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Transactional and transformational leadership
An examination of the leadership challenge model
Gennaro F. Vito, George E. Higgins and Andrew S. Denney
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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine three different structural models the Leadership Challenge model to determine if they best capture transactional or transformational leadership. The three models are derived from the literature.
Design/methodology/approach – The data for this study come from self-report surveys of middle managers that are attending the Administrative Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute. The managers completed the 30-item 360° leadership challenge measure. Because the leadership challenge measure is a 360° evaluation of leadership, up to five observers provided data about their manager. The authors use the data from the observer in this study. Using structural equation modeling, the authors examine the aims.
Findings – The findings show two important advances. First, the leadership challenge model may capture both transformational and transactional leadership. Second, the findings support the view that the really captures transformational leadership.
Originality/value – To the authors’ knowledge, no study has performed this type of examination in the policing literature. The value of this type examination is high.
Keywords Police, Leadership
Paper type Research paper

Leadership is an important function for police managers. It is instructive to think of leadership in a series of functions. Police managers formulate and refine the organization’s mission, goals, and objectives in terms of perceived needs. This requires the police managers handle departmental resources, motivate personnel to achieve goals and objectives, set a moral and professional tone, and create an environment for efficient, effective, and productive work (see More et al., 2012, pp. 60-61). No one way to lead a policing organization exists. Burns (1978) presented two ways, however, that are available, for police managers to use, are transactional and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership
Burns (1978) argues that individuals in an organization may be influenced and motivated by leaders. Burns (1978) outlines the leadership process two, theoretical, components: transformational and transactional leadership. Generally, each of these types of leadership has different ways to influence attitudes and motivation.

Burns (1978) idea of transactional leadership has its roots in social psychological social exchange theory. This form of leadership relies on the reciprocal and deterministic relationship between a leader and their subordinate(s) (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Judge and Piccolo, 2004). To clarify, leaders use a bargaining process with subordinates to motivate behavior. Utilizing relative positional power,
the leader regulates the bargaining process so that benefits may be issued and received to continue positively valued behavior.

Transactional leadership is characterized in multiple ways. First, a transactional leader utilizes contingent rewards (e.g. work for pay or time off) to underlie the arrangements for explicit or implicit agreement on goals to be reached to obtain the desired rewards or behavior (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997). Second, the transactional leader uses a management-by-exception format to implement a monitoring program that allows them to gather behavioral information to predict or prevent the subordinate from deviating from the agreed upon goals of objectives (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997). Third, transactional leaders are generally passive and only take action when a problem arises (Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

Under this perspective, leaders and subordinates have considerable power and influence. The mutually beneficial exchange that takes place to obtain goals supports this view (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997; Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Situations may arise where a leader being privy to vital information or a subordinate may have specialized problem-solving skills that put each into a leveraging position for negotiation; thus, valuable time may be squandered because negotiations are occurring rather than productivity. Unfortunately, this type of exchange may only garner short-term commitment.

Transformational leadership

The transformational leadership theory also makes provisions for power and influence in the leadership process as the transactional leadership theory. According to Burns (1978), the relationship between the leader and the subordinate is based on emotion. The leader utilizes the trust and confidence that the subordinate places in them to motivate behavior (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997). Transformational leaders typically rely on four characteristics: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997).

The transformational leader uses these characteristics to motivate behavior. For instance, the transformational leader uses their charisma to create a sense of referent power (Bass, 1985). Here, the subordinate puts themselves into a position where they have a strong need for leader approval, and they do not criticize (Burns, 1978; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Villiers, 2003, p. 33). Transformational leaders are able to inspire subordinates by connecting with them emotionally, which provides the opportunity to share a vision. The emotional connection with the subordinate does not end with inspiration. A transformational leader uses this connection to serve as a mentor or developer demonstrating to the subordinate a focus on them (i.e. individual consideration). The transformational leader encourages the intellectual stimulation of their subordinates. In this area, the transformational leader assists or mentors the subordinates in questioning the status quo, or thinking of old problems in new ways (Bass, 1985; Reese, 2005, pp. 24-25).

The transformational leader optimizes his or her power and influence using charisma or vision. Bass (1985) argues that subordinates are less likely to influence the leader because they are placed on a pedestal. This does not discount the possible values of individual consideration or intellectual stimulation as possible influences on the subordinate.

Transformational leaders are present in police organizations. In his assessment of leadership in the Los Angeles police department, Reese (2005, p. 132) identified Chief William Bratton as a transformational leader due to his intellectual vision, empathy for
his officers and the community as well as his personal charisma and communication skills. Empirically, transformational leadership has been a focus of studies on police leadership. Murphy and Drodge (2004) interviewed 28 Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on their views of police leadership within the framework of transformational leadership theory. The RCMP officers stressed that leaders can emerge at all levels of the organization and that leadership skills can be learned.

Murphy (2008) used an auto-ethnographic approach to gather leadership information from large municipal police departments. The results indicate that emotions are an integral part of police leadership. Specifically, leaders that formed an emotional attachment with their officers and “walked the talk” are able to use transformational leadership effectively.

**Leadership challenge model**

Another way of viewing leadership is through the Leadership Challenge Model (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2012) argue that the five principles of leadership are as follows:

1. Model the Way.
2. Inspire a Shared Vision.
4. Enable Others to Act.
5. Encourage the Heart.

In addition, each of the Five Principles contain “Ten Commitments” that specify what actions leaders typically take to achieve them.

Commitment 1 under “Model the Way” states that leaders must find their voice by clarifying their values because they influence how leaders respond to their followers. Expressing genuine values to followers empowers and motivates them to accomplish what needs to be done. Commitment 2 signifies the competence of the leader by demonstrating their ability to act in alignment with their expressed values. In turn, this action sets an example for followers and helps build consensus among them. Leaders can also reinforce values through storytelling and bringing values to life.

In the second practice, leaders inspire a shared vision with followers. Commitment 3 states that leaders accomplish this by imaging exciting and ennobling possibilities. Commitment 4 requires that leaders bring their vision to life by appealing to the shared aspirations of the followers.

In the third practice, “Challenging the Process,” the leader seizes the initiative and makes improvements in the organization with the active participation of the followers. Accordingly, Commitment 5 states that leaders seek innovative ways to change, grow and improve. Leaders encourage experiments and sponsor the courage of followers to take risks and seek out opportunities to make change happen. As a result, leaders do not chastise and punish followers when they take risks to move the organization forward. Instead, they encourage them to learn from and improve upon their mistakes.

The fourth practice is “Enabling Others to Act.” Leaders trust their followers to complete tasks effectively. They do not seek power or status and recognize that followers must feel the need to take the initiative and act upon it. Under Commitment 7, leaders foster collaboration by promoting trust and collaborative goals for the organization. They inspire their followers to solve their own problems and thus build
confidence and competence. Commitment 8 relates to this practice by sharing power and discretion with followers.

The fifth and final practice is “Encouraging the Heart.” Leaders set high standards and hold followers accountable but they also take the time to celebrate accomplishments. Commitments 9 and 10 states that effective leaders accomplish these tasks via public gatherings that communicate what positive performance look like and create a spirit of community within the organization.

In sum, Kouzes and Posner use the information that come from the 360° evaluation (i.e. the individual completes the SLCI (self) and then nominates observers to complete the SLCI (observer)) to suggest that leaders who have followed these tenets have been successful and that others can learn from their example. Persons who accept this leadership challenge (i.e. information from their observers) and adopt these methods can move their organizations forward as well.

An interesting issue comes up in the leadership literature, the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership is not clear. Research from 360° evaluations show that some observers can make the distinction between the two types of leadership (Yammarino and Atwater, 1993; Yammarino and Dubinsky, 1994; Atwater et al., 2006), but other research shows that the observers are not able to make this distinction (Scandura and Schriesheim, 1994). These studies do have an important systematic difference; they used different leadership scales. The differences in the distinction may be a manifestation of these different scales.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) argue that their LPI captures transformational leadership. A close inspection of five principles of the LPI suggests that they are capturing key parts of transformational leadership. The research, however, shows mixed results. Fields and Herold’s (1997) survey study assesses whether transactional and transformational leadership can be inferred from subordinate reports of leadership behaviors in a 360° evaluation. For this assessment, they used the LPI. Fields and Herold (1997) show that transactional and transformational leadership are underlying dimensions of the five LPI dimensions. Consistent with previous research (Scandura and Schriesheim, 1994), they show that the distinction between the two types of leadership is not clear in these data. Their results show that encouraging the heart and modeling the way fit best for both transformational and transactional leadership.

Carless (2001) examined the construct validity of the LPI to determine if it was a single, multiple, or hierarchical measure of transformational leadership. Using data from over 1,400 subordinates, the results show the greatest support for a hierarchical model of transformational leadership. In other words, the items formed the five factors of the LPI, and these five factors indicate an overall measure of transformational leadership. Therefore, the mixed results from the research suggest that a compelling study would be to address this issue.

The present study
Fields and Herold (1997) suggest that subordinates are not able to distinguish between transformational and transactional leadership because the measures of the LPI overlap when indicating these leadership styles. However, Carless (2001) shows that subordinates indicate that the LPI creates a hierarchical measure of transformational leadership. The present study is a test of this suggestion using responses to the LPI from observers of police managers. The aim is to examine whether the LPI can be indicators of transformational and transactional leadership. Model 1 in Figure 1 shows this assumption. Following Fields and Herold (1997), we assume that challenge the process,
inspire a shared vision, and encourage the heart are indicators of transformational leadership. We also assume enable others to act and model the way are indicators of transactional leadership.

The second aim is to examine whether the observers are able to make distinctions between transformational and transactional leadership. Model 2 in Figure 1 shows our assumptions. Similar to Fields and Herold (1997), our Model 2 differs from Model 1 assuming that model the way may be an indicator for both forms of leadership.

The third aim is to examine whether the observers see the items of the LPI as a measure of transformational leadership similar to Carless (2001). This is accomplished
by examining whether measures of the five principles indicate a unidimensional measure. Model 3 shows this model.

Methods

Sample and procedures
The present study analyzes responses from a 360° assessment of the leadership performance of police managers attending the Administrative Officer’s Course at the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. As a part of their course on leadership at the AOC, these police manager students were asked to fill out a self-assessment of their leadership strengths and weaknesses as posed by the model presented in Kouzes and Posner’s (2012) work, *The Leadership Challenge* and listed in their assessment document, *The Student Leadership Challenge Inventory* (SCLI – Kouzes and Posner, 1998). This scale was developed by Kouzes and Posner to assess how student respondents evidenced behaviors and practices associated with the five elements of *The Leadership Challenge* model:

1. Model the Way.
2. Inspire a Shared Vision.
4. Enabling Others to Act.
5. Encourage the Heart.

These elements reflect the practices and methods followed by successful leaders. The SLCI itself consists of two forms – the Self and the Observer. The scales on the forms are identical with six statements designed to measure each of the five elements listed above. The difference between them is in their application. The Self SCLI is completed by the leader while the Observer SCLI is completed by a subordinate and/or superior. Thus, they both assess the leadership qualities of the person in question in the form of a 360° evaluation. Studies using the LPI have demonstrated its validity and reliability in measuring these leadership practices with a number of different populations, including students, business and police managers (Posner, 2004; Carless, 2001; Zagorsek et al., 2006; Vito and Higgins, 2010).

The police manager students filled out a “Self” portion of this instrument while a copy of the “Observer” instrument was sent to three subordinates and three superiors in their agency. The anonymous Observer instrument responses were mailed by the course instructor and were returned to his office. Our research sample consists of the survey results from six AOC classes (n = 291) and 1,659 Observers. The response rate from the Observers was 95 percent.

The sample is constrained to 1,659 observers[1]. The sample is 81.3 percent (n = 1,348) male, and white 87.4 percent (n = 1,390). The mean rank is Captain (M = 5.45, n = 247), but the modal category for rank is sergeant (19.8 percent, n = 328). The average education level is college graduate (M = 5.03 or 38.5 percent). The average age is 43.37 years old. The average number of sworn police officers is 16.17 in their department.

Measure
The measure for the study is Kouzes and Posner’s (2012) version of the Leadership Practices Inventory. The measure contains 30-items for each of the five leadership principles (see the Appendix for the complete listing of the items).
Analysis plan
The analysis plan takes place in two steps. The first step is a presentation of the bivariate correlations for these data. These correlations show whether the dimensions of the LPI share variation.

The second step is a presentation of the measurement model using structural equation modeling. Within the structural equation modeling process, we use confirmatory factor analysis. Figure 1 provides our a priori assumptions about how the measures from the LPI may be indicators of transformational and transactional leadership. Following Kline (2011), the a priori nature of our assumptions makes CFA a viable means of analysis. In the second step, we examine a number of fit statistics, and follow Hu and Bentler’s (1999) recommendations. We begin by examining the \( \chi^2 \) statistic that should not be statistically significant. Hu and Bentler (1999) show that the \( \chi^2 \) statistic is likely to be significant because the sample size is relatively large. Therefore, we examine multiple fit statistics: comparative fit index (\( \geq 0.95 \)), RMSEA (\( \leq 0.05 \)), and SRMR (\( \leq 0.05 \)). In addition to the fit statistics, we follow Kline’s (2011) recommendation that large factor loadings are above 0.50. A properly fitting model that reveals strong factor loadings is an indication that the leadership challenge inventory items represent latent measures of transformational and transactional leadership.

Results
Step 1
Table I shows the bivariate correlations for each of the five measures show high correlations. For instance, modeling the way has high correlations with all of the other four measures ($r = 0.69-0.83$). In addition, inspiring a shared vision has high correlations with all of the other measures ($r = 0.62-0.83$). Further, challenging the process has high correlations with all of the other measures ($r = 0.64-0.83$). Enabling others to act has high correlations as well ($r = 0.62-0.74$). Finally, encouraging the heart also has high correlations ($r = 0.67-0.74$). Additional modeling is necessary to understand how these high correlations come together. Specifically, it is important to address whether our beliefs that these correlations are caused by latent measures of transformational and transactional leadership.

Step 2
Table II presents the measurement model that uses confirmatory factor analysis. This model examines whether challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, and
encouraging the heart are caused by the latent measure transformational leadership, and whether modeling the way and enabling others to act is caused by transactional leadership, as in Model 1. The results of the measurement model show that the model fits the data ($\chi^2 = 443.19$ ($p = 0.00$); CFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.24; SRMR = 0.04). The $\chi^2$ and the RMSEA indicate that this model does not fit the data. All of the factor loadings are strong. Specifically, all of the factor loadings for are above Kline’s (2011) mark of 0.50 except for two measures. Regardless of the size of the factor loadings, the model does not fit the data not supporting our hypothesis. The problem with the model fit occurs because not enough data is present leading to identification problems. The issue here is the number of observed measures (i.e. measures of leadership challenge) that are eligible to be caused by the latent measures. According to Kline (2011) at least three, but optimally more, observed measures are needed to properly identify a model in confirmatory factor analysis. In other words, the model does not have enough information for proper identification, and is not supportive that the five principles are distinct in their measurement of transformational and transactional leadership as shown in Fields and Herold (1997).

Table II examines whether challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, and modeling the way are caused by the latent measure transformational leadership, and whether encouraging the heart and enabling others to act behaves as in Model 2. Unlike the measurement model, the structural model does fit the data ($\chi^2 = 31.31$ ($p = 0.00$); CFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.02). The model fits the data properly. In addition, all of the factor loadings are strong. These results support our view that the leadership challenge inventory may serve as indicators of transactional and transformational leadership. Further, these results indicate that the observers are not clear about the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. This is supportive Field and Herold’s (1997)
assumption that the LPI provides information for both transformational and transactional leadership.

Table II examines our assumption that the LPI five principles provide information on transformational leadership. The fit between Model 3 and the data are the best of the three. The $\chi^2$ is significant (32.11, $p = 0.00$). The CFI is acceptable at 0.99. The RMSEA is acceptable at 0.07, and the SRMR is acceptable at 0.01. The standardized factor loadings are above 0.50. In fact, the smallest is 0.73 suggesting that the five principles are capturing information for a unidimensional trait. This is support that the LPI is actually capturing information about transformational leadership, which is supportive Carless (2001).

Discussion

Burns (1978) argues that leadership may occur in two ways: transactional and transformational. To determine if this theory of leadership has come to fruition in police organizations, the measurement of these concepts needs to be examined and developed. Kouzes and Posner's (2012) version of the Leadership Practices Inventory may provide some indication of this leadership theory, which was the aim of the theory. Using structural equation modeling, three important results come from these data. First, the LPI dimensions may indicators of transformational and transactional leadership. However, their indication is not clear. The second result show that the observers believe that “modeling the way” is not only part of transformational leadership, but it is also part of transactional leadership. Third, the best way to understand the LPI is as a measure of transformational leadership.

Our results do appear to partially replicate Field and Herold’s (1997) results. They show that the LPI dimensions are indicators of transformational and transactional leadership. In their sample of subordinates, they show that the LPI dimensions do not clearly distinguish between transformational and transactional leadership. Specifically, in their study, not only did the “modeling the way” dimension cause confusion in these two types of leadership, but “encouraging the heart did as well.” In the present study, the only dimension that causes this type of confusion of leadership styles is “modeling the way.” Modeling the way is when the leader is to “walk the walk.” In other words, the leader has to be able to follow through on the issues that arise in the manner that is proper to the leadership style.

The results from the present study imply, for police leadership, that the LPI can be a measure of these two types of leadership. Special attention needs to be paid to the “modeling the way dimension.” When researchers or leaders wish to use the LPI in this manner, they have to recognize that the “modeling the way” dimension may have different meanings based on the type of leadership under study or being used. The researcher or leader needs to become intentional in their use of the “modeling the way” dimension of the LPI. Further research is required to provide specific information as what “modeling the way” actually means for the different types of leadership.

Additional results support our contention that the five factors of the LPI may form a unidimensional measure. The unidimensional measure is of transformational leadership. Consistent with Carless (2001), the LPI indicates transformational leadership. Specifically, a breakdown of the five factors shows the qualities that Bass (1981, 1985, 1997) suggests are present in transformational leadership.
Therefore, when police agencies use the LPI, they need to understand that they are getting information about transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership.

While the results point to the LPI as a measure of transformational leadership, the results also suggest that this type of leadership is important for police organizations. Darroch and Mazerolle (2012) conducted an analysis of the organizational factors that constrained or facilitated the adoption of intelligence-led policing (ILP) principles in New Zealand police departments. Operations under ILP included directed patrols at hot spot areas, bail checks of active offenders, and targeting the routine activities of prolific offenders. They determined that successful implementation of ILP was related to several factors including: evidence of a transformational leadership style in the area – including the celebration of crime reduction as a goal, the existence of a “can do” organizational culture, support for partnerships and problem solving, tolerance for experimentation and trial of novel approaches, openness to learning, a willingness to sponsor improvement and engage in innovation. In general, the areas that promoted and sponsored ILP were distinguished by an open management style where officers felt closer to their managers, were comfortable taking independent action and felt that they were able to influence their job in a team environment. The implementation and development of ILP in these New Zealand departments was not driven by top level administrators but led by individual commanders at the area and district levels who focussed upon crime reduction within their local area.

When considering the means for the subscales, it is clear that the subordinates were in favor and viewed their leaders as transformational. This suggests that empowering individuals to rise above immediate needs and self-interest is not only a theoretical view, but a current practice in police organizations. The thrust of this study is that the LPI will allow police organizations to investigate the extent of transformational leadership, and possibly provide ways police organizations may be able to improve in this area.

Although we have demonstrated that the LPI dimensions may be used to understand transformational leadership, the study has some limits. One limit of the study is that the data are cross-sectional. Another possibility for these results is that they are an artifact of cross-sectional data, and serves as another limit of the study. We are unaware of any study, to date, that uses dynamic data that shows whether these results will stand up over time. In other words, it is unclear whether the different forms of leadership require different LPI dimensions at a later time. Future research should investigate our model with this type of data.

Another limit of the study is that the data come from a non-random sample. Because of the 360° nature, selection bias is a reality. In order to understand leadership whether in one or more organizations, the selection of the leaders is likely to be non-random and the selection of the observers, by the leaders, is likely to be non-random. Thus, this limit is not fatal to the study, but it is an artifact of the 360° format, and the data still provide valuable information.

Despite the limits of the study, the results are important. While additional measures are necessary and longitudinal data may provide different effects, the leader is able to use this information to determine if their leadership style is coming across, and the LPI provides an indication of transformational leadership. In other words, academics and researchers may be able to gain a better understanding of transformational police leadership using the LPI. Further, as individuals are promoted to leadership roles, and receive training, the LPI may inform leadership training.
Note
1. We constrain the sample in this way so that the information is an evaluation of a leader. If we did not do this the police manager’s data will confound the issue and provide a false indication of the type of leadership that the LPI indicates.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice type</th>
<th>Observer responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model the Way</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>Sets a personal example</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Looks ahead and communicates future</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describes ideal capabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helps others take risks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fosters cooperative relationships</td>
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<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>Follows through on promises</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talks about vision of the future</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finds common ground</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Keeps current</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Treats others with respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Builds consensus on values</td>
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<td>Talks about values and principles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communicates purpose and meaning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Takes initiative in experimenting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provides leadership opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creatively recognizes people</td>
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Table AI.
LPI leadership practices and items
About the authors
Dr Gennaro F. Vito is a Professor in the Department of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville. He also serves as a Faculty Member in the Administrative Officer’s Course at the Southern Police Institute. He holds a PhD in Public Administration from The Ohio State University. Active in professional organizations, he is a Past President, Fellow, and recipient of the Bruce Smith Award (2012) of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. He has published on such topics as: capital sentencing, police consolidation, police leadership, police traffic stops, policing strategies for drug problems in public housing, attitudes toward capital punishment, and the effectiveness of criminal justice programs, such as drug elimination programs, drug courts, and drug testing of probationers and parolees. He is the co-author of ten textbooks in criminal justice and criminology including Practical Program Evaluation in Criminal Justice (Elsevier, 2014).

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