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## Enhancing Teacher Credibility: What We Can Learn From the Justice and Leadership Literature

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### ABSTRACT

Enhanced perceptions of instructor credibility are related to positive outcomes in the classroom, including participation and learning (Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; McCroskey & Teven, 1999; Myers, 2004; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). We contend that student perceptions of instructor credibility can be directly impacted by applying management research to classroom practices. In other words, actionable management research is useful in the classroom not just to share with students because it may make them better managers, but also to improve teaching practices and related outcomes. The present article explores this tenet, first discussing why we believe applied research findings can and should be transferred to the classroom and then using Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) and organizational justice literature to demonstrate how these concepts can be generalized to the classroom environment to ultimately enhance instructor credibility.

### KEYWORDS

Actionable research; classroom design; classroom management; implicit leadership theory; instructor credibility; justice

Establishing instructor credibility in the classroom is a frequently studied topic in the field of communication (Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Ruppert & Green, 2012; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). It receives less attention, however, in the business and management education literature. Defined as an attitude characterized by belief in instructor, instructor credibility includes competence, character, and caring dimensions (Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; McCroskey & Teven, 1999). These dimensions have a multitude of effects on student perceptions and behaviors, including participation and learning (Myers, 2004; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). It has been demonstrated empirically that credibility is enhanced by instructors who practice what they teach in a business communication course. That is, instructors who apply concepts from the course in their communications with students are seen as more credible (Ruppert & Green, 2012). Seemingly, the parallel from the field of management is that the business professor who applies findings from the relevant literature toward classroom management will also increase student perceptions of credibility. The present article explores this tenet, first discussing why we believe applied research findings can and should be applied to the classroom and then using Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) and organizational justice literature to demonstrate how these concepts can be generalized to the classroom environment to ultimately enhance instructor credibility.

As there are a large number of seminal findings in the management literature from which we could draw for this evaluation, we found the need to limit the scope of this article in some way. We chose ILT and organizational justice as we feel that these areas show particular potential for applications in classroom management and especially are relevant to instructor credibility. Further, examining teachers-as-leaders is a logical first step as the social-cognitive parallels inherent in the discussion of ILT help to form the basis as to why applied research should be generalizable to the classroom. Finally, there is further reason to begin with these areas as both leadership and justice are seen as important correlates of student success and perceptions in the classroom (e.g., Chory, 2007; Chory-Assad, 2002; Feldman, 2007; Horan, Chory, & Goodboy, 2010).

### Generalizability of applied literature to the classroom

Much has been written about the relevance and usefulness of management research for practicing managers (e.g., Bartunek, 2007; Burke & Rau, 2010; Pearce & Huang, 2012; Rousseau, 2006; Shapiro, Kirkman, & Courtney, 2007). Similarly, much has been written about the practice of teaching (e.g., Arbaugh & Hwang, 2015; Chickering, Gamson, & Poulsen, 1987;

Whetten, 2007). Little attention has been paid, however, to the intersections between applied management research and the practice of teaching. Indeed, actionable management research (defined as research that has implications for action and is relevant in an organizational context) may be useful in the classroom to both inform managerial practice (e.g., Pearce & Huang, 2012) and influence and improve teaching practices (Chory & McCroskey, 1999; Chory-Assad, 2002). The art of teaching, after all, includes principles of classroom management (e.g., Chickering et al., 1987) that often mirror the art of managing organizations.

There are many reasons to believe that teachers can learn from literature primarily targeted toward managers and leaders. First, the context of a teaching environment (student: teacher) is, in many ways, similar to a work environment (employee: manager). From a management perspective, there is overlap in the theoretical underpinnings of what makes for a successful classroom experience and what makes for a successful work environment. For example, both classroom management and organization management involve concepts like discipline, motivation, and assessment of performance (e.g., Chase & Chase, 1993; Zinn, Sikorski, & Buskist, 2004). Further, Chickering et al. (1987) suggest that effective teaching encourages teacher-student contact, cooperation among students, and active learning, and provides prompt feedback, time on task and communicates high expectations. Various theoretical and empirical articles have also suggested that work effectiveness is best precipitated by similar factors (e.g., Osland, Kolb, Rubin, & Turner, 2006; Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004). Indeed, researchers have argued that constructs such as justice (Chory-Assad, 2002), culture (Chen, 2000), and total quality improvement (Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996) generalize from the field to the classroom. This evidence leads us to think about actionable management research in a broader way such that effective action can apply equally to the classroom and the work environment. Those instructors that have implemented the classroom-as-an-organization model, for example, making management research actionable in the classroom by converting the classroom into a real working organization and allowing students to experience the practice of management directly (see Cohen, 1976; Sheehan, McDonald, & Spence, 2009).

### Teachers as leaders

Beyond the face validity of the external contextual environment, there is a social-cognitive argument as to why work and school situations may be perceived similarly. Cognitively, students are placed in a situation

similar to that of new employees. They must evaluate the task demands as well as the person responsible for enabling them to complete the task. In this regard, there are likely basic cognitive processes that occur when a person emerges in a position of power before others they are expected to lead (e.g., Ritter & Lord, 2007). The faculty member in the classroom is in a situation similar to the new manager in trying to establish legitimacy and create an organizational climate in which workers can be most effective.

Both the fields of education and leadership have undergone paradigm shifts in the last several decades, from a focus on the teachers (leaders) to a focus on the learners (followers) (e.g., ILT, Leader Member Exchange; Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Lord, Foti, & DeVader, 1984; Whetten, 2007). This shift can be seen in the education literature with the growing importance of experiential learning, active learning, and learning styles (e.g., Auster & Wylie, 2006; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Frost & Fukami, 1997; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001; Whetten, 2007). Some of the leadership literature has also moved from concentrating on leadership styles and leader characteristics to an emphasis on follower perceptions and cognitions (e.g., Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993; Lord & Emrich, 2000). The changing emphasis in these literatures has allowed researchers to better understand what makes followers follow and what makes students learn. Based on the underlying similarity in these paradigm shifts, if students in the classroom maintain the same cognitive processes as followers in the workplace, much of the literature would be dually applicable. That is, teachers who capitalize on the idea that student perceptions of them and the course are important will be more successful in generating true learning.

Beyond the theoretical possibilities, there are clearly many practical benefits of applying the management literature to the classroom in an overt way, such as reducing student perceptions of powerlessness and apathy (Sashittal, Jassawalla, & Markulis, 2012) and increasing student motivation and learning (Chory-Assad, 2002; Horan et al., 2010). Much is also discussed regarding the disconnect between the research literature and practice in the field (e.g., Bartunek, 2007; Burke & Rau, 2010; Pearce & Huang, 2012; Rousseau, 2006; Shapiro et al., 2007). Modeling the appropriate management behaviors in the classroom may be one way more effectively teach students real life skills that can then be transferred into a workplace setting, effectively decreasing the gap between research and practice. The education and management literatures also suggest that new management teachers often are ill-prepared to enter the classroom (e.g., Boice, 1992;

Burke & Ng, 2006; Rynes & Trank, 1999; Trank & Rynes, 2003), just as new managers are often ill-prepared to enter the field of management (Ghoshal, 2005; Jackson, 2010; Mintzberg, 2004). The application of applied research findings may improve performance in both instances.

### Implicit leadership theory

The applied literature related to ILT should be especially applicable to teachers in the classroom as it targets automatic perceptual processes that occur when one is faced with a potential leader. ILTs are cognitive categories defined by a prototype, which is a set of abstract characteristics describing a typical leader that guide leadership perception in a particular context (Lord et al., 1984; Matthews, Lord, & Walker, 1990; Ritter & Lord, 2007; Smith & Foti, 1998). Potential leaders are compared to the prototype, and if they are similar enough to the abstract cognitive conceptualization, they will be classified as a leader. The more consistent an individual's behavior is with the prototype, the more likely it is that that individual will be seen as a leader. Research has found that eight characteristics make up the leader prototype: sensitivity, dedication, (anti)tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, intelligence, and strength (Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994).

As ILT suggests, cognitive categorizations of leaders are organized hierarchically, and are able to take information regarding context into account (Lord & Maher, 1991). In fact, depending on the context, a different cognitive category will be activated in order to interpret leadership behavior. Relatively little literature, however, has been written exploring the specific nature of the teacher-as-leader prototype. One article suggests that based on differences between novices and experts, the expert teacher prototype should consist of information related to knowledge (content, pedagogical, and pedagogical-content), efficiency of problem solving, and insight (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). The article does not, however, address how expectations of expertise will affect follower perceptions of teachers-as-leaders. Nonetheless, portions of the leader prototype may be applied in the perceptual processes of students, as, according to the ILT literature, the general category of leader versus nonleader distinction will be made first before the context is taken into account (Lord & Maher, 1991). The juxtaposition of these ideas led us to suggest that the social cognitive context in business and educational environments is similar enough to result in akin perceptual processes, and specifically that the leader prototype will be activated in a

classroom environment. This conclusion is interesting in that the eight dimensions of the leadership prototype identified by Offermann et al. (1994) have not been studied as a gestalt in the classroom. However, the finding that student evaluations given during the first week of teaching do not tend to differ significantly from student evaluations given on the last week of class lends credibility to the importance of ILTs in the classroom (Wachtel, 1998) and suggests that initial perceptions of the instructor are strong and long-lasting.

If we examine the extant parallels between the pedagogical and applied literatures as related to the eight ILT dimensions, perceptions of intelligence are demonstrably important in achieving legitimacy as the leader in the classroom (based on the notion that the teacher is seen as the expert; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). Indeed, one review suggests that teacher course knowledge is related to student learning and student evaluations, as is intellectual challenge (Feldman, 2007). As mentioned, competence (perceived knowledge or expertise) is also construed as a dimension of instructor credibility (Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992). Even given the research in constructs related to intelligence, the establishment and perception of instructor intelligence and the resulting outcomes are an area ripe for future research exploration.

The dimensions most necessary for classroom management, sensitivity, dedication, and (anti)tyranny, are also likely to be important as related to student perceptions in the classroom (Chory, 2007; Paulsel, Chory-Assad, & Dunleavy, 2005). One study, for example, noted that character and caring, as dimensions of instructor credibility, impact perceptions of classroom justice (Chory, 2007). Interestingly, in the applied literature, dedication was noted as the most strongly endorsed factor in the leadership prototype (Offermann et al., 1994). The importance of dedication may be shown through the significant correlations between course outcomes, availability and helpfulness, and enthusiasm (Feldman, 2007). Additionally, caring, concern, respect, and interest in students also seem to impact student evaluations and learning (as related to the anti-tyranny dimension; Feldman, 2007); however, there is room for empirical exploration of this construct as well.

Charisma and attractiveness may also be significant in this context, as public presentations in front of others can impact teaching effectiveness (Kim, Damewood, & Hodge, 2000; although online learning may change the impact of these factors). There is some debate as to whether charisma or attractiveness influences course outcomes, but it seems these variables do

affect outcomes in certain situations (Wachtel, 1998). Indeed, one study found that charisma explained 69% of the variance in lecturer ability (Shevlin, Banyard, Davies, & Griffiths, 2000), and attractiveness tends to be significantly related, although to a lesser extent (Freng & Webber, 2009; Hamermesh & Parker, 2005; Kozub, 2010; Wachtel, 1998).

Finally, masculinity and strength likely have complicated and multifaceted relationships with a variety of teaching outcomes. The importance attributed to masculinity, for example, may differ depending on the content area (e.g., finance professors may be expected to be male/masculine; Ritter & Yoder, 2004), but in many areas teaching is likened to the feminine (i.e., teaching is seen as a female sex-typed occupation). In addition, depending upon the national culture, it is questionable whether being strong and forceful, bold, and powerful (strength) will help a teacher be seen as a leader in the classroom, as students often tend to expect to take a more active role in their own learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). The teaching and learning literature suggests these latter dimensions will not hold simple relationships with classroom experiences (e.g., Bilimoria, O'Neil, Hopkins, & Murphy, 2010), but what the applied literature can add is an impetus to focus on these elements further and to study them in the context of the other eight dimensions of the leadership prototype.

### Organizational justice

Perceptions of justice have emerged as an important construct in both the applied and pedagogical literature. In the applied literature, much work has been done differentiating the various dimensions of justice, such as distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal (Colquitt, 2001). Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of outcomes, whereas procedural justice refers to the fairness of the process used to distribute outcomes. Interpersonal justice deals with the manner in which people are treated (Bies & Moag, 1986), and informational justice involves the explanations of information given to an individual regarding procedures and outcomes (Colquitt, 2001).

These individual dimensions of justice, and perceptions of justice overall, have been linked to a variety of organizational outcomes (e.g., Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005), including outcome and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational retaliatory behavior (Colquitt, 2001), trust (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata, & Rich, 2012), and motivation (Kanfer, 1992; Tyler & Bies, 1990). The importance of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice

dimensions has been established in the classroom as well (e.g., Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004, 2004b; Chory, Horan, Carton, & Houser, 2014; Colquitt, 2001; Horan et al., 2010; Feldman, 2007). In fact, the construct of organizational justice is one of the top correlates of student success and perceptions of the instructor (e.g., Chory, 2007; Chory-Assad, 2002; Feldman, 2007; Horan et al., 2010).

One example of actionable management research that has long been used in the workplace, but also has implications in the classroom, is the interaction between procedural and distributive justice. Specifically, in a review of the literature, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) found that, especially when distributive justice is low, procedural justice can mitigate negative reactions. Other research found that a procedurally just climate is related to reconciliation behaviors after a perceived offense (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006), and that perceptions of procedural justice can lessen the likelihood of seeking revenge (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999). Generally, procedural fairness includes concepts of voice (value-expressive: having the opportunity to express one's opinions) and/or influence (instrumental: control over outcomes) (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Leventhal (1980) broadened procedural justice to include principles such as consistency, lack of bias, correctability, representation, accuracy, and adherence to ethical standards.

Applying this interaction to the classroom via a social exchange theory framework (Adams, 1965), students will compare a grade received to either the amount of time and effort expended, a comparison other (i.e., another student in the class), or some combination of these. If the outcome is not as expected based on this comparison, it will be deemed unfair, highlighting the need to both provide explanations as to how grades are determined and consistency in grading procedures. Additionally, allowing students the opportunity to express their perspectives related to the outcome will likely also enhance perceptions of procedural justice (e.g., Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). Research has shown that in general when employees are given voice, whether it affects the outcome or not, they perceive the process as more fair (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). The importance of consistency and voice in procedural justice perceptions has been demonstrated in a multitude of studies (Greenberg, 1986; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and is a concept where the applications to a classroom setting seem obvious, but may not be explicitly applied.

Various dimensions of justice have been explored empirically in the pedagogical research. Research has

established that procedural justice perceptions have main effects on classroom outcomes such as student evaluations of teaching (Feldman, 2007; Tata, 1999), student motivation and indirect interpersonal aggression (Chory-Assad, 2002), learning (Chory-Assad, 2002; Feldman, 2007), hostility, revenge (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004), grade satisfaction, class rule compliance (Colquitt, 2001). Interactional justice has also been shown to be an important factor in student perceptions (Chory et al., 2014; Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b). It is clear that the student perception of injustice and the emotional response are just as dynamic and complicated as the employee response and that in certain situations, different types of justice perceptions may become predominant (e.g., Chory et al., 2014; Chory-Assad, 2002; Horan, Martin, & Weber, 2012; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984).

The interaction between procedural justice and distributive justice has also been established in pedagogical research. One study found, for example, that student evaluations are more strongly related to grading procedures than actual grades (Tyler & Caine, 1981). Another study showed that instructors seen as accurate graders received higher student evaluations regardless of actual grade received (Cooper, Stewart, & Gudykunst, 1982). Explicit teacher behaviors associated with injustice are unfair testing, deviating from the syllabus, and showing favoritism.

Although much pedagogical research has been done, we contend that organizational justice is a construct that should receive more attention in terms of actionable classroom behavior. The principles of consistency and voice, for example, deserve more consideration as to what they mean for instructors in a classroom (see also Chory & McCroskey, 1999). These concepts also deserve much more overt attention in the training of future teachers and during the course preparation process. Although definitions of the justice dimensions have been translated into the classroom setting, more consideration of what these concepts mean to instructor behavior, course design, the syllabus, grading, and feedback is deserved. An exploration of the relative weighting of different types of justice in the eyes of students would also be interesting, as certain studies, for example, have suggested procedural justice as having more weight on outcomes such as motivation, affective learning, and aggression (Chory-Assad, 2002), but interactional justice and combined procedural/distributive injustice as having more severe negative emotional responses (Chory et al., 2014; see also Chory, 2007). In addition, the applied literature has shown that anger will result in the face of procedural

or interactional injustice, even with high distributive justice (Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000; see also Horan et al., 2010). Finally, the empirically demonstrated relationships between organizational justice and outcomes such as organizational commitment, organizational retaliatory behavior, and motivation deserve further examination in the classroom, especially as they apply to the university as a whole and may impact retention and graduation rates as well as alumni giving.

### Applying ILT and justice research to instructor credibility

Previous studies have shown that instructor credibility (an attitude characterized by belief in instructor) is increased if the instructor practices what they teach (Ruppert & Green, 2012). We have argued in the preceding that the findings from the applied literature, particularly as related to ILT and organizational justice, have direct applications to classroom management. In Table 1, Table 1 we link ILT and organizational justice to specific examples of instructor behavior to demonstrate how different dimensions of credibility may be impacted.

Notably, Chory (2007) examined credibility in relation to justice in the classroom, finding that competence predicted interactional justice, caring predicted procedural and interactional justice, and character predicted all three types of justice (including distributive). Also useful in defining specific classroom behaviors is an article by Houston and Bettencourt (1999) that classifies specific instructor behaviors as fair or unfair using a critical incident technique (for examples of procedural justice see also Horan et al., 2010).

Table 1 suggests that competence, defined by knowledge and expertise, can be achieved by establishing legitimacy on the first day, keying into aspects of the leadership prototype such as intelligence, charisma, and attractiveness. For example, wearing more formal business attire and being well prepared and organized for the first day of class will trigger students' perceptions of a subject-matter expert (SME) who is ready to lead the class. In addition, an introduction and overview of instructor credentialing in the subject, and related subjects, will establish intelligence and legitimacy. This is also arguably an opportunity to establish strength and dedication with regard to the content, enhancing the instructor's position as an SME. In addition, student perceptions of an instructor's expertise might be related to distributive justice, as research shows that students trust an SME instructor to be competent and grade the assignment fairly (Paulsel et al., 2005). Providing intellectual challenge has also been linked to perceptions of

**Table 1.** Examples of instructor behavior as related to credibility, ILT, and justice.

Instructor credibility	Defining characteristics	Examples of instructor behavior	Possible ILT dimensions	Possible justice dimensions
Competence	Knowledge Expertise	Establish legitimacy on first day through a well-designed course	Intelligence Charisma Attractiveness Strength Masculinity Dedication	Distributive justice Interactional justice
		Establish legitimacy on first day through appearance Establish clear and student-relevant learning objectives Have a thorough and engaging syllabus Clearly convey discipline understanding and its relevance Be prepared for class sessions Provide intellectual challenge		
Character	Consistency Accuracy Lack of bias Ethical	Model integrity in your classroom management	Strength Sensitivity Dedication Antityranny	Procedural justice Interactional justice Distributive justice
		Keep your promises and when you need to change assignments or class design, clearly communicate why change is needed Be aware of and counter your potential biases in classroom management Link assessments to learning objectives Focus on learning instead of just grades Discuss your grading process (be transparent in grading) Communicate clear criteria for grades, such as rubrics Assess grades fairly		
Caring	Concern Availability Helpfulness Enthusiasm Interest	Show connections between student learning needs and course outcomes/ assignments	Sensitivity Dedication	Procedural justice Interactional justice
		Be available for student questions or conversations Treat students with respect Create psychological safety for students Avoid relying on punishment to motivate, offer positive incentives Answer e-mail quickly Return grades promptly Provide study guides Curve grades if necessary Stay after class Have abundant office hours or availability		
Flexibility	Voice Influence Correctability Adaptability Responsiveness to feedback	Collect, listen, and respond openly and thoughtfully to student feedback and concerns	Sensitivity Antityranny	Distributive justice Procedural justice
		Model learning by adapting course design as needed with clear communication about why Structure learning to reflect different learning styles Admit when wrong Allow for appeal Provide second chances Allow for excused absence Be responsive to external factors		

justice and is most directly related to the intelligence and strength dimensions of the ILT (Feldman, 2007).

The character element of instructor credibility brings in the aspects of procedural justice most explicitly defined by Leventhal (1980) to include principles such as consistency, lack of bias, accuracy, and adherence to ethical standards. Behavioral examples include fair testing and grading. Grading criteria, performance standards, and expectations should be clear and equally applied. Professors are not exempt from basic perceptual biases, but grading procedures can be used to allow one to make a professional judgment call in a more equally applied manner. For example, the instructor may consider using grade descriptions (what kind of work constitutes an A, B, etc.), checklists of items required, or rubrics (where each requirement for the assignment is described on a high to low scale) (Walvoord & Anderson, 2010). When given to students before the assignment, these teaching tools can be very helpful in explaining the procedures that will be used for grading and increasing consistency (Whetten, 2007).

This type of behavior should also be directly linked to the sensitivity, dedication, and antityranny dimensions of the leader prototype.

Perceptions of the overall fairness of the class are likely increased by linking assessments to course learning goals (Walvoord & Anderson, 2010; Whetten, 2007) and to the material taught in class. This sounds elementary, but it is important to teach the criteria upon which the students will be tested and to test the criteria you have set out for the students to learn. Such a match will increase perceptions of procedural justice by fulfilling student expectations of grading and testing procedures. Finally, shifting the classroom focus to the process of learning versus the assignment of a grade (Walvoord & Anderson, 2010; Whetten, 2007) may encourage perceptions of procedural fairness even in the absence of a strong distributive outcome. Admittedly, it is difficult to sway the focus of students away from course grades, but if grades are seen as an opportunity for improvement rather than the ultimate punishment, students should focus more on the procedure versus the outcome.

We suggest that caring may include characteristics such as concern, availability, helpfulness, enthusiasm, and interest. In this regard, teacher confirmation of students as valuable and significant is related to increased perceptions of justice (Buttner, 2004; Paulsel et al., 2005), and likely has much to do with the voice component of procedural justice. Additionally, faculty can demonstrate sensitivity and (anti)tyranny characteristics by listening to student concerns, caring about students as individuals (hence taking individual circumstances into account), and being willing to expend extra energy to ensure student success. Relatedly, one study found that the use of coercive power in the classroom was related to lower perceptions of procedural justice (and referent, expert, and legitimate power are positively related to such perceptions) (Paulsel et al., 2005). This suggests that staying away from punishment as the main method of motivation would likely improve perceptions of procedural fairness as well. Research also finds that perceptions of interactional justice are strongly tied to perceived instructor kindness (Chory, 2007), which students likely link to behaviors such as having abundant office hours, curving grades, and providing study guides (Houston & Bettencourt, 1999). In short, increasing helping behaviors that demonstrate the instructor is on the side of the student in wanting to provide the materials that will enable them to do well in the course will be seen as caring about the student.

Finally, flexibility is included in Table 1 as an emergent element related to ILT and justice perceptions outside of the three dimensions of instructor credibility. This dimension may be strongly related to caring; however, it includes a specific cluster of behaviors such as admitting when wrong, allowing for appeal, providing opportunities for revision, and adapting based on changing semester-by-semester constraints (see also Houston & Bettencourt, 1999). The proceeding discussion would point to these behaviors as related to the influence dimension of voice, but also the sensitivity and antityranny dimensions of the ILT. Indeed, Walvoord and Anderson (2010) have pointed out that to maximize justice, one should listen to and observe students and be open to change when necessary.

## Conclusion

Enhanced perceptions of instructor credibility are related to positive outcomes in the classroom (Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; McCroskey & Teven, 1999). We contend that student perceptions of instructor credibility can be directly impacted by applying management research in the classroom. In other

words, actionable management research is useful in the classroom not just to share with students because it may make them better managers, but also to improve teaching practices and outcomes. Course instructors should go beyond incorporating specific exercises (e.g., roundtable examination, live case method) that link theory to practice (Berggren & Söderlund, 2011) to actually role modeling actionable behaviors as an instructor.

Previous research supports this idea in one context—business communication principles applied to a business communication course (Ruppert & Green, 2012). Going beyond this specific context, the ILT and justice literatures may be particularly fruitful to analyze to the extent that the applied literature in these areas can be shown to be related to establishing credibility. Combined with the pedagogical literature, the applied research in these areas lead us to several best practices in the classroom in order to establish competency, character, and caring (see Table 1).

Much further research is necessary to further explicate the points we have made in this article. A full review of the literature, for example, could address other findings deemed actionable in the field (e.g., Pearce & Huang, 2012) and juxtapose those with the extant pedagogical literature as it relates to the establishment of instructor credibility in the classroom. This review may expose a number of possible future research studies to explore student perceptions in the classroom using what we already know in industry. Additionally, we have discussed some links between the ILT dimensions (Offermann et al., 1994) and justice perceptions in the establishment of instructor credibility, but there appear to be more opportunities to go beyond this outcome alone. For example, student perceptions of instructor ILT and justice could be related to measures of student success and satisfaction, providing more insight about which leadership and justice characteristics are most associated with enhanced student learning. Finally, although parallel research streams exist related to the interaction between procedural and distributive justice in organizational and classroom settings, a thorough review of research findings in the applied and pedagogical research would more clearly delineate under which circumstances, and for which outcomes, certain dimensions of justice are more salient (and/or provide direction for new empirical studies).

Clearly, there are a number of research questions that emerge from the discussion of utilizing actionable management research to establish instructor credibility, even when the discussion is limited to ILT and justice. There is much advantage to exploring how applied findings can be actionable in a classroom setting to make us better

teachers, but also to overtly looking to the applied body of literature to unearth previously unasked research questions about the art and science of teaching.

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