Under > HH Turkey: Over > LL > Under > HH	Full support Partial support
H2 (All countries)	AL agreement → QCE → IRP & ERP	Taiwan: Full mediation for both IRP & ERP Turkey: Full mediation for both IRP & ERP The U.S.: Full mediation for both IRP & ERP	Full support Full support Full support

Note. HH: In-agreement/high, LL: In-agreement/low, Under: Underestimator, Over: Overestimator, IRP: Leader-rated In-Role Performance, ERP: Leader-rated Extra-Role Performance.

<sup>2</sup> We also conducted supplementary analyses to check the overall percentage of congruence in AL perceptions across three countries. We calculated the percentage of in-agreement/high (HH) and in-agreement/low (LL) categories in each country. HH and LL percentages were 6% and 10% in Taiwan, 11% and 8% in Turkey, and 27% and 19% in the U.S. We also computed the d-score of AL assessments of the leaders and the followers (Edwards, 1993). The smaller d-score implies more congruent assessment of AL. The percentage of dyads having a d-score less than 2 (as an indication of congruence), was 28% for Taiwan, 38% for Turkey and 48% for the U.S, which again illustrates that the percentage of congruence was higher in the U.S. as opposed to Taiwan and Turkey.

In the U.S., the coefficient of AL on the QCE was 0.20 ( $p < .01$ ) (Table 3). When QCE was in the equation, its influence on in-role performance was 0.54 ( $p < .01$ ), and the coefficient of AL on in-role performance was 0.06 ( $p > .05$ ). On the other hand, the influence of the QCE on extra-role performance was 0.45 ( $p < .01$ ), and the coefficient of AL on extra-role performance was –0.15 ( $p > .05$ ). Thus, the QCE fully mediated the effects of the AL agreement on both performance variables, fully supporting Hypothesis 2 for the U.S.

In Taiwan, the standardized path coefficient of the combined block variables on the QCE was 0.54 ( $p < .01$ ) (Table 3). When QCE was in the equation, its impact on in-role performance was 0.15 ( $p < .01$ ), and the coefficient AL on in-role performance was 0.11 ( $p > .01$ ). The effect of QCE on extra-role performance was 0.24 ( $p < .01$ ), and the coefficient of AL on extra-role performance was –0.01 ( $p > .05$ ). Thus, the QCE fully mediated the links from congruence on AL to in-role and extra-role performance, supporting Hypothesis 2 for Taiwan.

In Turkey, the path coefficient of the combined effect on QCE was 0.77 ( $p < .01$ ) for AL. When QCE was in the equation, its influence on in-role performance was 0.17 ( $p < .05$ ), and the coefficient of AL on in-role

performance was –0.09 ( $p > .05$ ). On the other hand, the effect of the QCE on extra-role performance was 0.16 ( $p < .05$ ), and the coefficient of AL on extra-role performance was 0.04 ( $p > .05$ ). These results yield that the QCE fully mediated the influence of congruence on AL on both types of performance, fully supporting Hypothesis 2 for Turkey. All of our hypotheses and findings are summarized in Table 4.

Finally, as correlations between the error terms of the mediation equation could have provided biases, we controlled for endogeneity to see that our mediated relationship follows the direction we proposed. To this end, following the procedures suggested by Meissner and Wulf



(2014), and Linuesa-Langreo, Ruiz-Palomino, and Elche-Hortelano (2018), we tested our mediation hypotheses using the two-stage least-square technique (2SLS). Accordingly, strong instruments should be exogenous and uncorrelated with the model's error term (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2014). It is suggested to include all available exogenous variables, such as age, education, and tenure because the inclusion of more instruments in a model will increase the information used to find the predicted values of  $\times$  (Antonakis et al., 2014). Since leaders' and followers' demographics are the available exogenous variables that have significant correlations with AL and QCE in our study, we instrumented QCE using the leader's demographics (i. e., age, education, and tenure with the company) and the followers' demographics (i.e., age, education, tenure with the company and the leader).

In the first step, we used demographics to estimate the values of QCE, and at the second step, we utilized the values of QCE to estimate the coefficients of in-role and extra-role performance. According to the 2SLS analyses, coefficients of leaders' and followers' demographics varied between 0.01 and 0.03 for Taiwan ( $p > .05$ ), 0.01 and 0.05 for Turkey ( $p > .05$ ), and 0.01 and 0.03 for the U.S. ( $p > .05$ ); all were non-significant. F-statistics of the model with and without the instrumental variable were well above the threshold value of 10 (Antonakis et al., 2014), 15.06,  $p < .01$  for Taiwan; 19.86,  $p < .01$  for Turkey, and 20.19,  $p < .01$  for the U.S. Furthermore, the link from AL to QCE and the link from QCE to followers' in-role and extra-role performance were significant ( $p < .01$ ) for all three samples, confirming our proposed direction of the mediated model.

These results indicate that our control variables are strong enough, and endogeneity and reverse causality do not seem to be present in our model. The Durbin-Wu-Hausman tests also supported these findings. The results of all three samples varied between 1.58 and 1.84 and failed to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that the coefficients of the OLS model are reliable and did not significantly differ from those of the IV model (Linuesa-Langreo, Ruiz-Palomino, & Elche-Hortelano, 2018). Finally, we tested a reverse mediated model (QCE  $\rightarrow$  AL  $\rightarrow$  Performance) using conditional process analysis with block variable approach. The results show that total effects of the reverse mediation model for all three samples vary between  $-0.02$  and  $0.02$ , and all are non-significant ( $p > .05$ ). Considering the results of conditional process analysis for reverse mediation together with the endogeneity tests, we can conclude that these relationships are very unlikely to happen in the opposite direction.

## 5. Discussion

This study contributes to the leadership literature in three ways. First, it examines the leader–follower agreement on a dark side of leadership, as compared to previous studies that typically focused on positive leadership styles. Second, it advances the cross-cultural leadership literature by looking into the effects of the leader–follower agreement on AL across cultures (Turkey and Taiwan as representatives of high power distance countries, and the U.S. as a representative of low power distance countries). While some of our cross-cultural findings are consistent with the previous studies, we report several interesting findings that challenge earlier views. Third, it extends the self-other agreement literature by highlighting the role of the QCE with the leader as a mediating mechanism. This effort is noteworthy in that it opens the black box of the self-other agreement on leadership, and explains how congruence on AL affects subordinate in-role and extra-role performance via a relational element.

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

One of our robust findings across cultures is that employees reported the highest quality of communication with leaders when they perceive the leader as non-authoritarian. This finding implies that when leaders

behave in a commanding fashion and mistreat their employees with rudeness and insensitivity, they cannot build two-way communication with their followers. This result is consistent with previous research, which suggests that such authoritarian leaders give silent treatment and trigger negative emotions and uncertainty among their followers, resulting in an uncomfortable environment and one-way communication (Wu et al., 2012). It is also in line with the literature on communicative leadership, which suggests that a leader's dominating and commanding behavioral style, lacking in empathy and without concern for employees' rights, is a barrier to effective communication among the dyadic members (Bakar & McCann, 2016; Johansson et al., 2014; Sager, 2008). These authoritarian leaders are unwilling to listen, hear complaints or criticisms, or share information in a truthful manner, which creates a culture of silence (Huang, Van de Vliert, & Van der Vegt, 2005), discomfort, and distance between leaders and followers (Liu et al., 2010) in all cultural contexts.

This cross-cultural similarity suggests that although followers are more likely to tolerate such authoritarian leaders in high power distance contexts (e.g., Turkey and Taiwan), they feel uncomfortable interacting with such leaders in dyadic communication. That is, when both parties perceive the leader as highly authoritarian, they have neither smooth conversations nor are responsive to one another's concerns and suggestions, even in high power distance contexts.

Despite the above-mentioned general and negative effects of AL on the quality of communication, different categories of agreement on authoritarianism show variability in predicting the QCE across cultures. This variability was more observable in the response surface graphs, which illustrate that none of the countries show similarities in the patterns of relationships. For example, in the U.S., high levels of the leader–follower agreement (even in this negative form of leadership) tend to have positive effects on dyadic communication. In Turkey, however, the leader–follower agreement on high levels of AL has negative effects. In Taiwan, agreement is not as important as it is in the U.S. or Turkey. These results imply that cultural differences should be taken into consideration while studying the potential consequences of the leader–follower agreement.

The higher levels of perceived communication quality in both congruence conditions, and the lower quality of communication in both incongruence conditions in the U.S., suggest that employees are not concerned with whether the leader is authoritarian or not; rather, it is the agreement that matters to the QCE they have with their leaders. This finding is in line with previous research stating that employees in the U. S. constantly express their opinions and provide feedback to their managers, and the leaders in return try to understand their followers' expectations and feelings; they have more information about their subordinates' perceptions of their behaviors, resulting in high levels of leader awareness (Atwater et al., 2005; 2009). In these cases, dyadic members experience mutual understanding and more positive relational dynamics, which increases harmony between the parties. Yet, when the leader's standing on self-awareness is low, that is when s/he is an overestimator or an underestimator, communication and interpersonal reciprocity in the dyad suffers.

In fact, looseness in the U.S. may be an explanation for this finding (Triandis, 1995). It can be argued that weak social norms and reciprocity-based relationships in the egalitarian U.S. tend to result in more positive attitudes toward dissimilar others (Uz, 2015), which in the current study, contributed to receptivity toward authoritarian leaders when they are self-aware. The lack of main effects for neither leaders' nor followers' perceptions of AL, but the significant interaction between the two ratings, also supports the importance of 'seeing eye to eye' or 'dancing in harmony with the partner' in such an egalitarian context. Indeed, our follow-up analyses testing the overall percentage of congruence across the three countries are consistent with this finding, suggesting that the percentage of congruence is higher in the U.S. as compared to Taiwan and Turkey. However our results question the universality of these 'Western' findings on the leader–follower

agreement when one takes a cross-cultural perspective, as further explained below.

In Turkey, contrary to findings in the U.S., followers of in-agreement/high authoritarian leaders reported the lowest level of communication with their leaders. A leader–follower agreement on the authoritarian style of the leader implies that the leader clearly exhibits oppressive and punitive behaviors, and subordinates experience the lowest quality contact with them. Consistent with this, we also found that when followers do not perceive the leader as authoritarian (both in overestimator and in-agreement/low conditions), they experience the highest quality of dyadic communication. Due to the high power distance orientation in Turkish organizations (Paşa, Kabasakal, & Bodur, 2001), leaders emphasize that they are in a superior-inferior relationship, and consequently, may not try to reduce or eliminate any discrepancies between their perceptions and their followers' perceptions (Gu, Wang, Liu, Song, & He, 2018). Employees, then, may find themselves in the middle of uninvolved and inattentive dialogues while interacting with these leaders, which then contaminates their interactions. Authoritarian behaviors result in distant, cold, and unidirectional downward communication with followers, even though followers are more tolerant of authoritarianism in these contexts.

It should be noted that Turkey is a changing society represented by “the duality between east and west, tradition and modernity, religious and secular” (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002, p. 51). Therefore, the professional and educated groups of Turkish society have more modern values in contrast to traditional uneducated groups (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004). Our Turkish sample in the current study included highly educated professionals (87% of them have at least a university degree, the highest percentage among the three countries). Thus, this group is unlikely to feel comfortable when it comes to one-to-one communication with authoritarian leaders, even with those who are self-aware. This explains the sharp decrease in communication for Turkish subordinates working with in-agreement/high leaders. Hence, it is not the leader–follower agreement per se, but the very negative nature of AL which is important in predicting the quality of communication with leaders in such a changing society (from more hierarchical relationships toward a more modern and equality-based outlook).

In Taiwan, contrary to cases in the U.S. and Turkey, we found that only follower ratings, not the interaction between follower and leader ratings, are significant. Therefore, although our prioritization of the agreement categories for Taiwan (H1b) was fully supported, we observed that congruence or incongruence does not make a big difference on the perceived quality of communication. This lack of striking differences between agreement categories is, in a way, supportive of the previous research, which found that employees in Taiwan perceived authoritarian leaders less negatively due to a vertical relationship based on dependence and compliance between leaders and followers (Wang et al., 2012).

The notion of moral character in Taiwan stemming from the Confucian ideology may be one potential explanation for the similar patterns across agreement categories (Cheng et al., 2004). According to this philosophy, authority figures are expected to care for the collective well-being of the workplace, act as moral exemplars, and maintain social harmony (Wang et al. 2018). Although their followers consider them authoritarian, leaders do not harm followers' perceptions of justice (Gumusluoglu et al., 2020). Moreover, Asian people are motivated to maintain a ‘Golden Mean,’ an optimal state of equilibrium and balance in their interpersonal interactions (Wilkins, 2017). Among the virtues of Confucian philosophy are reciprocity and the display of a positive image, which require that the parties involved in communication save one another's dignity (Jia & Tian, 2017). Hence, different than Western practices, it is not the goals but the means that are heavily emphasized in maintaining good interpersonal contact. Our study extends these suggestions to a communication context and demonstrates that whether self-aware or not, authoritarian leaders in Taiwan engage in effective communication with their subordinates in order to build harmonious

relationships with them.

Finally, supporting the idea that relationships are inherently communicative (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Johansson et al., 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2006), we found that the quality of communication with the leader acts as a significant mediating mechanism between the leader–follower agreement on AL and subordinate performance. This mediating effect of communication is found to be valid and universal across the three countries for in-role and extra-role behaviors. It suggests that regardless of culture, high-quality leader–follower communication facilitates employees in accomplishing goals and working beyond their duties. Communication is the most significant, direct, and immediate way for leaders to exhibit guidance for followers on a daily basis. Because leaders in high-quality communicative relationships are approachable, actively seek and share information, communicate performance standards and work outputs, as well as engage in informal talk with employees (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Bakar et al., 2010; Johansson et al., 2014), they are more likely to help them perform their assigned tasks and duties. Moreover, followers who report a high quality of communication with their leaders tend to be ‘good soldiers’ who will go the extra mile and help others. When leaders show responsiveness, support, and sensitivity (Bakar et al., 2010; Sager, 2008), employees develop trusting relationships with them. Having supportive and comfortable communication with leaders allows employees to feel respected and heard (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). Employees, in return, reciprocate leaders' behaviors by increasing their in-role and extra-role performances (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

## 5.2. Practical implications

Our findings could potentially be of use to managers in companies operating in the U.S., Turkey, and Taiwan. In the U.S., as long as managers and their subordinates agree with each other on the managers' leadership style, they engage in high-quality communication. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide managers in the U.S. with feedback on how their subordinates see them, regarding not only positive but also negative aspects of their leadership behaviors. This can help managers reduce or eliminate any discrepancies between their own and subordinates' perceptions, and adopt appropriate normative behavioral responses to such developmental feedback (Sosik & Jung, 2003; Tsui & Ashford, 1994). Apparently, American employees want to dance with leaders who can see eye-to-eye.

In Turkey, however, followers respond positively to leaders when they perceive the leader as non-authoritarian, whether the leader is self-aware or not. In such a high power distance context, managers may not even try to address perceptual discrepancies to improve their effectiveness because this may be seen as a sign of weakness. Therefore, reminding them of the possible destructive outcomes of authoritarian behaviors, and guiding them about how to adjust their behaviors to benefit interpersonal interactions, are critical actions in Turkey. In the Taiwanese context, it is important for managers to find the middle ground and create an environment with open communication where subordinates feel safe to voice their concerns and suggestions. Overall, leadership training and development programs in these countries should emphasize not only the bright but also the dark sides of leadership as well as its detrimental effects on interpersonal interactions which, in turn, influence follower performance.

## 5.3. Limitations and recommendations for future research

The present study has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow for an assessment of cause-effect relationships. Future studies should consider a time-lagged or longitudinal design to predict the relationships among our constructs. Furthermore, it suggests QCE as a mediating mechanism influencing the relationship between the leader–follower agreement on the authoritarian style of the leader and follower performance. Future research should explore other potential

mediating psychological or relational processes such as LMX (Erturk et al., 2018) or trust (Chan et al., 2013) in this relationship. More research is needed to replicate this study in other high/low power distance countries, as well as across countries which vary in other cultural dimensions such as assertiveness (Atwater et al., 2009) or high/low context (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). Similarly, we did not measure power distance directly when comparing AL perceptions across the countries. Measuring power distance directly would offer a better understanding of how cultural values relate to differences in leadership perceptions. Finally, while operationalizing leader awareness, we followed the common practice in the literature and measured it as the agreement between leaders' and followers' perceptions of leader behaviors. Alternatively, future research could directly ask leaders whether they believe that there is an agreement or not between themselves and their followers. Or else other measurements could include followers' perceptions about how aware they think their leader is about his/her way of supervising. These operationalizations would provide valuable insights on perceived unawareness of the dark side of leadership.<sup>3</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This study advances our understanding of the leader–follower agreement on the dark side of leadership across cultures. Expanding previous research, our findings demonstrate that the nature of leadership under question is as important as the leader–follower agreement in predicting follower outcomes. Agreement on authoritarianism seems to be contingent on cultural values and yields different patterns across national cultures. We hope our study stimulates future research to further scrutinize the cross-cultural implications of agreement on AL and examine when and how authoritarian leaders and their followers act together in harmony to achieve their goals.

## 7. Data availability statement

The processed data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The raw data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions imposed by the companies included in the study.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

None

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