

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN GOAL ORIENTATION AND  
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE THEORETICAL PROCESSES  
THROUGH WHICH ETHICAL LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES  
WORK OUTCOMES

by

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“To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine....”

Eph 3:20

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Abstract

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Due to recent heightened public awareness of ethics and ethical scandals in business, the ethical leadership construct has become increasingly popular. However, scholars still know little about the predictors of ethical leadership and the specific processes through which ethical leaders influence their followers. Across three different papers, I contribute to the literature by addressing these gaps. The first paper consists of a theoretical review of goal orientation and ethical leadership with specific focus on the interplay between the two constructs. In the second paper I use latent path analysis with a sample of 234 supervisor/subordinate dyads and find leader trait-avoid goal orientation as a significant negative antecedent to ethical leadership. Additionally, I find evidence supporting the social learning influence of leader trait goal orientation on follower state goal orientation. Specifically, leader trait-prove and trait-avoid goal orientation directly influenced follower state-prove and state-avoid goal orientation respectively. Ethical leadership mediated the relationship between leader trait-learn and trait-avoid and follower state-learn and state-avoid respectively and indirectly influenced task-related organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) through follower state-avoid. Finally, the

third paper consists of a meta-analysis of empirical ethical leadership studies through 2014 ( $k=81$ ,  $N=19,101$ ). I find support for a primary social exchange explanation for ethical leadership's influence on follower OCBs and a social learning explanation for its influence on follower unethical behavior. Contrary to predictions, report intentions (i.e., willingness to report unethical behavior) was best explained through a social exchange perspective. Mixed theoretical influence was found for task performance and affective commitment.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Leaders often become the chapter headings in the book of human history. Mention a leader's name and suddenly images of a time period, event, and a people are invoked. Hearing the name Moses or Mohammad prompts us to ponder the history and life of the Jewish or Muslim people. Alexander the Great brings to mind military conquest, imperialism, and the vast spread of Hellenistic culture. Names such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson remind us of the foundations of the United States and the American Revolutionary War. Adolf Hitler helps us recall the formidable influence of charisma coupled with the brutality and oppression of the Holocaust. Mahatma Gandhi is a name recognized worldwide for the Indian independence movement and the legitimate influence of nonviolent protest. Rosa Parks gives us insight into the inspirational effect of an individual act of brave defiance. Hearing both her name and the name Martin Luther King, Jr., brings to mind the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., the troubling effects of racism, and the power of a dream. In light of the profound impact leaders have, it is no wonder why the study of leaders and leadership has been a part of human discourse for centuries.

The purpose of this dissertation is to attempt to contribute to this ongoing discourse and the more recent scientific exploration of what it means to be a leader. My precise focus is ethical leadership, which although being a nascent construct in the field of management, has undoubtedly been a part of the leadership discourse since its genesis. As James MacGregor Burns (2003) wrote, "We don't call for good leadership – we expect, or at least hope, that it will be good...I contend that there is nothing neutral about leadership; it is valued as a moral necessity" (p. 2). When it comes to leadership training and development we do not typically identify such efforts as "good" leadership

training or “ethical” leadership development, for we expect, or hope, aspiring leadership at its core is good and ethical. Despite this hopeful expectation, however, the explicit scientific study of ethical conduct and leadership in the social science literature during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was scant. To fill such void, the formal study of ethical leadership (e.g., Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005) commenced in the late 1990s and early 2000s in the field of management. It is within this vein of literature I hope this dissertation provides theoretical clarification and empirical advancement.

The bulk of the extant ethical leadership research is focused on its predictive capabilities (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). This is not surprising, given the legitimacy of a management construct is usually determined by its efficacy to influence employee attitudes and behaviors and ultimately performance (Waldman, Ramirez, House, & Puranam, 2001). For the sake of developing a more robust leadership theory, however, it is necessary to move beyond predicting outcomes to understanding precursors and process (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Perrow, 1970). Therefore, I have set out in this dissertation to address these two specific areas. To do this, I examine the interplay between goal orientation and ethical leadership, proposing goal orientation as both a predictor of ethical leadership as well as a process variable through which it influences outcomes such as follower organizational citizenship behaviors and unethical behavior. I also analyze the relative strength and usefulness of using social exchange theory and social learning theory to explain the effects of ethical leadership.

To best accommodate the breadth of my analysis, I have chosen a three-paper format. The collective theme of these papers centers on building a more robust theory of ethical leadership by advancing our limited understanding of antecedents and the

processes invoked by ethical leader behaviors. Before introducing each of these papers and their individual contribution to this collective goal, I thought it best to begin with a concise overview of the literature from which ethical leadership emerged. This is not a comprehensive review but rather a broad synopsis of the social science leadership literature with the intention of exposing the need for concentrated focus on ethical leadership research. Following this overview I conclude with a summary of each paper included in this dissertation.

### Survey of Leadership Research

The fact that superior leaders have been chronicled over thousands of years led Thomas Carlyle and his contemporaries, such as William James, to promote what has since been called the “Great Man Theory” of leadership (Carlyle, 1840; James, 1880). The implication of this work was the idea that great leaders are born with special qualities setting them apart for the leadership of others. Trait theorists continued this line of thinking by analyzing individual differences distinguishing leaders from nonleaders (Chemers, 1997; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). Over time consistent leadership traits such as persistence, honesty, emotional stability, internal locus of control, assertiveness, general mental ability, and achievement motivation have transpired (Avolio, 2007; Kouzes & Pozner, 1987; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1998). A multitude of trait-based empirical data allowed Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhart (2002) to meta-analyze the relationship between the Big Five personality factors and leadership, revealing strong and consistent positive correlations between extraversion and conscientiousness and leadership effectiveness and emergence.

This pure trait approach to leadership conflicted with the extreme situationalism promoted by philosophers such as Hegel, Marx, and Spencer who discarded the notion a person or his/her traits had any bearing on the impersonal forces that prevailed in history



(Burns, 2003). Stogdill (1948) also rebutted a pure trait view by concluding in his review, “the findings suggest that leadership is not a matter of passive status or of the mere possession of some combination of traits” (p. 66). The debate between the two sides centered on whether situations and events control us or if our innate traits and characteristics help us overcome or succumb to the forces around us (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

To bridge the divide, scholars began focusing on behavioral-based and later contingency-based theories of leadership. Behavioral-based theories began acknowledging the role of the situation in influencing the consequences of leader behavior choices on leader effectiveness (Barrow, 1977; Hemphill, 1949; Yukl, 1971). Yet, behaviorists still largely focused on leader behaviors as the predictor rather than the criterion (Perrow, 1970; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Contingency-based theories sought to analyze the interaction between the situation and the leader’s control, influence, and motivation (Fiedler, 1964, 1967). Often contingency-based theorists utilized behavior-based models and prescribed their effectiveness across various contexts (e.g., Hersey & Blanchard, 1969, 1982; House, 1971; Kerr, Schriesheim, Murphy, & Stogdill, 1974; Vroom & Yetton, 1973).

Seminal work on leader behavior commenced at both the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan in the 1950s and 1960s (Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Stogdill & Coons, 1957). Although the work at these two institutions was somewhat orthogonal, two similar dimensions emerged, consisting of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors (i.e., *consideration* and *initiating structure*). Task-orientation behaviors resemble making role assignments, coordinating employees, and developing performance standards (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Conversely,

relationship-oriented behaviors consist of being courteous, empathic, and showing concern for employees and other organizational members (Holtz & Harold, 2013).

A substantial number of leadership theories were birthed from the behavioral-based perspective (Yukl, 1998; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). Charismatic leadership theory stemming from Weber (1947) illustrated the exceptional influence some leaders obtain from articulating an inspirational vision coupled with perceived sincerity and sensitivity to the needs of followers (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998). Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory emerged in the 1970s analyzing the relational behaviors within leader/follower dyads (Graen, 1976; Graen & Cashman, 1975). In this stream of research, the importance of leader behavior in establishing strong exchange relationships with individual followers is confirmed by consistent positive relationships between LMX and leader effectiveness (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). Arguably the most influential behavioral-based leadership theory, transformational leadership, entailed several classifications of leader behavior including transactional, management by exception (i.e., active and passive), laissez-faire, and transformational (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Transformational leadership was born from the idea that some leaders are able to influence their followers to go above and beyond performance expectations (Bass, 1985). In a leadership treatise of sorts, Burns (1978) exposed what he called a “crisis of leadership” and put forth a framework differentiating transactional from transforming leadership. Transactional leadership was proposed as the most commonly practiced form of leadership whereby leaders offer rewards and incentives in exchange for follower compliance. Conversely, transformational leaders appeal to the needs of followers and inspire collective goal attainment rather than the pursuit of individual wants and needs. The interpretation of Burns’ work into the management sciences by Bass and colleagues

in the 1980's led to a massive proliferation of research on transformational leadership collectively finding strong positive relationships with employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011).

Transformational leadership theory exhibited promise toward a holistic approach for explaining leader effectiveness, but one of its fundamental shortcomings was its rather benign emphasis on ethics (Ciulla, 1998; Graham, 1991; Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis). Burns (1978) felt strongly enough about the moral component of transformational leadership to suggest, "the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (p. 4). The fact that transformational leadership may take on unethical displays was eventually acknowledged (e.g., Bass, 1998; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) resulting in the differentiation between pseudo-transformational leadership and authentic transformational leadership (e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 2003). Pseudo-transformational leaders use transformational behaviors to manipulate followers toward the accomplishment of their own selfish goals, while authentic transformational leaders possess moral character and pursue the needs of self and others (Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, & Sosik, 2011).

It was from this leadership research environment that a critical mass of researchers began focusing on the role of ethical and moral behaviors in leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) exhorted, "For far too long, the literature on leadership, especially business leadership, has neglected the ethical issues" (pref. x). Soon after, Craig and Gustafson (1998) introduced the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) to measure the degree to which leader integrity affected leader effectiveness. The importance of the morally derived behaviors of listening, empathy, stewardship, and awareness among others were analyzed as part of servant leadership

(Barbuto & Wheeler, 2002; Graham, 1991; Spears, 1995, Spears, Lawrence, & Blanchard, 2001). Fry (2003) introduced the concept of spiritual leadership emphasizing integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. Also, at this time Treviño, Hartman, and Brown (2000) began extensive qualitative research on what normatively appropriate ethical behavior looked like in organizations.

### *Ethical Leadership*

The formal ethical leadership construct conceived by Treviño and colleagues (2000) was compelling because it was derived from actual interviews with business executives and ethics compliance officers. It was also one of the few leadership constructs that specifically honed in on ethics and ethical conduct giving researchers the ability to specifically analyze the effectiveness of ethical leader behavior separately from larger leadership frameworks (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Brown et al. (2005) proposed a formal definition for ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p. 120). They also developed the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) encouraging a vast quantity of empirical studies regarding the efficacy of ethics in leadership.

Foundational theory suggests ethical leaders must be both a moral person and a moral manager (Treviño et al., 2000). As a moral person, an ethical leader acts in a trustworthy manner, is fair to others, and has high levels of integrity. In addition to these characteristics, ethical leaders are also moral managers who consistently communicate their commitment to ethics, reward ethical conduct and punish unethical conduct, and intentionally role model ethical behavior for followers (Treviño et al., 2003).

Using the ELS to measure the joint display of moral person and moral manager behaviors, empirical studies abound indicating the effectiveness of ethical leadership in

predicting positive workplace outcomes. Brown and colleagues (2005) led the way finding ethical leadership to predict job satisfaction, willingness to report peer indiscretions, and perceived leader effectiveness. Subsequent research found support for ethical leadership predicting individual and group-level OCBs (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, Folger, 2010) and affective commitment (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) uncovered ethical leadership's positive affect on extra-role voice behavior through psychological safety. In an examination of the core job characteristics, ethical leadership was positively related to task significance, effort, autonomy, and eventually task performance (Piccolo et al., 2010). Finally, ethical leadership negatively predicted unwanted work behaviors such as unethical behavior (Mayer, Nurmohamed, Treviño, Shapiro, & Schminke, 2013; Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010; Schaubroeck et al., 2012), relationship conflict (Mayer et al., 2012), and group-level deviance (Mayer et al., 2009). Substantive mediating mechanisms examined include ethical climate (Mayer et al., 2010), ethical culture (Schaubroeck et al., 2012), regulatory foci (Neubert, Wu, & Roberts, 2013), follower moral identity symbolization (Mayer et al., 2012), and more recently follower moral emotions and mindfulness (Eisenbass & Van Knippenberg, 2015).

Few researchers have used ethical leadership as a criterion variable, but some established antecedents do exist. Using the Big Five domain of personality characteristics, research indicates ethical leaders tend to be conscientious and agreeable (Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2011; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Mayer and colleagues (2012) utilized two large-scale field studies finding leader moral identity internalization and symbolization to positively predict ethical leadership. Cognitive moral

development (CMD) is also an established antecedent (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Jordan, Brown, Treviño, & Finkelstein, 2013). Jordan and colleagues (2013) found leader CMD and follower CMD to interact in predicting ethical leadership such that the higher a leader's CMD is compared to his or her follower's, the greater the subsequent ethical leadership perceptions. Brown and Treviño (2014) recently found support for having a strong career role model in predicting subordinate-rated ethical leadership perceptions.

#### Statement of Contribution

From this short review it is evident ethical leadership has immense utility value. It is also evident there is still much we do not understand. Important questions remain about the nature of ethical leadership, what its antecedents are, and what the mediating mechanisms through which it influences followers are. Specifically, are there characteristics of a leader and/or his or her environment that make ethical behavior more likely? Which theories best explain why ethical leadership influences various employee attitudes and behaviors? Does ethical leadership directly influence follower outcomes or are there mediating variables that better explain the process? I set out in this dissertation toward answering these questions and each of the three included papers contribute in a unique yet unified way.

#### *Paper One*

As I reviewed the extant ethical leadership literature, I pondered why some leaders behave ethically and others do not. Studies confirm there is certainly a moral component to such behavior (e.g., Jordan et al., 2013; Mayer et al., 2012; Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, & Milner, 2002), but aside from morality perhaps there is something about the way a leader works or how they set goals or perceive success that makes ethical or unethical behavior more likely. This question led me to further analysis

of the goal orientation construct, referring to an individual's situated or trait-like preferences for achievement (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; VandeWalle, 2003). Conceived from the field of educational psychology (Dweck, 1986), early studies on goal orientation link a focus on performing better than others or avoiding failure to cheating and plagiarism behaviors among students (Anderman, Griesinger, & Westerfield, 1998; Murdock, Hale, & Weber, 2001). This is contrasted with more positive outcomes for individuals who approached achievement situations with a desire to learn, grow, and master skills for the sake of self-improvement (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Based on these findings, I propose the goal orientation of a leader may predispose him or her to consider ethical or unethical means for goal accomplishment. The purpose of the first paper is to provide an extensive theoretical basis for this proposed relationship between goal orientation and ethical leadership and why exploring this interplay might be of scholarly significance.

### *Paper Two*

In the second paper I draw extensively upon theory from Paper One to empirically test a model of goal orientation and ethical leadership. First, I examine the differential effects of the three dimensions of a leader's trait goal orientation (i.e., learn, prove, and avoid) on his or her subsequent ethical leadership perceptions. Second, I analyze whether a leader's trait goal orientation at work influences a similar follower state goal orientation with ethical leadership as a mediator. Finally, I test whether the effects of ethical leadership on follower task-related OCBs and task-related unethical behavior is partially mediated by follower state goal orientation. To investigate my hypotheses, I collected data from subordinates and their supervisors (N=234 dyads) and utilize latent path analysis to test the full model.

### *Paper Three*

Brown and colleagues (2005) introduced ethical leadership as a *social learning* construct. Shortly after this, Brown and Treviño (2006) also acknowledged the *social exchange* implications of the construct. Since then, many researchers speak of the combined effects of these two theoretical processes to explain the “why” and “how” of ethical leadership (Ng & Feldman, 2014). In the third and final paper of this dissertation I take a more precise approach to understanding the theoretical processes underlying ethical leadership models. Using a meta-analytic mediation model ( $k = 81$ ,  $N = 19,101$ ), I compare and contrast the social learning versus social exchange effects of ethical leadership on OCBs, affective commitment, task performance, report intentions, and unethical behavior. Using prior theory as precedent, I propose LMX as a social exchange mediator and ethical climate as a social learning mediator.

### Conclusions

The importance of leaders to the success of civilizations, movements, and organizations alike is undisputed. The scientific exploration of what great leaders are made of, how they behave, and how they interact with situations and their followers has progressed rapidly in the last century. Through this exploration the necessity of studying ethics in leadership has become quite clear. In order for the ethical leadership construct to continue its growth and to inform practice, robust theoretical development and empirical examination is necessary. I hope this dissertation adds another useful piece to the puzzle.



## Chapter 2

### An Examination of the Relationship Between Goal Orientation and Ethical Leadership

The correctness of an administrative decision is a relative matter – it is correct if it selects appropriate means to reach designated ends.

Herbert Simon

In contemporary business and society, the term “ethics” is a buzzword. One doesn’t have to look far to find news briefs or articles on corporate social responsibility, conscious capitalism, or simply companies advertising their espoused ethical values. According to research in the last decade these efforts appear to have paid off. In 2007, a Goldman Sachs, Inc. stock index of companies chosen for superior ethical conduct was noted as outperforming the overall stock market indicators by 25% (Giles & Mulier, 2007). In the book, “Firms of Endearment”, Sisosia, Sheth, and Wolfe (2007) analyzed 28 organizations deemed as highly conscious companies and found the publically traded organizations from that group to exceed the return on investment of the S&P 500 by a factor of 10.5 over a 6-year period (Schwartz, 2013). Ethisphere Institute publishes an annual ranking titled *World’s Most Ethical Companies* honoring organizations that promote ethical business practices both internally and externally. Its 2014 ranking featured 144 organizations compared to only 77 in 2007 (Ethisphere, n.d.). Just these few examples alone suggest there is general consensus that being called “ethical” is a good thing and organizations, leaders, and employees are often more profitable if they behave accordingly.

Organizations labeled “highly ethical” typically report fewer incidences of ethical misconduct (Ethics Resource Center, 2014), and higher employee citizenship behaviors (Ethisphere, n.d.) than their peers. An example of the costly repercussions of unethical conduct is illustrated by the \$14.8 billion in fines and settlements that J.P. Morgan paid in

2014 as well as a posted decrease of \$1.1 billion to its 4<sup>th</sup> quarter revenues for legal expenses including the Madoff settlement announcements (Meek, 2014). Reducing unethical behavior, therefore, can result in tremendous cost avoidance for an organization. Conversely, the increase in employee citizenship behaviors accompanied with being “highly ethical” has a substantial impact on employee well-being and productivity (Olson, 2013). Robert Levering, co-founder of Great Place to Work, the company behind Fortune’s annual *100 Best Companies to Work For in the U.S.*, remarks, “a great place to work is one in which you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do, and enjoy the people you work with” (Great Place To Work, 2014). Trust happens to be one of the fundamental descriptors of a highly ethical organization (Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006).

With this buzz about ethics and the research suggesting the positive performance outcomes that may accompany it (Ameer & Othman, 2012; Chun, Shin, Choi, & Kim, 2013; Surroca, Tribo, & Waddock, 2010; Trudel & Cotte, 2008), it is advantageous for scholars and business leaders to understand what makes an organization ethical, as well as the factors influencing employee ethical behavior. Given the tendency of employees to mimic the behaviors they observe in their leaders (Bandura, 1986), the study of ethical leadership is an important place to start.

Since the behavioral-based construct of ethical leadership was formally operationalized by Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), research on the topic has experienced a tremendous rise in popularity (c.f. Brown & Mitchell, 2010). The construct was initially understood through social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), implying ethical leadership would decrease unethical behavior and increase followers’ proclivity toward ethical decision making (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). Recently scholars have also looked to social exchange theory (Blau,

1964) to explain the positive outcomes of ethical leadership such as organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, & Folger 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011). However, the antecedents to and processes through which ethical leadership affects these employee outcomes are still not well understood (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Furthermore, few studies have examined characteristics of the follower that may influence the effects of ethical leadership (see Jordan, Brown, Treviño, & Finkelstein, 2013 for an exception).

Just as ethical leadership is closely linked to reducing “bad” organizational outcomes and increasing “good” outcomes, the goal orientation construct is linked with similar effects (Farr, Hofmann, & Ringenbach, 1993; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; Van de Walle, Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1999). Originally conceptualized in the field of educational psychology (Eison, 1979; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984), goal orientation is a social cognitive construct representing individual differences in how people evaluate and determine the appropriate actions to take when engaging in achievement tasks (Farr et al., 1993; Payne et al., 2007). Positive outcomes are usually associated with individuals who adopt a learning goal orientation—indicative of an intrinsic desire for challenging and mastery opportunities—such as fostering adaptive self-regulatory processes that increase skill acquisition and task achievement (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996).

In a meta-analysis on goal orientation, Payne and colleagues (2007) found goal orientation to have a strong influence on self-regulation outcomes (e.g., general self-efficacy, goal setting, effort). Self-regulatory mechanisms, which enhance personal agency, are particularly relevant to ethical leadership as they often facilitate the repression of unethical behaviors and the promotion of prosocial behaviors (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001). Despite the promising conceptual

relevance of goal orientation to the ethical leadership literature, very little research has explicitly examined the relationship between the two constructs.

This paper contributes to the ethical leadership literature by proposing a critical interplay between goal orientation and ethical leadership. In my theoretical model, illustrated in Figure 2-1, I propose leader trait goal orientation as a key antecedent to ethical leadership. Drawing from social learning theory, I then propose ethical leadership partially mediates the effect of a leader's trait goal orientation on his or her follower's state goal orientation. Moreover, I propose ethical leadership is negatively related to task-related unethical behavior and positively related to task-related OCBs through a follower's state goal orientation.

To develop this model I begin with a theoretical background and review of ethical leadership as a foundation. Second, I review and discuss goal orientation theory and analyze how it intersects with ethical leadership theory. Third, my proposition concerning an ethical leader's influence on his or her follower's state-based goal orientation is formulated. Finally, extant theory on goal orientation, unethical behavior, and OCBs is integrated to develop the outcome propositions.

## Ethical Leadership

### *Qualitative Foundations*

In the management literature, Treviño and colleagues led the inception of conceptualizing a descriptive construct for ethical leadership (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). The two pillars of ethical leadership, moral

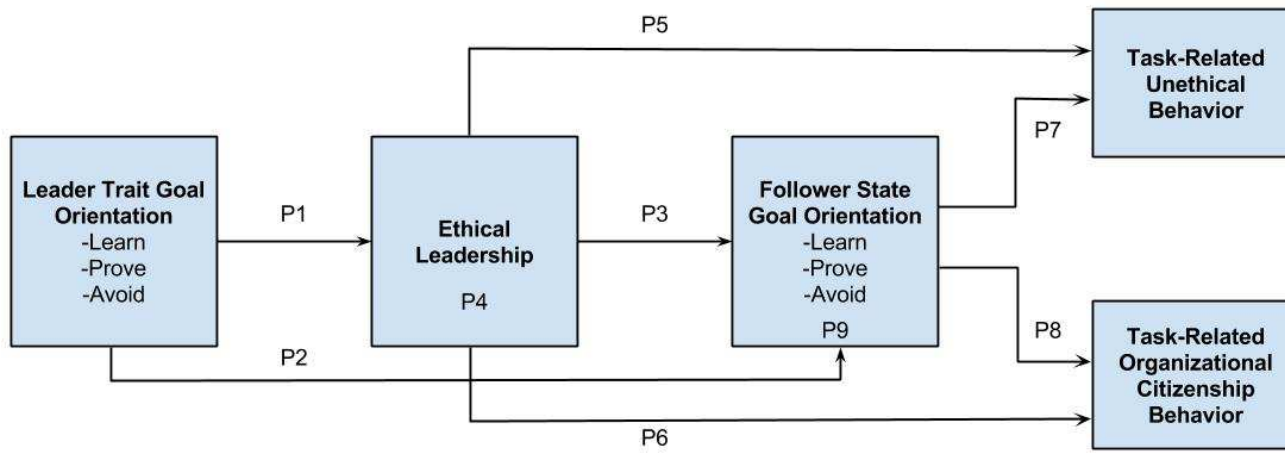


Figure 2-1 Theoretical Model of Goal Orientation and Ethical Leadership

person and moral manager, surfaced from 40 structured interviews of executives and corporate ethics officers in the U.S. (Treviño et al., 2000). Perhaps the fundamental theme of these seminal papers was the idea that a good leader inherently *is* an ethical leader. However, many highly ethical people are perceived as ethically-neutral leaders because they lack the skills in moral management. Following is a brief review of Treviño et al.'s (2000) breakdown of the moral person and moral manager pillars of ethical leadership.

#### Moral person

The moral person pillar is the foundation of ethical leadership. The stable characteristics associated with this pillar include trustworthiness, honesty, and integrity. Integrity encompasses trust and honesty as it implies consistency and reliability in espousing such traits. Sincerity and forthrightness were also mentioned as characteristics of ethical leaders suggesting the importance of transparency and telling people what you really think and believe rather than telling them what they want to hear. From a behavioral standpoint, the moral person does the right thing even when it is not recognized or seen by others. (S)he acts in ways that show genuine concern for the well-being of others, portraying a tone of openness and approachability so that subordinates and peers feel comfortable sharing concerns and problems with him or her. Finally, a moral person behaves in a manner exhibiting high personal morality. The final dimension of the moral person pillar is decision making. Ethical leaders make decisions that are objective, fair, and consider the needs of others. In other words, although organizational decisions may be focused on the bottom-line, moral people also ensure they meet the standard of being in the best interest of society, the environment, and the well-being of all stakeholders (Treviño et al., 2000).

### Moral manager

From a leadership standpoint, while being a moral person is a crucial pillar of ethical leadership, on its own it is rather impotent. Leaders who are strong ethical people, yet lack the skill of being a solid role-model for ethical conduct in the organization, are often seen as ethically-neutral. This is why the moral manager pillar is so important. Being a moral manager entails explicitly pronouncing that ethical conduct is the standard form of conduct in the workplace. Such managers engage in intentional and visible actions that demonstrate the appropriate way to handle ethical dilemmas. Moral managers actively manage the process through which work is conducted, reward ethical behavior, and discipline unethical behavior. Finally, moral managers make it a point to communicate regularly about ethics and its importance to the value system of the organization (Treviño et al., 2000).

### The ethical leader

In line with the social construction of leadership—that leaders are people who are perceived by others to be leaders—Treviño et al. (2003) further analyzed the qualities of ethical leaders using data collected from interviews of senior executives and ethics officers. A key theme that emerged was the overwhelming perception that ethical leaders are people-oriented. This theme was mentioned 25 times across 13 interviews of ethics officers. Among the executives interviewed, the idea that ethical leaders treat people well and are genuinely concerned for them was mentioned across the majority of interviews. Other frequent perceptions include that ethical leaders are good communicators and listeners, they do the right thing, are influential, and are courageous and strong (Treviño et al., 2003). They also have broad ethical awareness and make decisions concerning not only the interest of the bottom-line but also the good of their people, their community, and society.

Perceptions that corroborated with the moral manager pillar of ethical leadership included role modeling through visible ethical action, ethical decision-making, and the use of rewards and punishments to influence ethical behavior (Treviño et al., 2003). Ethical leaders “walk the talk” and become trusted role models through consistent, predictable ethical behavior. They institutionalize ethical values into their organizations by setting standards and holding themselves and others accountable for maintaining those standards. Through the use of rewards for doing the right things *the right way*, and punishments for unethical behaviors, ethical leaders make it clear there is no tolerance for unethical conduct in the workplace.

When asked to compare an ethical leader they knew of to someone who is ethically-neutral, important differences arose (Treviño et al., 2003). Perceptions of ethically-neutral leaders included more self-centered thinking, a short-term bottom-line focus, and a lack of ethical awareness. A few of the executives interviewed commented that the term “ethically-neutral” didn’t make sense, implying you are either perceived as ethical or you are not. Finally, regarding the use of power, ethically-neutral leaders were perceived to use their power for self-seeking or negative purposes when compared to the socially beneficial use of power by ethical leaders (Treviño et al., 2003).

#### *Ethical Leadership as a Construct*

The formal development of the ethical leadership construct was conducted by Brown and colleagues (2005). Primarily relying on a social learning foundation, they defined ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown et al., 2005, p 120). Based on this definition, it is clear ethical leaders set the example for how their employees should conduct themselves in the workplace.



This is done not only by how they conduct themselves (i.e., moral person) but also how they interact with and motivate their followers (i.e., moral manager).

Scholars are gaining a clear understanding of the employee-based outcomes of ethical leadership (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Brown & Treviño, 2006). These include higher affective and normative organizational commitment (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Roberts, & Chonko, 2013), extra-role voice behavior and psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), effort and task performance (Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011), moral efficacy (Schaubroeck et al., 2012), OCBs (Kacmar et al., 2011; Mayer et al., 2009; Piccolo et al., 2010), and decreased employee unethical behavior (Mayer et al., 2012; Schaubroeck et al., 2012), to name but a few. Less clear in the literature are the relevant antecedents to ethical leadership as well as the processes through which ethical leadership influences the aforementioned outcomes.

#### Antecedents of ethical leadership

The few studies that have focused on the antecedents of ethical leadership have primarily examined cognitive moral development (CMD), moral identity, and Big Five personality traits. For example, among 143 executive leader-follower dyads, a leader's CMD positively predicted ethical leadership perceptions and this effect was maximized when the leader's CMD was higher than the follower's CMD (Jordan et al., 2013). Across two studies, the first of 542 and a second of 891 supervisor-subordinate dyads, a leader's level of moral identity symbolization (study 1 & 2) and internalization (study 2) positively predicted ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2012). Ethical leadership was then found to be a significant mediator between leader moral identity and unit-level unethical behavior and relationship conflict.

Analyzing the Big Five personality traits and ethical leadership, Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) found agreeableness and conscientiousness, but not neuroticism, to

positively predict ethical leadership perceptions. Further analysis by Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoogh (2010), replicated these findings in two multi-source studies and found conscientiousness and agreeableness to be positively-related to ethical leadership as well. Conscientiousness was an antecedent due to its influence on role clarification, and agreeableness due to its role in fairness and power sharing. Extending Walumbwa and Schaubroeck's (2009) findings, after controlling for leader-member exchange (i.e., LMX, significantly correlated to ethical leadership at  $r = .76$ ), Kalshoven and colleagues (2010) also found emotional stability to be a positive predictor of ethical leadership.

These studies have been a helpful starting point in determining the dispositional composition of ethical leaders, however much work is still necessary (Brown & Treviño, 2006). An emerging construct in the organizational sciences, goal orientation, is plausibly a relevant antecedent as well as a process outcome variable of ethical leadership. What follows is a theoretical background of goal orientation along with an analysis of how goal orientation and ethical leadership may conceptually intersect.

#### Goal Orientation and Ethical Leadership

The workplace is the ultimate achievement situation. Leaders and their followers alike enter the workplace with achievement goals. Leaders are tasked with motivating and engaging their followers to achieve organizational objectives, while followers are focused on achieving the tasks, goals, and objectives outlined by their leaders. Just as ethical leaders avoid a myopic bottom-line mentality (Treviño et al., 2000), people with learning goal orientations also look past the *what* and instead focus on the *why* and *how* of achieving their goals (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007).

#### *Goal Orientation Theory*

Goal orientation was formally developed in the field of educational psychology during the 1970s and 1980s with the convergence of the work of three main scholars:

Eison, Dweck, and Nicholls (Payne et al., 2007). Beginning with his dissertation and several subsequent publications, James A. Eison argued students approach their studies with either a grade orientation or a learning orientation (Eison, 1979, 1981, 1982). According to Eison, students with a *grade orientation* are focused on doing the minimum amount of work necessary to achieve a certain grade while those with a *learning orientation* are motivated by being challenged and the pursuit of growth and mastery. Nicholls (1975, 1976) proposed students define success on two dimensions: task involvement or ego involvement. *Task involvement* motivation entailed improving one's performance compared to your own past performance (i.e., self-referent comparison). *Ego involvement* is when a person is motivated by comparing his or her own performance to another person (i.e., other-referent comparison). Thus, the primary foundation of Nicholls' theory is the difference in referent: self or other (Nicholls 1986; Payne et al., 2007).

Dweck (1975, 1986) and colleagues (Diener & Dweck, 1978; Dweck & Reppucci, 1973) identified two different cognition-affect-behavior patterns that existed among school-aged children. The first was a maladaptive helpless pattern identified by a child avoiding challenging tasks and performing poorly amidst obstacles. The second was a mastery-oriented or adaptive pattern consisting of children who sought out challenging tasks and persisted in the face of obstacles and failure. Later theorizing by Dweck and colleagues attributed such patterns to an individual's goal orientation founded in a fundamental belief about human intelligence (Dweck, 1975, 1986; Dweck & Elliott, 1983; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). People who accept an entity theory of intelligence—that individuals possess a fixed or nonmalleable level of skill or ability—approach tasks with a *performance goal orientation* (PGO) whereby they seek to prove their competence or avoid being seen as incompetent (Fisher, Minbashian, Beckmann, &

Wood, 2013; Kanfer, 1990). Conversely, those that believe intelligence is incremental—that it grows and can increase with experience and time—possess a *learning goal orientation* (LGO), viewing their work as an opportunity to gain competence and grow their skills and abilities (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Although the works of Eison, Nicholls, and Dweck were largely conceptualized separately and have slightly different theoretical formulations, all three agreed individuals differ in their motivation for task achievement and at least two distinct descriptions exist: *developing* competence versus *validating* competence (VanDeWalle, 1997). When goal orientation was finally introduced in the organizational sciences (e.g., Button et al., 1996; Farr et al., 1993), the majority of the theory was drawn from Dweck's work and the two orientations of LGO and PGO were formally adopted.

Individuals with a PGO usually view their work as something they must perform well in order to prove their capabilities to others, or to avoid being viewed as incompetent (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; VanDeWalle, 1997). Those high in PGO view their skills and abilities as nonmalleable. Therefore, mistakes are viewed as failures and indicative of a deficit in ability (Phillips & Gully, 1997). Individuals with a PGO prefer less challenging activities and have a strong desire to avoid making mistakes (Button et al., 1996).

Those with a LGO draw more from an incremental theory of intelligence implying people learn and grow over time. When people view their skills and abilities as malleable they are more likely to interpret mistakes as learning lessons and approach tasks as opportunities to gain knowledge and competence (Phillips & Gully, 1997). High LGO individuals typically enjoy a challenge and seek out more difficult tasks, are focused on self-improvement, and view the past as something to learn from rather than to regret (Button et al., 1996). Employees with a LGO care about both the ends as well as the means. In other words, it is not just about accomplishing the task, it is about what you

learn along the way and how much better you become as a person and a professional through the process of completing the task.

#### Dimensionality of goal orientation

Although the early work on goal orientation was bi-dimensional in nature (i.e., PGO and LGO), scholars later theorized three separate factors of the construct by breaking PGO into the two dimensions of *prove* (PPGO) and *avoid* (APGO) (VandeWalle, 1997). PGO's initial conceptualization entailed both an individual's desire to prove their competence as well as their desire to avoid failure and disapproval. VandeWalle (1997) formally proposed a three-factor structure to the construct would allow more fine-grained analysis and better theoretical development. The *prove* dimension, PPGO, was formally defined as "the desire to prove one's competence and to gain favorable judgments about it," while the *avoid* dimension, APGO, was defined as "the desire to avoid disproving of one's competence and to avoid negative judgments about it" (VandeWalle, 1997, p. 1000). The bulk of recent research on goal orientation analyzes the construct from this three-factor structure (e.g., Deshon & Gillespie, 2005; Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Hendricks & Payne, 2004; Payne et al, 2007).

The relationship between the dimensions of goal orientation has also been debated (Button et al., 1996; Payne et al., 2007; Phillips & Gully, 1997). Button and colleagues proposed LGO and PGO are "neither mutually exclusive, nor contradictory" (1996, p. 28). In their meta-analysis, Payne and colleagues (2007) found PPGO to be positively correlated to LGO for both trait- and state-based measures while LGO and APGO were negatively related. Adding a bit more ambiguity to the results, APGO and PPGO were positively related to each other across trait and state measures. Despite this equivocality, the general agreement in the literature is that LGO is linked with positive work outcomes while APGO is linked with primarily negative work outcomes (Dragoni &

Kuenzi, 2012; Elliott, 1999; Payne et al., 2007). Theoretically, PPGO, where individuals seek to prove their competency, skills, and abilities, lends itself toward positive work outcomes when success is publicly salient, although not to the same magnitude of effect as LGO (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012).

#### Dispositional versus situational

In the extant literature, goal orientation has been conceptualized as both a dispositional, trait-like characteristic (e.g., Button et al., 1996; Colquitt & Simmering, 1998) as well as a situational, state-like variable (e.g., Butler, 1993; Dragoni, 2005; Stevens & Gist, 1997). Kaplan and Maehr argue the original definition for goal orientations was “situated orientations for action in an achievement task” (2007, p. 142). Giving credence to both positions, Button and colleagues (1996) characterized goal orientation as a relatively stable trait-like variable that may be influenced by the situation, implying the environment may influence individuals to adopt higher or lower levels of a specific goal orientation to accommodate situational cues. Two of the early theorists in goal orientation, Dweck and Nicholls, empirically investigated both situation-specific goal orientations (Elliott & Dweck, 1988) as well as dispositional goal orientations (Nicholls, Cheung, Lauer, & Patashnick, 1989).

The vast majority of research on individual goal orientation treats the construct as a relatively stable trait (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Payne et al., 2007; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). In a meta-analysis, Payne et al., (2007) compiled 148 effect sizes for trait goal orientation compared to only 10 effect sizes for state goal orientation. Their results indicated trait goal orientation was fairly stable short-term, but few studies analyzed its long-term stability. Despite the rather myopic focus by scholars on trait goal orientation, there is agreement in the literature that goal orientation may have both state-

and trait-like qualities (Chen & Mathieu, 2008; Deshon & Gillespie, 2005; Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; VandeWalle, 1997).

In their development of motivated action theory, Deshon and Gillespie (2005) explicated the lack of scholarly agreement regarding the stability of goal orientation. Motivated action theory suggests a “dynamic interplay” between the chronically activated goals of an individual and the goals activated by the situation. Based on this conceptualization, Deshon & Gillespie (2005) suggest goal orientation may manifest as a state, domain-specific, and trait-like characteristic.

In his construction of a work domain goal orientation instrument, VandeWalle (1997) posited individuals’ goal orientations may vary by domain. For example, in an academic setting, an individual may have a learning goal orientation but when they move into a work setting their orientation may become more performance-based. VandeWalle’s conceptualization implies goal orientation may be somewhat malleable or influenced by the domain environment or perhaps the leader or peers in a given context (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1994; Dweck, 1991; VandeWalle, 1997).

Dragoni (2005) acknowledged an interplay between trait and state goal orientation through both individual and group-level processes. Specifically, she proposed subordinate state goal orientation is influenced by the psychological climate of the group as well as the leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship. Empirical work by Dragoni and Kuenzi (2012) found support for a leader’s trait goal orientation predicting the unit goal orientation and subsequently the unit’s performance perceptions. The implications of these studies is that the influence of a leader, either at the individual-level (i.e., LMX) or at the group-level (i.e., group climate), has some level of direct or indirect effect on the goal orientation of their followers.

Similar to the extant research on goal orientation in the organizational sciences (e.g., Chen & Mathieu, 2008; Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012), I propose a cascading effect of leader trait-based goal orientation to follower state-based goal orientation. Specifically, I suggest a leader's trait-based goal orientation is both an antecedent to ethical leadership and a follower's state-based goal orientation. These ideas are formally developed through an integration of goal orientation and ethical leadership.

#### *Goal Orientation as an Antecedent to Ethical Leadership*

##### LGO (Learn) and ethical leadership

Individuals with a LGO focus not only on goal achievement but also the process through which goals are achieved. Additionally, they exert more effort and have intrinsic interest in their tasks, focusing on self-referent versus other-referent comparisons. In the same manner, ethical leaders are concerned with not only doing the right things, but also doing the right things the right way (Treviño et al., 2003). In other words, the process of achieving objectives is as important, if not more important than the achieved product. For example, when asked the question, "what is ethical leadership?" a senior executive in Treviño et al.'s study suggested, "there's only one way to do business and that's the right way" (2003, p. 12). Ethical leaders infuse meaning and purpose into the work process by helping followers see the bigger picture and focus on maximizing individual improvement and effort (e.g., De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Piccolo et al., 2010). I propose individuals with a high LGO are more likely to be perceived as ethical leaders.

Proposition 1a: A leader's trait LGO (learn) will positively predict the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

##### PPGO (Prove) and ethical leadership

Individuals with a PPGO, tend to use self-other comparisons to prove their competence (Dweck, 1986). Instead of improving themselves, they typically seek to just



look better than their peers. Rather than encouraging individuals to be transparent and to use failure as a diagnostic tool, leaders with a high PPGO encourage the use of impression management and rationalization tactics among followers (Chen & Mathieu, 2008; Dragoni, 2005). These qualities are sharply in contrast to the conceptualization of ethical leadership, depicting leaders who take responsibility for their own behavior and who are transparent about failures and successes alike. Instead of trying to be better than other people, ethical leaders strive to focus on being the best they can be relative to moral ideals. In their management of followers, ethical leaders are more likely to focus on individual development and provide meaningful feedback for maximizing the potential of each follower (Piccolo et al., 2010). Since individuals with a PPGO would typically not foster the characteristics of a moral person and a moral manager, I propose PPGO will be negatively related to ethical leadership.

Proposition 1b: A leader's trait PPGO (prove) will negatively predict the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

#### APGO (Avoid) and ethical leadership

Individuals high in APGO, avoid challenges and choose to take on the simplest tasks possible in order to maintain the appearance of competence. Managers with an APGO will usually show favoritism toward high performers while ignoring the developmental needs of lesser performing followers (Dragoni, 2005). They also lack persistence in completing challenging tasks and objectives, often giving up easily (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Ethical leaders, on the other hand, finish what they start and take a holistic approach to their management style. Instead of viewing their subordinates as a means to an end, they consider each follower as a valued member of the organization. Piccolo and colleagues (2010) posit, "ethical leaders enhance task significance by making clear the contributions of group members' tasks to moral ideals and higher order goals" (p. 263). By emphasizing process over product, ethical leaders motivate followers

to stretch themselves and look beyond simple bottom-line objectives. Therefore, I propose individuals with a high APGO will be less likely to be perceived as ethical leaders.

Proposition 1c: A leader's trait APGO (avoid) will negatively predict the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

The leaders of an organization are role models for what normatively appropriate conduct looks like in that organization (Bandura, 1986; Brown et al., 2005). So while it is proposed that a leader's trait goal orientation is a likely antecedent to ethical leadership, it is also plausible that it will influence the state goal orientation of followers. As a leader interacts with followers, they implicitly model his or her own goal orientation to followers through personal conduct, interpersonal interaction, and management style. Similarly, the core elements of ethical leadership promote LGO over PPGO or APGO behaviors. Thus, it is likely ethical leadership—generally conceptualized as a social learning construct—accounts for at least part of the process through which a leader's trait goal orientation influences his or her follower's state goal orientation.

#### *Social Learning Theory*

Bandura (1977) posits people acquire new patterns of behavior either by directly experiencing the rewards or punishments that stem from such behavior or by observing the consequences of the behavior of others. This vicarious learning, or learning by observation, was further developed by Bandura into what is now known as social learning theory (SLT, Bandura, 1986). SLT suggests individuals generally learn appropriate behaviors by watching attractive and credible role models (Jordan et al., 2013). Leaders are often among the most credible role models in an organization since they embody what being successful in an organization looks like. They are also endowed by the organization with power and prestige. Consequently, when an individual seeks to determine how they should conduct themselves they generally observe their leaders.

### Social learning and goal orientation

As leaders interact with their followers they signal to them their preferred orientation through which goals should be achieved. Dragoni suggests, “Leaders transmit their achievement priority by engaging in behaviors and practices that support, reinforce, and imply their favored achievement orientation” (2005, p. 1086). Therefore, leaders with a high LGO will signal their preferred orientation by encouraging task completion behaviors indicative of high effort and persistence; the key priority being learning and mastery (Stevens & Gist, 1997). A leader with a PPGO will encourage impression management behaviors and portray success as being better than others rather than putting forth your best effort. Finally, a leader with high APGO will support his or her favored goal orientation by focusing on easy tasks, and limiting the appearance of error or failure to the detriment of optimal performance (Dragoni, 2005). According to SLT, as leaders transmit these favored goal orientations they are likely to induce similar state goal orientations among their followers. Although followers may have different *trait* goal orientations than their leaders, as they interpret their leader’s preferred task completion behaviors, they will tend to develop an isomorphic situational goal orientation when operating in their leader’s domain (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Van de Walle, 1997).

Proposition 2a: Leader trait-LGO will positively predict follower state-LGO.

Proposition 2b: Leader trait-PPGO will positively predict follower state-PPGO.

Proposition 2c: Leader trait-APGO will positively predict follower state-APGO.

### Social learning and ethical leadership

Ethical leaders are often both attractive and credible role models (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Not only are they an example of how to succeed in the organization, they also

are attractive because of their trustworthiness, fairness, and transparency in their interactions with followers (Treviño et al., 2000). The high integrity ethical leaders possess make them particularly appealing to followers since they know what to expect and are clear about what is and what is not acceptable behavior in their domain (Piccolo et al., 2010).

As role models, ethical leaders motivate employees by linking moral values to work processes, providing employees with a clear picture of how their tasks benefit the whole, and by contributing broadly to the organization and society (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). As ethical leaders consistently analyze the right way to do things, they provide employees with an example of how to make ethical decisions, think critically, and see the bigger picture. These fundamental behaviors often enhance employee self-efficacy, a principal component of SLT (Bandura, 1986; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

General self-efficacy—an individual's general sense of being capable of performing in a wide variety of situations—is heightened by the presence of high quality role models (Bandura, 1986). Ethical leaders, through their intrinsic concern for people and process instead of simply the product, engage in self-efficacy bolstering leadership behavior. As they value each of their followers, they consider their individual developmental needs and look for tasks that will help followers not only succeed but also, learn from failure. In support of this, a study analyzing 201 supervisor-subordinate dyads conducted by Walumbwa and colleagues (2011) found ethical leadership to be positively related to employee self-efficacy.

The self-regulatory enhancing behaviors of an ethical leader foster a LGO while discouraging *prove* and *avoid* mentalities. One of the chief methods of enhancing employee self-efficacy is to give open and honest feedback and to measure success by

self-referent comparisons (Bandura, 1988). Ethical leaders value and respect their followers, resulting in nurturing behaviors such as realistic encouragement, recognition, and constructive feedback. This in turn, provides followers with confidence in who they are and what they bring to their jobs. Bandura suggests:

“People who have a strong belief in their capabilities think, feel, and behave differently from those who have doubts about their capabilities. People who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. Failure wrecks their motivation...People who have high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided.” (1988, p. 285-286)

Just as it is proposed that individuals with a LGO are more apt to be perceived as ethical leaders, it is tenable ethical leaders are more likely to promote follower state-LGO and repress follower state-APGO and state-PPGO behaviors.

Proposition 3a: Ethical leadership will positively predict follower state-LGO.

Proposition 3b: Ethical leadership will negatively predict follower state-PPGO.

Proposition 3c: Ethical leadership will negatively predict follower state-APGO.

It is also expected, within the social learning framework, the effect of a leader's trait goal orientation on their follower's state goal orientation will be magnified to the extent it influences ethical leadership behaviors. In other words, I propose leader trait goal orientation will predict follower state goal orientation both directly and indirectly through ethical leadership.

Proposition 4: The effect of a leader's trait goal orientation on their follower's state goal orientation will be partially mediated by the leader's ethical leadership perceptions.

Up to this point I have proposed a key antecedent to ethical leadership is leader trait goal orientation and ethical leader behavior, in turn, influences follower state goal

orientation. Leaders with a LGO will have higher ethical leadership perceptions and, through the process of encouraging behaviors that mirror their own orientation (e.g., through role modeling and operant conditioning) and their moral ideals, they will presumably foster a state-LGO among their followers. I propose it is partially through follower state goal orientation that ethical leadership impacts follower task-related unethical behavior and organizational citizenship behaviors.

### Unethical Behavior and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

#### *Task-Related Unethical Behavior*

The study of ethical behavior in organizations has increased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Within just a short time, numerous reviews of ethical and unethical behavior (e.g., Ashforth & Anand, 2003; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014; Treviño & Weaver, 2003; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006), a meta-analysis on workplace unethical decision-making (Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010), and empirical studies analyzing organizational ethical behavior (e.g., Detert, Treviño, & Schweitzer, 2008; Gino & Margolis, 2011; Gino, Schweitzer, & Ariely, 2011; Kluver, Frazier, & Haidt, 2014; Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012; Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010) have been published. The major premise of much of this work is, in the long-term, unethical conduct in the workplace reduces organizational-level performance and attractiveness (Treviño et al., 2014).

In organizational research, *unethical behavior* refers to “any organizational member action that violates widely accepted (societal) moral norms” (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010, p. 2). Actions such as lying, cheating, and stealing are among the most salient violations of societal norms studied (Treviño, et al., 2014). An important distinction has been made in the literature between unethical behavior and workplace aggression research (Hershcovis, 2011). Workplace aggression research—for example,

counterproductive work behavior (Fox & Spector, 1999) and workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2003)—typically refers to behaviors that violate organizational norms rather than the broad threshold of “societal norms” that exists for the definition of unethical behavior (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Furthermore, much of the workplace aggression research implies a retaliatory intention with antecedents such as workplace injustice (Ferris, Spence, Brown, & Heller, 2013; Holtz & Harold, 2013), work stressors (Meier & Spector, 2013), or abusive supervision (Lian, Lance Ferris, & Brown, 2012). While some conceptual overlap exists between the two literature streams (Treviño et al., 2006), the definition of unethical behavior does not include all forms of workplace aggression (e.g., tardiness, gossiping, working slower than one can).

For the purposes of this paper, the focus is on *task-related unethical behavior*. I define this construct, drawing on Kish-Gephart and colleagues’ (2010) definition, as any organizational action taken for the purpose of increasing others’ perceptions of task performance perceptions that violates widely accepted (societal) moral norms. The important distinction in this definition lies in the intention of the perpetrator; to inflate their performance perceptions among peers and supervisors. To my knowledge, few scholars have specifically analyzed unethical behavior within this specific constraint (*opportunistic noncompliant behavior* is a possible exception, see Warren, 2005).

Task-related unethical behavior could be considered a type of impression management, however not all forms of impression management are unethical. Impression management, “the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them” (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34), includes ethically-neutral tactics such as ingratiation or upward appeals. Task-related unethical behavior stems from an individual’s insecurity about their abilities or an intense desire to prove themselves as capable employees, and results in the violation of generally accepted

norms of morality. These violations may include blatantly lying about accomplishments, cheating to complete a work task, stealing to inflate financial performance, or sabotaging another's work to make them look bad. Those who engage in task-related unethical behavior understand their actions are bad but view the personal benefits of looking like a good performer as outweighing the costs (or risks) of getting caught (Lewicki, 1983; Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Duoma, 2004).

#### *Task-Related Organizational Citizenship Behaviors*

While unethical behavior represents unwanted workplace behavior, OCBs are behaviors that benefit the organization or organizational members and, "can neither be enforced on the basis of formal role obligations nor elicited by contractual guarantees of recompense" (Organ, 1990, p. 46). While early theorists contended OCBs were separate from in-role behaviors and entirely an extra-role behavior (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), Graham (1991) conceptualized OCBs in a manner independent from role requirements by focusing on the construct of civic citizenship and the three behavioral dimensions of obedience, loyalty, and participation (Van Dyne et al., 1994). A later review by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) organized OCBs into the seven following dimensions: (1) helping behavior (e.g., selfless behaviors benefitting others), (2) sportsmanship (e.g., constraint against grumbling or complaining about work policies), (3) organizational loyalty (e.g., protecting the reputation of the organization), (4) organizational compliance (e.g., upholding organizational rules), (5) individual initiative (e.g., going above and beyond to uphold company policies in the completion of work tasks), (6) civic virtue (e.g., participation in work meetings and events), and (7) self development (e.g., voluntary efforts for self improvement).

It seems clear from these brief descriptions that OCBs are "good" behaviors and organizations should be interested in fostering them. Due to their desirability, scholars



have examined the antecedents to OCBs and found job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction and fairness perceptions), task variables (e.g., feedback and intrinsic motivation), and an array of leader behaviors (e.g., transformational leadership and ethical leadership) are positively related to OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Drawing from a social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964), employees who are treated fairly by their supervisors (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994), and supported by their organization (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), are likely to reciprocate such treatment through higher levels of commitment, identification, and ultimately citizenship behaviors (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007).

Settoon and Mossholder (2002) differentiated between two dimensions of interpersonal citizenship behavior: person-focused and task-focused. They found relationship factors such as coworker support and perspective taking, through empathic concern, to positively relate to person-focused interpersonal citizenship behavior (i.e., helping behavior). Network centrality as well as empathic concern positively influenced task-focused interpersonal citizenship behavior (i.e., described as helping behaviors requiring extra effort in resolving work-related problems). They conclude by suggesting reciprocity may not be the only influence behind citizenship behaviors and more calculative factors (i.e., relationship structure) are active as well. Due to the focus on tasks and goal orientation in this paper, the most relevant citizenship dependent variable is task-focused citizenship behavior. Examples of task-focused OCBs include helping coworkers with heavy workloads or complex, challenging assignments (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002).

#### *Ethical Leadership, Unethical Behavior, and OCBs*

A strong ethical leader should discourage followers from engaging in task-related unethical behavior while simultaneously encouraging task-focused OCBs. According to

SLT, as followers observe their leader engaging in personal acts of high integrity and trustworthiness, they will begin to equate such actions with the appropriate form of conduct in their workplace (Brown et al., 2005). Likewise, as a leader rewards others who do the right things the right way, and punish those who engage in moral indiscretions, the leader sends a clear message that ethical conduct is expected. Ethical leaders also value people and relationships, and spend quality time building up and developing their employees. As followers observe these supportive helping behaviors, they will view such behavior as the norm for interpersonal treatment in their workgroups. This SLT conceptualization was supported across two studies conducted by Mayer and colleagues (2012), where ethical leadership was related to lower unit-level unethical behavior and unit-level relationship conflict (i.e., as rated by the leader). In aggregate, employees in workgroups who rated their supervisors as highly ethical were less likely to have interpersonal dysfunction (e.g., relationship conflict) and engage in unethical behaviors (Mayer et al., 2012).

From a social exchange perspective, followers of ethical leaders will feel an obligation to reciprocate the positive and morally upright behaviors bestowed upon them by their leader (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Mayer and colleagues (2009) found support for the effects of socioemotional exchange, which refers to interpersonal exchange behaviors based upon trustworthy and fair treatment (Blau, 1964). Specifically, they found followers of ethical leaders engaged in prosocial behaviors benefitting their entire workgroups and refrained from engaging in unethical behaviors that might damage their leaders or coworkers. Similarly, in a sample of 288 supervisor-subordinate dyads in a governmental agency, Kacmar and colleagues (2011) found ethical leadership to positively predict both task-focused and person-focused OCBs.

From both a SLT and SET conceptualization, ethical leaders should negatively influence the task-related unethical behavior and positively influence the task-related OCBs of their followers.

Proposition 5: Ethical leadership will be negatively related to follower task-related unethical behavior.

Proposition 6: Ethical leadership will be positively related to follower task-related OCBs.

The specific mediating mechanisms through which ethical leadership impacts organizational outcomes are still not well understood. To date, a few of the process variables explored in the literature include leader-member exchange (Walumbwa et al., 2011), ethical culture (Schaubroeck et al., 2012), psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), and task significance and effort (Piccolo et al., 2010). While these studies have helped our understanding of ethical leadership, they do not sufficiently explain how ethical leaders actually change the way their followers approach tasks. As ethical leaders focus on process over product and people over profits they influence the manner in which their followers approach their tasks; valuing the long-term benefits of task engagement rather than trite short-term successes. I propose ethical leaders foster more positive follower work behavior through their influence on their followers' state goal orientation.

#### *Follower State Goal Orientation*

##### Goal orientation and unethical behavior

Whether an employee engages in tasks with a desire to develop their competence or with a desire to validate their competence may determine their likelihood to engage in unethical behavior to complete their tasks. Lewicki (1983) proposed that decisions to lie or use deception are often made with a cost/benefit analysis. In a given task, if the cost of deception outweighs the benefits of using deception than people will

generally avoid engaging in such acts. However, if the benefits of lying outweigh the costs, then the propensity to lie will increase. According to goal orientation theory, individuals approach achievement tasks viewing the costs of failure or looking incompetent in front of colleagues, differently. For those with a LGO, failure is a learning experience and tasks are usually chosen based upon the learning experience offered; thus, the costs of failure are perceived to be low. Those with a PPGO or an APGO, however, view the costs of task failure as much higher since impression management and maintaining the appearance of competence is vitally important.

In a lab study on goal setting using 154 students, Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Douma (2004) found goal setting behaviors influenced unethical conduct. Students who were given reward goals (i.e., monetary compensation for goal accomplishment) were more likely to misrepresent their performance and take unearned money than were participants who were simply asked to do their best on a task. Although this study did not specifically measure goal orientation, it does suggest the manner in which individuals approach their tasks does have an affect on their subsequent engagement in unethical behavior.

Followers with a state-LGO, approach their work tasks asking the question, “What is the best way for me to increase my skills and abilities?” Task accomplishment through embellishment or other means of unethical behavior does not increase a follower’s long-term professional mastery. It may however increase their likelihood of appearing successful relative to peers. Thus, I propose while state-PPGO and state-APGO will lend itself toward unethical behavior, state-LGO will not.

Proposition 7a: Follower state-LGO will be associated with less unethical behavior.

Proposition 7b: Follower state-PPGO will be associated with more unethical behavior.

Proposition 7c: Follower state-APGO will be associated with more unethical behavior.

## Goal orientation and OCBs

Goal orientation plausibly impacts whether someone will engage in task-focused helping behaviors for their coworkers. On the one hand, individuals with a PPGO, who are trying to prove their competence and abilities, may look forward to an opportunity to help a coworker on their tasks as it will imply they are superior in some way. On the other hand, helping coworkers on their tasks may increase their coworkers' performance and thus level the playing field, something an individual with a high-PPGO would not want. Those with an APGO-individuals trying to avoid looking incompetent-are not inclined to engage in helping behaviors as it would possibly increase the salience of their lack of ability to their coworkers. High LGO individuals should view opportunities to assist coworkers on tasks as a challenge and perhaps another opportunity to further develop competency.

To date, a gap exists in the organizational literature on the link between goal orientation and OCBs. The few studies that have explored such a link have primarily come from the sport and exercise sciences. For example, a study focusing on Nicholls' (1989) dimensions of goal orientation found individuals with high task involvement to be more likely to have prosocial attitudes compared to those with high ego involvement (Lee, Whitehead, Ntoumanis, & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2008). The sample consisted of adolescent boys in a youth sports program, and the authors found support for their model, indicating moral and competence values (i.e., concern for self comparison) were related to greater task involvement and more prosocial attitudes. Moral values were negatively related while status values (i.e., concern for self-other comparisons) were positively related to ego involvement and antisocial attitudes (i.e., unsportsmanlike conduct). A different study sampling 210 adult football players also found a significant link between goal orientation and prosocial behaviors. Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda (2006) found a significant

interaction between task and ego orientation on prosocial judgments. Task orientation predicted prosocial judgments only at low levels of ego orientation while ego orientation positively predicted antisocial judgments and behavior (i.e., unsportsmanlike conduct and harm to other players).

Simply stated, OCBs take effort. Serving others and reaching out to assist them on tasks while also completing one's own tasks takes an individual willing to exert high levels of effort (Piccolo et al., 2010; Van Dyne et al., 1994). According to Dweck and Leggett (1988), individuals with a performance goal orientation view higher effort as a negative indication of their abilities, while those with learning goals view higher effort as a means to develop their ability. They also posit that people with a learning or mastery goal orientation experience an intrinsic sense of pride from exerting extra levels of effort.

In summary, individuals with a PGO will generally prefer not to engage in OCBs while those with LGOs will engage in these extra role behaviors. However, having a PPGO will likely have a weaker negative effect on OCBs than will having an APGO as there are times when engaging in OCBs may seem beneficial to followers with a PPGO.

Proposition 8a: Follower state-LGO will be positively related to task-related OCBs.

Proposition 8b: Follower state-PPGO will be negatively related to task-related OCBs.

Proposition 8c: Follower state-APGO will be negatively related to task-related OCBs.

Proposition 8d: The negative effect size of follower state-PPGO on task-related OCBs will be weaker than the negative effect size of follower state-APGO on task-related OCBs.

As previously proposed, a follower's state goal orientation is influenced by his/her leader's behavior. Therefore, I propose the effect of ethical leadership on unethical

behavior and task-related OCBs is partially due to an ethical leader's influence on their follower's state goal orientation.

Proposition 9a: The negative effect of ethical leadership on task-related unethical behavior will be partially mediated by follower state goal orientation.

Proposition 9b: The positive effect of ethical leadership on task-related OCBs will be partially mediated by follower state goal orientation.

### Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that ethical leaders are not simply people who engage in moral acts and hold others accountable to such behavior; they actually work and approach their tasks differently. I propose leaders who value people and the work process over profit are more likely to be perceived as ethical. It's not that ethical leaders do not value profit or the quality of their products, but their high moral commitments lead them to a fundamental belief in building others up and creating value for the greater good.

As ethical leaders demonstrate their commitment to doing the right things the right way, they inspire their followers to do likewise. As followers engage with their own tasks they observe their leaders as an example and often vicariously learn from them, eventually engaging in similar behaviors. Followers of ethical leaders will also value the personal investment, helping behaviors, and integrity of their leaders and feel a willingness and obligation to reciprocate such actions to their leaders, coworkers, and organization.

To date, the extant literature on ethical leadership offers few substantive antecedents of this important leadership behavior. In this paper, I propose trait goal orientation as an antecedent, suggesting leaders who have a high trait-LGO will be more likely to be perceived as ethical leaders because of their focus on process and long-term mastery over impression management and short-term perceptions (Nicholls, 1984). High

LGO leaders will encourage superior effort and stimulate followers to challenge themselves (Dweck, 1986). Conversely, leaders with high PPGO are less likely to be perceived as ethical due to their focus on comparing themselves to others and influencing their followers to the same (Dragoni, 2005). Leaders with high APGO avoid challenging tasks such as confronting employees or dealing with conflict in the workplace, all behaviors that make them less likely to be perceived as ethical.

As ethical leaders motivate and influence their followers they encourage them to approach work tasks with a state-LGO. Ethical leaders value their followers and encourage open communication while stressing the importance of how followers do their jobs (Piccolo et al., 2010). Even though followers may have a different trait-based goal orientation, when they are around an ethical leader a state-based LGO is likely to be induced (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Vandewalle, 1997). Part of the impact of ethical leadership on task-related unethical behavior and task-related OCBs is through increased levels of state-based LGO realized in followers.

As the ethical leadership construct develops, my proposed model contributes to the literature by suggesting the unexplored process variable of follower state goal orientation. The potential to reduce bad and increase good employee work behaviors is a major reason the ethical leadership has gained popularity (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), yet much development is still needed. Follower state goal orientation as a process variable suggests ethical leaders not only encourage ethical behavior but also influence their followers to work differently from the onset. Promoting high LGO attitudes and behaviors among followers reduces the propensity of followers being tempted by unethical task completion actions. Reducing the fear of failure among individual followers will also increase their likelihood to help others without fear their performance will suffer.



### *Conclusion*

Given the salience of ethics in society and business, ethical leadership is an important construct for scholarly effort. As the construct matures, it is vitally important to develop a better understanding of the antecedents and processes through which ethical leadership is linked to follower behavior. Conceptually, trait goal orientation shows promise as an antecedent to ethical leadership. If future empirical research supports the link between goal orientation and ethical leadership, this has practical implications for leader selection and development. Similarly, I propose ethical leaders actually influence their followers state goal orientation and that this is a partial explanation as to why ethical leadership impacts follower's task-related unethical behavior and OCBs. It is my hope that future research will continue to test and enhance this model.

## Chapter 3

### The Interplay Between Goal Orientation and Ethical Leadership in Predicting OCBs and Unethical Behavior

In 2002, a General Motors engineer decided to utilize a poor performing ignition switch in a few car models. Twelve years and at least 54 front-impact collisions later, GM finally issued a recall on the 2.19 million U.S. cars affected by the switch (Healey, 2014). This debacle was exacerbated by a multitude of leaders, groups, and committees deferring responsibility and avoiding admitting their mistakes (Valukas, 2014). The events around this recall illustrate that behaving in an ethical manner may be more about a process of task motivation rather than making a one-time ethical decision. If the initial engineer and myriad other leaders in GM approached the ignition switch decision with a different achievement motivation perhaps the subsequent crashes may have been prevented and the lives lost, saved.

When we think of ways to encourage ethical behavior in the workplace in order to avoid scandals and costly negative publicity, the first place we often begin with is leadership. Employees tend to emulate leader behaviors because leaders are often viewed as attractive, credible, and legitimate role models for how to gain status in an organization (Bandura, 1986; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). It is no surprise, then, that the ethical leadership construct has experienced a substantial rise in popularity (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Brown & Treviño, 2006). In the past decade, ethical leadership scholars have touted its significant influence on follower outcomes such as organizational commitment (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009), employee voice (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), the reporting of unethical conduct (Schaubroeck et al., 2012), organizational citizenship behaviors (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den

Hartog, & Folger, 2010), and task performance (Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Studies have also verified ethical leadership's strong efficacy in deterring employees from engaging in unethical behavior (e.g., Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Schaubroeck et al., 2012).

Conventional wisdom suggests leaders who are perceived as ethical likely possess high moral standards. Indeed, empirical research verifies a significant positive relationship between morality-related individual difference variables, such as cognitive moral development (e.g., Jordan, Brown, Treviño, & Finkelstein, 2013) and moral identity (Mayer et al., 2012), and ethical leadership. However, assuming higher levels of morality are the sole foundations of ethical leadership would lead us to infer the multitude of leaders associated with misconduct are bereft of moral character. At face level, this is unlikely and begs the question as to whether or not there is more to ethical leadership than morality alone. In this paper, I explore whether individual differences in leader goal orientation relate to ethical leadership. More specifically, I examine if a leader's goal orientation, the motivation through which they approach their performance engagements (Dweck, 1986), relates to their perception as an ethical leader from followers. Additionally, I seek to determine if ethical leaders influence the positive and negative work behavior of their employees through invoking a specific employee state goal orientation.

To date, very little research has analyzed the interplay between goal orientation and ethical leadership. In fact, the antecedents of ethical leadership and the process variables through which it affects employee work behaviors, in general, are not well understood (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). This study contributes to the literature by suggesting that while being a moral person and a moral manager (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2000) is a necessary component of ethical

leadership, it is not sufficient on its own. I propose ethical leaders affect the ethical work behaviors of their employees not only because they are moral people and moral managers, but also because they embrace responsibility, persist in the face of obstacles, and have less fear of failure.

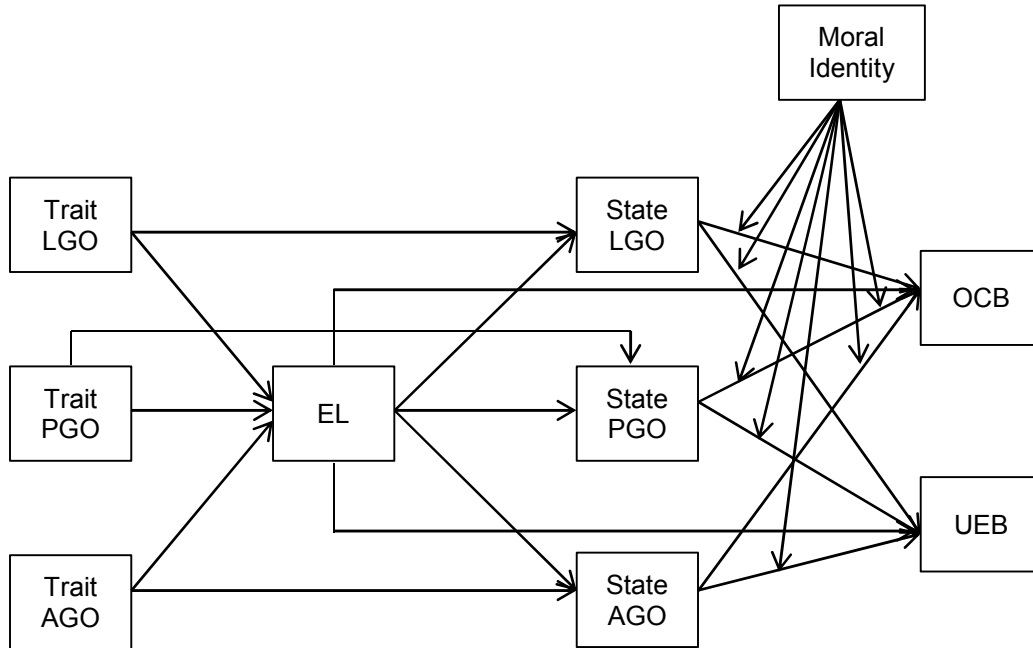


Figure 3-1 Hypothesized Model

Theoretical Background

*Ethical Leadership*

In 1987, Archie Carroll analyzed the business landscape with a focus on three different types of management: immoral, amoral, and moral (Carroll, 1987). Immoral managers were conceptualized as both lacking ethical principles and being actively opposed to that which is ethical. Carroll described these leaders as selfish and hyperfocused on performance and profits. In an illustration highlighting immoral management, he quoted immoral supervisors as saying, "I don't care how you do it – just do it" (Carroll, 1987, p. 7). In other words, immoral managers pursue any means to

accomplish their desired ends. A different management type, amoral management, was viewed as either intentional or unintentional by nature. Intentionally amoral managers purposely exclude moral considerations from influencing management decisions while unintentionally immoral managers fail to consider the moral implications of their behavior out of carelessness or inattentiveness (Carroll, 1987). Set apart from the other two forms, moral management was conceptualized as pursuing organizational goals of profit and productivity only within the means of fairness, honesty, and selflessness. A summary of moral management, then, is moral managers subjugate their desired ends to the morality of the means.

Several studies by Trevino and colleagues (Treviño et al., 2000; Treviño et al., 2003) built upon Carroll's work by providing a more formal theory of ethical leadership. They conceptualized ethical leadership as being comprised of two core pillars: moral person and moral manager. Treviño et al. (2000, 2003) found ethical leaders are moral people since they behave with high levels of integrity, consistently demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness in all facets of their lives. They are open, transparent, and consistently do the right things the right way. They are moral managers through intentionally role modeling their ethical behavior to subordinates, rewarding ethical behavior when they see it, and punishing ethical misconduct when it is committed. They also communicate regularly about the importance of ethics and values in the workplace.

Ethical leadership is formally defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). This conceptualization of ethical leadership draws from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), emphasizing an ethical leader's influence on employee behavior through role-modeling and operant

conditioning. Brown and Treviño (2006) also drew from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to suggest employees may increase desirable behaviors such as OCBs and ethical decision-making because they are reciprocating the fair, honest, and trustworthy treatment they receive from an ethical leader.

These perspectives on ethical leadership (Carroll, 1987; Treviño et al., 2000, 2003; Brown et al., 2005) indicate the process by which work is completed (i.e., the means) is critical to ethical leadership. This concept—of the relative emphasis placed on the means by which something is achieved versus the ends—is also a fundamental component of the individual difference variable goal orientation. Goal orientation describes differences in how people approach work tasks with some individuals primarily focusing on process (i.e., learning/mastery) and others primarily on outcomes (i.e., performance).

#### *Goal Orientation*

Goal orientation was initially introduced in the field of educational psychology. Eison (1979, 1981, 1982) posited that students engage in their studies with either a focus on getting good grades, which he labeled a *grade orientation*, or with a focus on mastering the content, labeled a *learning orientation*. Nicholls (1975, 1979) examined how students defined success in their studies, proposing some continually have high *task involvement*, meaning they try to improve their performance compared to their own prior results, and others have high *ego involvement*, where they try to perform better than those around them. A third scholar, Dweck, proposed individuals with an entity-based view of intelligence (i.e., a belief that intelligence is static and fixed) tend to engage in tasks in a maladaptive and helpless manner. This approach was branded *performance goal orientation*. In contrast, those who view intelligence as malleable and seek

challenging roles in order to increase their competence were considered to have a *learning goal orientation* (Dweck, 1975; 1986).

When goal orientation was officially introduced in the organizational literature (Farr, Hoffman, & Ringenbach, 1993; Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996), the two dimensions of *performance* and *learning* were adopted. Those with a learning goal orientation seek opportunities to learn, grow, and persist when faced with obstacles. They often view failure and difficulty as a challenge to be overcome rather than something to avoid (Button et al., 1996; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Conversely, individuals with a performance goal orientation are concerned about looking good in front of others, and proving to others their competence. When failure is imminent they tend to avoid the task as it may signal their low ability (Farr et al., 1993; Vandewalle, 1997).

Later work by Vandewalle (1997) proposed breaking performance goal orientation into two dimensions, *performance-prove* (PGO) and *performance-avoid* (AGO). PGO is formally defined as “the desire to prove one’s competence and to gain favorable judgments about it” while AGO is defined as “the desire to avoid disproving of one’s competence and to avoid negative judgments about it” (Vandewalle, 1997, p. 1000). This three dimensional structure of goal orientation, consisting of LGO, PGO, and AGO, is widely used in organizational behavior research (e.g., Deshon & Gillespie, 2005; Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Hendricks & Payne, 2005; Payne et al., 2007), with LGO and PGO linked primarily to positive work behaviors and AGO to negative work behaviors (Payne et al., 2007).

Goal orientation is examined as a trait-based construct as well as a domain-specific or state-like construct affected by environmental influences (Button et al., 1996; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Vandewalle, 1997). One of the original definitions of goal orientation describes the construct as “situated orientations for action in an achievement

task” (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007, p. 142), implying a state-like characteristic. In support of this view, lab research in a variety of fields has demonstrated goal orientation can be manipulated or primed (Stevens & Gist, 1997; Chen & Mathieu, 2008). VandeWalle (1997) took a slightly different view, suggesting individuals may adopt varying goal orientations in different domains, such as at work or at school. Recent theorizing and empirical work, however, has treated goal orientation as a relatively stable trait influenced by situational characteristics (Button et al., 1996; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Payne et al., 2007; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). Deshon and Gillespie (2005) propose the construct can be analyzed as a trait, domain-specific, or state-like construct depending upon the implications the researcher is trying to propose. In the current study I examine a leader’s trait goal orientation as an influence on his or her follower’s perceptions of his or her ethical leadership. I then analyze the extent to which leader trait goal orientation influences a follower’s state goal orientation through ethical leadership.

#### *Goal Orientation and Ethical Leadership.*

Ethical leaders are fair and principled managers who do not compromise their high moral standards in pursuit of short-term performance gains (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010). In Treviño and colleagues’ (2003) qualitative work, a senior executive summed up ethical leadership by suggesting, “there’s only one way to do business and that’s the right way” (p. 12). Ethical leaders care about the work process in itself and seek to be sure the way work is conducted fosters the well-being of subordinates and other stakeholders (Piccolo et al., 2010). Although profitability and performance certainly remain goals for ethical leaders, they are no more important than the moral goals of fairness, honesty, and trustworthiness (Treviño et al., 2000).

Similar to ethical leadership, individuals with a LGO prioritize process over product (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986). Looking past outcomes, high LGO individuals view



tasks as beneficial if they learn and achieve a sense of mastery from them (Klein, Noe, & Wang, 2006). For instance, in approaching a challenging or controversial task, leaders with a LGO would look past the possible costs of failure or reputational harm and instead embrace the opportunity to handle an ethical dilemma with integrity, viewing it as an obstacle that can and should be overcome. Thus, individuals with a LGO would be more likely to be perceived as ethical leaders.

Hypothesis 1a: A leader's trait-LGO (learn) is positively related to the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

Ethical leadership involves a comparison of oneself to higher-level, moral ideals rather than colleagues or subordinates (Carroll, 1987). This modus operandi is manifested in an ethical leader's management style by focusing on subordinate feedback and development in order to promote their full potential (Piccolo et al., 2010). In contrast, managers with a PGO rely on other-referent comparisons to prove their competence to peers and colleagues. Leaders with a high PGO rationalize failure by attributing it to the situation or to those around them rather than taking responsibility for their own actions. They use impression management tactics to appear competent rather than being transparent and open about shortcomings and areas of improvement (Dragoni, 2005). Also, their excessive focus on performance emphasizes the end goal over the means to achieving it, something contradictory to ethical leadership.

Hypothesis 1b: A leader's trait-PGO (prove) is negatively related to the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

In an empirical analysis of job characteristics and ethical leadership, Piccolo and colleagues (2010) suggest, "ethical leaders enhance task significance by making clear the contributions of group members' tasks to moral ideals and higher order goals" (p. 263). This emphasis on task significance encourages employees to look past any future obstacles that might be encountered. Instead of focusing on task success or

failure, ethical leaders help employees develop themselves and view the task process to be as beneficial as the success of the outcomes. Managers with an AGO, in contrast, discourage employees from taking on tasks that might make them look bad (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). With their focus on avoiding appearing incompetent, high AGO leaders alienate underperforming followers and demonstrate favoritism toward followers who can make them look good (Dragoni, 2005).

Hypothesis 1c: A leader's trait-AGO (avoid) is negatively related to the ethical leadership perceptions of that leader as rated by his/her followers.

### *Social Learning Theory*

When people first enter an organization, they must quickly learn what conduct is appropriate and inappropriate in the work environment (Bandura, 1977). This learning process can be achieved through direct experience, using trial and error, or vicariously through observing the actions of attractive and credible role models in the organization (Bandura, 1986). Social learning theory (SLT) argues leaders are typically among the most salient of role models in an organization since they hold positions of power and prestige (Bandura, 1986; Jordan et al., 2013). People often prefer observational learning due to its efficiency and the ability it affords one to avoid experiencing the negative consequences of learning through direct experience (Bandura 1977; 1986).

In considering how a leader might influence follower state goal orientation, SLT would imply leaders transmit their preferred achievement orientation to followers by managing in a way that encourages and reinforces an isomorphic goal orientation (Dragoni, 2005). Leaders with a LGO, then, will manage in a way that reflects LGO behaviors by encouraging high effort, persistence, and building competence. A manager with a PGO will both engage in and promote impression management tactics and foster an environment of other-referent comparison as the means through which competence is conveyed. Conversely, high AGO leaders will favor employees that succeed and

encourage followers to choose easy tasks with a high probability for success rather than taking on difficult tasks even though they might promote long-term skill development. As leaders manage with their primary goal orientations they signal to followers that such an achievement approach is the normatively appropriate way of behaving. Followers, in turn, will likely adopt a similar goal orientation when they are in their leader's jurisdiction (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; VanDeWalle, 1997).

Hypothesis 2a: Leader trait-LGO is positively related to follower state-LGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

Hypothesis 2b: Leader trait-PGO is positively related to follower state-PGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

Hypothesis 2c: Leader trait-AGO is positively related to follower state-APGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

As ethical leaders treat their employees fairly and encourage their well-being, they often become attractive role models to followers (Walumbwa et al., 2011). As followers analyze the actions of an ethical leader, they understand the importance of their work processes being completed honestly and in a trustworthy fashion (Treviño et al., 2000). They also will begin to see past simply high performance outcomes and equally see the importance of their effort and integrity throughout their engagement with a task. Instead of comparing themselves to others and trying to compete with colleagues to look competent, ethical leaders will encourage followers to collaborate for the good of the team or organization (Piccolo et al., 2010). Rather than avoiding obstacles or deflecting responsibility, ethical leaders will encourage their followers to challenge themselves and exert their best effort even in the face of failure (Brown et al., 2005; Piccolo et al., 2010). Therefore, as followers view the actions of an ethical leader to determine what is appropriate conduct, behaviors aligned with a LGO will be encouraged while those with a PGO and AGO discouraged. This is corroborated by Bandura who suggested:

People who have a strong belief in their capabilities think, feel, and behave differently from those who have doubts about their capabilities. People who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. Failure wrecks their motivation...People who have high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. (1988, pp. 285-286)

As ethical leaders support and build up their employees, reinforcing their human dignity apart from their achievement success, they will be encouraging persistence, determination, and long-term development rather than short-term performance successes.

Hypothesis 3a: Ethical leadership is positively related to follower state-LGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

Hypothesis 3b: Ethical leadership is negatively related to follower state-PGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

Hypothesis 3c: Ethical leadership is negatively related to follower state-AGO when the follower is in the leader's domain.

To the extent a leader's trait goal orientation influences his or her subsequent ethical leadership perceptions, I also propose an indirect effect will be present on the follower's state goal orientation through ethical leadership.

Hypothesis 4: The effect of a leaders' trait goal orientation on his/her follower's state goal orientation will be partially mediated by the follower's perception of ethical leadership. Therefore, (a) the effect of trait-LGO on state-LGO, (b) the effect of trait-PGO on state-PGO, and (c) the effect of trait-AGO on state-AGO, will be mediated by ethical leadership.

### *Unethical Behavior*

Unethical behavior is behavior that goes against well-known societal norms (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). The most widely studied unethical behaviors include lying, cheating, and stealing (Treviño et al., 2014). Early laboratory research by Hegarty and Sims (1979) established a link between supervisor support for ethical behavior and the ethical misconduct of their followers. The influence of a leader on follower ethical

behavior is perhaps one of the most frequently studied topics in the ethical leadership literature (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Unethical behavior is considered “bad” since it is related to negative publicity and performance (Treviño et al., 2014).

In the current study I examine the role of ethical leadership and goal orientation on *task-related unethical behavior*, since goal orientation is a task achievement-based construct (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007). Although general unethical behavior is concerned with behaviors such as lying or cheating in any context, task-related unethical behavior refers to engaging in unethical behaviors that are specifically designed to increase the likelihood of achieving success at a task or fostering others’ positive perceptions (Warren, 2005). For example, task-related unethical behavior may involve lying or covering up the severity of a safety problem in order to prevent incurring a costly recall, or diffusing one’s involvement in the process (i.e., lying or deceiving) in order to prevent others from perceiving you as incompetent.

Hypothesis 5: Ethical leadership is negatively related to task-related unethical behavior among followers.

#### *Organizational Citizenship Behaviors*

While task-related unethical behavior represents “bad” employee behavior, OCBs represent “the good” employee behavior. OCBs are typically positive work behaviors an employee engages in that are not formally required by the organization (Graham, 1991; Organ, 1990; Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994). These behaviors include selfless acts directed at helping other employees, loyalty to the organization, being a good team player by refraining from grumbling and complaining, and upholding organizational policies and procedures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). OCBs may have different referents. Behaviors aimed at supporting coworkers are labeled person-focused OCBs and those aimed at going above and beyond to resolve work-related problems are labeled task-focused OCBs (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002). Similar to my

focus on task-related unethical behavior, I also seek to specifically concentrate on task-related OCBs.

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), employees tend to reciprocate the behaviors bestowed upon them by their leaders. Said differently, if an employee is consistently treated with dignity, respect, and fairness (i.e., actions becoming of an ethical leader), they usually reciprocate with similar positive actions (Mayer et al., 2009). Recent research on ethical leadership and OCBs indicates the effectiveness of SET in explaining the effects of ethical leadership on prosocial outcomes (e.g., Kacmar et al., 2011; Mayer et al., 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Shin, 2012). For example, in a field study analyzing employees in a government agency, Kacmar and colleagues (2011) found ethical leadership to predict both person-focused as well as task-focused OCBs. This is consistent with the idea that employees reciprocate the favorable treatment they receive from ethical leaders.

Hypothesis 6: Ethical leadership is positively related to task-related OCBs among followers.

#### *Goal Orientation, Unethical Behavior, and OCBs*

##### Goal orientation and unethical behavior

As an individual approaches a task, the goal orientation through which they achieve such task may predispose them to avoiding or committing good or bad actions. An individual with a LGO will put less emphasis on performance outcomes and engage in fewer comparison behaviors between themselves and others (Dweck, 1986). If failure seems likely, this individual will be less focused on covering it up to manage their impression and more focused on how they can learn and develop from the experience. Conversely, individuals with a PGO may see stealing or cheating as viable behaviors that will help them look good in front of others and achieve success on their given tasks. Those with an AGO may deny involvement or fail to take responsibility for failed tasks.

Schweitzer, Ordóñez, and Douma (2004) demonstrated the manner in which an individual approaches performance engagements does influence whether or not they adopt unethical behaviors. In a laboratory experiment, participants who adopted *achieve* or *reward* goals (i.e., payment for accomplishing the goal) misrepresented their performance and took more unearned money than those who adopted *personal improvement* goals. Research conducted in the field of education has found a similar linkage between a performance orientation and cheating and plagiarism behaviors (Anderman & Midgley, 2004; Koul, Clariana, Jitgarun, & Songsriwittaya, 2009). Duda, Olson, and Templin (1991) also found a significant relationship between ego involvement (i.e., other-referent comparison) and the endorsement of unsportsmanlike play and cheating among high school basketball players. These studies support the theoretical linkage between goal orientation and unethical behavior.

Hypothesis 7a: Follower state-LGO is negatively related to follower unethical behavior.

Hypothesis 7b: Follower state-PGO is positively related to follower unethical behavior.

Hypothesis 7c: Follower state-AGO is positively related to follower unethical behavior.

#### Goal orientation and OCBs

Whether an individual is trying to improve their performance relative to their own past performance or relative to their colleagues' performance may impact their propensity to help coworkers. Having a LGO—with a focus on long-term mastery and individual competency—makes helping behaviors advantageous as it provides more opportunities to learn and grow. This is not necessarily the case for individuals with a PGO, since engaging in helping behaviors may assist a coworker in performing better and therefore, equalizing other-referent performance comparisons. Those with an AGO put most of

their effort into avoiding failure and responsibility and therefore would tend to avoid helping behaviors as it may expose weakness or lack of ability (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

The studies that have explored the links between goal orientation and OCBs have primarily come from the exercise sciences. For example, a study consisting of adolescent youth in a sports program found individuals with high task involvement were more likely to have prosocial attitudes compared to those with high ego involvement (Lee, Whitehead, Ntoumanis, & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2008). Sage, Kavussanu, and Duda (2006) also found task orientation predicted prosocial judgments at low levels of ego orientation, whereas ego orientation positively predicted antisocial judgments and behavior.

Hypothesis 8a: Follower state-LGO is positively related to task-related OCBs.

Hypothesis 8b: Follower state-PGO is negatively related to task-related OCBs.

Hypothesis 8c: Follower state-AGO is negatively related to task-related OCBs.

As previously proposed, a follower's state goal orientation is significantly influenced by their leader. Therefore, I propose the effect of ethical leadership on follower unethical behavior and task-related OCBs is partially due to the ethical leader's influence on his or her follower's state goal orientation.

Hypothesis 9: The negative effect of ethical leadership on task-related unethical behavior will be partially mediated by: (a) follower state-LGO, (b) follower state-PGO, and (c) follower state-AGO.

Hypothesis 10: The positive effect of ethical leadership on task-related OCBs will be partially mediated by: (a) follower state-LGO, (b) follower state-PGO, and (c) follower state-AGO.

Although goal orientation likely influences one's propensity for unethical behavior or helping behaviors, the importance of morality to a person's self-concept may be an important boundary condition. A follower's moral identity—the extent to which morality



defines who they are as a person—is an important consideration when analyzing outcomes of an ethical and altruistic nature (Aquino & Reed, 2002).

### *Moral Identity*

Due to the inconsistent results concerning the relationship between moral cognition and moral action, Blasi (1984) proposed a more holistic approach to morality research. His “Self Model” explained higher order moral reasoning alone does not guarantee a person will behave morally (Blasi, 1980; 1983). Instead, Blasi suggests the degree to which morality is central to a person’s self-concept is a fundamental aspect of moral self-regulation. Later research by Lapsley and Laskey (2001) indicated a person with high moral identity is one “for whom moral schemas are chronically available, readily primed, and easily activated for information processing” (p. 347).

Aquino and Reed (2002) proposed two dimensions to the moral identity construct: *symbolization* and *internalization*. Closely aligned with impression management, symbolization represents the self-presentational aspect of moral identity. A person with high symbolization is concerned about engaging in outward actions in order for others to perceive them as a moral person. Internalization is concerned more about the inner person, referring specifically to the centrality of morality to one’s core self. This dimension is often a better predictor of actual behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). In a study conducted by Mayer and colleagues (2012), both internalization and symbolization were found to positively predict ethical leadership, however, only internalization both directly and indirectly (through ethical leadership) predicted unit unethical behavior and unit relationship conflict.

Followers with high internalization hold moral traits to be a major aspect of their self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Therefore, ethical dilemmas in the workplace will be more salient and acting in a manner consistent with their self-beliefs more important

(Aquino, Freeman, Reed, & Felps, 2009). Similarly, they will be motivated to help others whether or not public recognition is foreseen (Winterich, Aquino, Mittal, & Swartz, 2013: 761). One study found internalization expanded one's circle of moral regard to include outgroup members (Aquino & Reed, 2003). This expansion of moral regard was expressed through helping behaviors such as donating money.

Since internalization is more strongly related to actual behavior, I propose it interacts with follower state goal orientation to predict task-related unethical behavior and OCBs (Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008).

Hypothesis 11: Moral identity internalization will moderate the relationship between follower state goal orientation and task-related unethical behavior such that at higher levels of internalization: (a) the negative effect of follower state-LGO will be stronger, (b) the positive effect of follower state-PGO will be weaker, and (c) the positive effect of follower state-AGO will be weaker.

Hypothesis 12: Moral identity internalization will moderate the relationship between follower state goal orientation and task-related OCBs such that at higher levels of internalization: (a) the positive effect of follower state-LGO will be stronger, (b) the negative effect of follower state-PGO will be weaker, and (c) the negative effect of follower state-AGO will be weaker.

## Methods

### *Sample Participants and Procedures*

I recruited supervisor/subordinate dyads representing myriad organizations in the southwestern United States across several industries including manufacturing, service, finance, technology, healthcare, and education. To recruit the subordinates, graduate and undergraduate business students were invited, in exchange for extra credit, to voluntarily join the study by participating in one of two ways. First, if the student was currently employed and working more than 20 hours a week (s)he was asked to participate as a subordinate and was emailed an online survey. At the end of the online

survey (s)he was asked to voluntarily provide his/her supervisor's contact information. Second, if the student was working less than 20 hours a week (s)he could still participate by recruiting a working adult as a surrogate to take the online survey in his or her place. I contacted the recruited surrogates to verify their legitimacy and then sent them an online survey with the supervisor contact information request at the end. In all, 97 graduate students (i.e., 95 as subordinates, 2 recruiting a working adult) and 345 undergraduate students (i.e., 286 as subordinates, 59 recruiting a working adult) participated in the survey.

Of the 442 initial subordinate participants, 407 provided contact information for their immediate supervisor. Upon receiving the supervisor contact information, an email was sent to him/her with an overview of the study and an invitation to fill out a linked online survey on behalf of his/her named subordinate. In each email, the subordinate name was capitalized and bolded in order to ensure the supervisor was aware of the subordinate he/she would be rating in the survey. Supervisors were offered a \$5 gift card as an incentive to complete the online survey. Of the 407 supervisor emails sent out, 252 completed the survey for a 62% response rate. After discarding those dyads with significant missing data (i.e., 50% or more responses left blank), the final sample size consisted of 234 supervisor/subordinate dyads ( $N = 234$ ).

Subordinates worked an average of 34 hours a week ( $s.d. = 10.8$ ) and were 57% female with an average age of 28 years old ( $s.d. = 8.9$ ). The mean organizational tenure was 3.25 years ( $s.d. = 4.1$ ) and mean tenure with supervisor was 2.48 years. The racial/ethnic demographic of subordinates was 37% White, 18% Asian, 13% Black, and 31% Hispanic. Supervisors worked 46.7 hours a week on average ( $s.d. = 8.9$ ) and were 48.7% female with a mean age of 38.7 ( $s.d. = 11.9$ ). The average organizational tenure

for supervisors was 7.5 years (s.d. = 6.4) and the racial/ethnic breakdown was 54% White, 16% Asian, 11% Black, and 15% Hispanic.

### *Measures*

Unless otherwise noted, all items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All measures are listed in Appendix A.

#### Leader trait goal orientation

The LGO, PGO, and AGO dimensions of goal orientation were measured using Vandewalle's (1997) 13-item measure with 5 items for LGO, 4 items for PGO, and 4 items for AGO. This instrument was developed to measure goal orientation specifically in the work domain and was self-reported by supervisors in this study. The factor structure was analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). For the initial model, all indicators were set to load on their appropriate factor, however the resulting model did not have very good fit,  $\chi^2_{(62)}=146.11$ ,  $p<.01$ , RMSEA =.08, CFI =.90, TLI =.88 SRMR =.07. Further analysis of the individual loadings of the indicator variables revealed two items loading significantly lower than the others. These items included, "I'm concerned with showing that I can perform better than others" (LGO, loading = .038) and "For me, development of my ability is important enough to take risks" (PGO, loading = .035). Other researchers have struggled to achieve good factor structure on this measure as well (e.g., Tucker, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002). Since both of these dimensions had other items with very similar yet more concise wording, I decided dropping these two items would not sacrifice the underlying construct domain of the measure. The modified model, excluding the two items, did exhibit improved fit statistics,  $\chi^2_{(41)}=91.91$ ,  $p<.01$ , RMSEA=.07, CFI=.93, TLI=.91, SRMR=.06. This modified model was compared to four alternative models (e.g., LGO and PGO combined, LGO and AGO combined, AGO and

PGO combined, and a one factor model) with  $\Delta\chi^2/df$  tests indicating the three factor modified model provided the best fit to the data (see Table 3-1).

Trait-LGO was measured, therefore, with four items including, "I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks at work where I'll learn new skills" and "I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent" ( $\alpha = .76$ ). Trait-PGO was measured with three items including, "I enjoy it when others at work are aware of how well I am doing" and "I would rather prove my ability on a task that I can do well at than to try a new task" ( $\alpha = .74$ ). Sample items from the four items for trait-AGO include, "Avoiding a show of low ability is more important to me than learning a new skill" and "I prefer to avoid situations at work at work where I might perform poorly" ( $\alpha = .80$ ).

#### Follower state goal orientation

My conceptualization of follower state goal orientation is drawn from previous research suggesting a leader influences their followers within their work domain (Dragoni, 2005; Gorenflo-Gilbert, 1999; Schwager, 1997). In order to measure this, I adapted Vandewalle's (1997) trait goal orientation measure by adding the prefix, "When I'm around my supervisor" to each item. A CFA of the full measure with 5 items loading on state-LGO, 4 items on state-PGO, and 4 items on state-AGO resulted in a model with less than adequate fit,  $\chi^2_{(62)} = 173.60$ ,  $p < .01$ , RMSEA = .09, CFI = .91, TLI = .89, SRMR = .07. To maintain parallel measures with leader trait goal orientation, the two items dropped in the supervisor measure were dropped from the follower measure as well. The resulting modified model had slightly better fit,  $\chi^2_{(41)} = 116.35$ ,  $p < .01$ , RMSEA = .07, CFI = .93, TLI = .90, SRMR = .07. This modified model was compared to four alternative models with  $\Delta\chi^2/df$  tests indicating significantly better fit for the modified three-factor model (see Table 3-2). The reliabilities were all in the acceptable range (state-LGO,  $\alpha = .85$ ; state-PGO,  $\alpha = .77$ ; state-AGO,  $\alpha = .80$ ).

Table 3-1 Confirmatory Factor Analyses for Trait Goal Orientation

Models	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta \chi^2(df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
1. Three factor model (original)	146.11*	62	2.36	--	.08	.90	.88	.07
2. Three factor model (2 indicators dropped)	91.91*	41	2.24	--	.07	.93	.91	.06
3. Two factor model (LGO and PGO combined)	244.01*	43	5.67	152.10(2)*	.14	.74	.67	.13
4. Two factor model (PGO and AGO combined)	332.09*	43	7.72	240.18(2)*	.17	.63	.52	.15
5. Two factor model (LGO and AGO combined)	230.14*	43	5.35	138.23(2)*	.14	.76	.69	.12
6. One factor model	484.28*	44	11.01	392.37(3)*	.21	.43	.29	.17

Notes: Vandewalle (1997) goal orientation measure, all alternative models (3-6) compared to modified three-factor model (2)  
\*p<.01

Table 3-2 Confirmatory Factor Analyses for State Goal Orientation

Models	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta \chi^2(df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
1. Three factor model (original)	146.11*	62	2.36	--	.08	.90	.88	.07
2. Three factor model (2 indicators dropped)	91.91*	41	2.24	--	.07	.93	.91	.06
3. Two factor model (LGO and PGO combined)	244.01*	43	5.67	152.10(2)*	.14	.74	.67	.13
4. Two factor model (PGO and AGO combined)	332.09*	43	7.72	240.18(2)*	.17	.63	.52	.15
5. Two factor model (LGO and AGO combined)	230.14*	43	5.35	138.23(2)*	.14	.76	.69	.12
6. One factor model	484.28*	44	11.01	392.37(3)*	.21	.43	.29	.17

Notes: Adapted Vandewalle (1997) goal orientation measure, all alternative models (3-6) compared to modified three-factor model (2)  
\*p<.01

### Ethical leadership

I assessed the ethical leadership perceptions of each supervisor by giving subordinates the 10-item Ethical Leadership Scale developed by Brown and colleagues (2005). The instructions of the measure designate the immediate supervisor as the target of evaluation. Sample items include, “can be trusted,” and “listens to what employees have to say” ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### Moral identity internalization

Subordinate moral identity internalization was self-reported using Aquino and Reed’s (2002) Moral Identity Scale. The internalization dimension consists of five items requiring respondents to contemplate nine morally respectable traits (e.g., generous, fair) and rate their level of agreement that these traits are important to their self-concept. Exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring revealed a one-factor solution with eigenvalue = 2.92, accounting for 58% of variance. One reverse-coded item, “I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics,” loaded significantly lower than the others (all loadings reported in Table 3-3). It is plausible the extremity phenomenon (McPherson & Mohr, 2005), suggesting reverse-coded items worded with extremes (e.g., “ashamed”) tend to instigate misreports, explains this. Thus, four items were used for this study with sample items such as “I strongly desire to have these characteristics” and “it would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.” The Alpha was .80.

Table 3-3 Factor Loadings for Moral Identity Internalization

Item	Full	Modified
1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.	.83	.85
2. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	.80	.85

Table 3-3—Continued

3. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics. (reverse-code)	.45	drop
4. Having these characteristics is not really important to me. (reverse-code)	.67	.58
5. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	.70	.70
Eigenvalue	2.92	2.67
$\alpha$	.79	.80

Notes: Aquino & Reed (2002) moral identity measure, EFA with principal axis factoring

#### Task-related OCBs

Supervisors were asked to rate the targeted subordinate’s task-related OCBs using a six-item measure developed by Settoon and Mossholder (2002). A sample item is, “This employee helps coworkers with work when they have been absent.” The reliability was acceptable ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

#### Task-related unethical behavior

Five items, specifically related to task-related activities, from Akaah’s (1996) unethical behavior measure, were used to measure task-related unethical behavior. This measure was utilized to assess both other-rated and self-rated unethical behavior in previous studies (e.g., Mayer et al., 2012; Reynolds, 2008). Supervisors rated the targeted subordinate on how frequently they participated in unethical acts including, “concealing one’s errors,” “claiming credit for someone else’s work,” or “passing the blame for errors on to an innocent coworker.” Items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1=“never” to 7=“frequently” ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

#### Control variables

Demographic variables known to have an effect on the criterion variables include age, gender, and tenure with supervisor (Kacmar et al., 2011; Reynolds, 2008). These



items were used as controls in the path analytic model with each endogenous variable being regressed on all three control variables along with the hypothesized paths.

### *Results*

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations are reported in Table 3-4. A cursory analysis of the relationships between the trait goal orientation dimensions and ethical leadership indicates correlations in the hypothesized directions with the trait-learn and trait-avoid correlations with ethical leadership significant (trait-LGO,  $r = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ; trait-PGO,  $r = -.04$ , n.s.; trait-AGO  $r = -.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Significant positive correlations also exist between each parallel dimension of leader trait and follower state goal orientation (LGO,  $r = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ; PGO,  $r = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ; AGO,  $r = .17$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Prior to testing my hypotheses, I conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to test the discriminant validity of the study variables. I first specified a ten-factor model with all of the indicator items loading on their respective latent constructs. This model provided adequate fit statistics ( $\chi^2_{(989)} = 1503.91$ ,  $p < .01$ , RMSEA = .05, CFI = .91, TLI = .91, SRMR = .06). All of the standardized factor loadings were above the acceptable cutoff of .40 with the average being .74. This hypothesized model was compared to four alternative models where I combined constructs that were empirically correlated (e.g., state-LGO and state-PGO, trait-LGO and trait-PGO). Table 3-5 shows a comparison of the hypothesized model with the four alternative measurement models indicating better fit for the congeneric model and supporting the discriminant validity of the ten study variables.

### *Analysis*

To analyze my hypotheses I specified a path model with all hypothesized relationships estimated using Mplus 7.2. Given the complexity of the relationships

Table 3-4 Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Emp. Age	28.00	8.86													
2. Emp. Sex	0.57	0.50	.02												
3. Ten w/Sup	2.48	3.16	.30**	.01											
4. T-LGO	6.06	0.86	-.04	-.07	-.01	(.76)									
5. T-PGO	4.97	1.23	-.06	-.16*	.00	.23**	(.74)								
6. T-AGO	2.89	1.28	.00	-.07	.14*	-.22**	.28**	(.80)							
7. EL	5.59	1.10	.01	-.04	.02	.14*	-.04	-.28**	(.93)						
8. S-LGO	5.41	1.05	-.03	-.08	.04	.16*	.06	-.13*	.48**	(.85)					
9. S-PGO	4.87	1.23	-.19**	-.08	.00	.13	.18**	.03	.11	.41**	(.77)				
10. S-AGO	3.17	1.24	-.16*	-.05	.02	-.07	.08	.17**	-.21**	-.27**	.29**	(.80)			
11. Intern	6.37	0.80	.03	.17*	.15*	.05	-.03	-.05	.16*	.29**	.15*	-.16*	(.80)		
12. OCB	5.75	1.20	.05	.11	.04	.25**	.00	-.19**	.18**	.12	.02	-.19**	.07	(.95)	
13. UEB	1.40	0.54	-.08	-.01	-.01	-.19**	.08	.23**	-.19**	-.17**	.02	.18**	-.17*	-.50**	(.81)

Notes: N=234 dyads. Sex (male=0; female=1), reliabilities in parentheses, Ten w/Sup=Tenure with supervisor, T-LGO=trait-learn, T-PGO=trait-prove, T-AGO=trait-avoid, EL=ethical leadership, S-LGO=state-learn, S-PGO=state-prove, S-AGO=state-avoid, Intern=Internalization, OCB = task-related organizational citizenship behavior; UEB = task-related unethical behavior. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01 (two-tailed)

Table 3-5 Confirmatory Factor Analyses of all Study Variables

Models	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta \chi^2(df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Ten factor model	1503.91*	989	1.52	--	.05	.91	.91	.06
Nine factor model (SLGO and SPGO combined)	1699.13*	998	1.70	195.22(9)*	.06	.88	.87	.07
Nine factor model (TLGO and TPGO combined)	1667.96*	998	1.67	164.05(9)*	.05	.89	.88	.07
Nine factor model (SLGO and Internalization)	1883.21*	998	1.89	379.30(9)*	.06	.85	.84	.09
Eight factor model (SLGO and SPGO, TLGO and TPGO combined)	1854.00*	1006	1.84	350.09(17)*	.06	.86	.85	.08

Notes: N=234 dyads, All alternative models were compared with the ten factor model.

\*p<.01

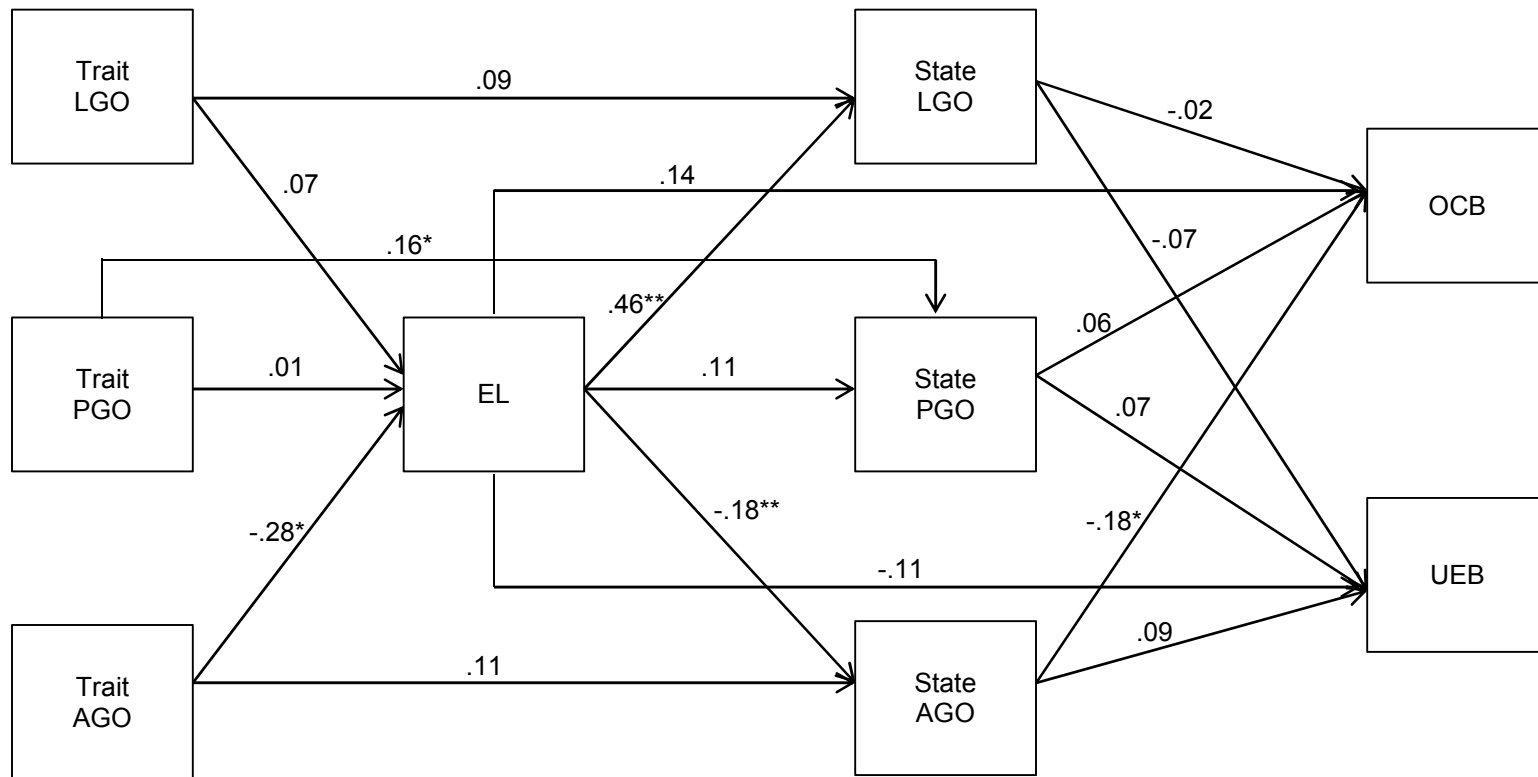
between the study variables, path analysis is preferred to traditional regression as it simultaneously models multiple relationships and allows the decomposition of correlations in the model into direct and indirect effects to test mediation. The full path model with coefficients and standard errors is reported in Figure 2-2.

#### Direct effects

The model estimates for all hypothesized direct effects are listed in Table 3-6. In hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, I proposed a positive effect for leader trait-LGO and negative effect for leader trait-PGO and trait-AGO on ethical leadership. H1a was not supported since the path from trait-LGO to ethical leadership was not significant ( $\beta = .07$ , n.s.). A lack of support was also found for H1b with trait-PGO not significantly related to ethical leadership ( $\beta = .01$ , n.s.). Trait-AGO, however, was significantly related to ethical leadership indicating support for H1c ( $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The three dimensions of leader trait goal orientation along with the controls explained 9% of the variance in ethical leadership perceptions ( $R^2 = .09$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The findings for hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c, proposing each dimension of leader trait goal orientation positively relates to its parallel follower state goal orientation, were mixed. Trait-LGO was not significantly related to state-LGO (H2a,  $\beta = .09$ , n.s.) but trait-PGO did significantly relate to state-PGO (H2b,  $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Initially, significance was not found for H2c, however upon bootstrapping the results, the path from trait-AGO to state-AGO was significant as zero was not in the confidence interval ( $\beta = .10$ , LLCL = .01 HLCL = .20). Worth noting, the control variable, employee age, was significantly related to state-PGO and state-AGO ( $\beta = -.03$ ,  $p < .01$ , for both variables).

Paths were estimated between ethical leadership and each dimension of follower state goal orientation to test H3a, H3b, and H3c. The path between ethical leadership and state-LGO was significant and positive as hypothesized (H3a,  $\beta = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



Notes: N=234 dyads. Standardized path coefficients reported. For clarity, control variables and non-significant interaction hypotheses are not pictured.

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

Figure 3-2 Model Results

Table 3-6 Model Path Estimates for Direct Effects

Path/effect	Standardized	Unstandardized	t	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>DV: Ethical Leadership</b>				
H1a: Trait-LGO -> Ethical Leadership	.07	.10	1.11	
H1b: Trait-PGO -> Ethical Leadership	.01	.01	0.18	
H1c: Trait-AGO -> Ethical Leadership★	-.28	-.24	-4.08***	
<b>DV: State Learning Goal Orientations</b>				
H2a: Trait-LGO -> State-LGO	.09	.11	1.51	
H2b: Trait-PGO -> State-PGO★	.16	.16	2.53*	
H2c: Trait-AGO -> State-AGO★†	.11	.11	1.65	
H3a: Ethical leadership -> State-LGO★	.46	.44	7.98***	
H3b: Ethical leadership -> State-PGO	.11	.13	1.80	
H3c: Ethical leadership -> State-AGO★	-.18	-.20	-2.69**	
<b>DV: Task-Related Unethical Behavior</b>				
H5: Ethical leadership -> UEB	-.11	-.05	-1.52	
H7a: State-LGO -> UEB	-.07	-.04	-0.83	
H7b: State-PGO -> UEB	.07	.03	0.86	
H7c: State-AGO -> UEB	.09	-.08	1.17	
H11a: State-LGO x Intern. -> UEB	.12	.07	1.36	
H11b: State-PGO x Intern. -> UEB	-.06	-.04	-0.78	
H11c: State-AGO x Intern. -> UEB	-.01	-.01	-0.13	
<b>DV: Task-Related OCBs</b>				
H6: Ethical leadership -> OCB	.14	.15	1.92	
H8a: State-LGO -> OCB	-.02	-.02	-0.17	
H8b: State-PGO -> OCB	.10	.05	0.70	
H8c: State-AGO -> OCB★	-.18	-.17	-2.41*	
H12a: State-LGO x Intern. -> OCB	-.14	.07	1.36	
H12b: State-PGO x Intern. -> OCB	.12	-.04	-0.78	
H12c: State-AGO x Intern. -> OCB	-.03	.01	-0.13	
<b>Endogenous Variables</b>				
Ethical Leadership				.09*
State-LGO				.24***
State-PGO				.08*
State-AGO				.09*
Task-Related OCB				.09*
Task-Related Unethical Behavior				.08*

Notes: N=234 dyads, H=hypothesis,★= supported, †= p<.05 w/bootstrap results

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

H3b, proposing a negative relationship between ethical leadership and state-PGO was not supported ( $\beta = .11$ , n.s.). Ethical leadership was negatively related to state-AGO supporting H3c ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Several direct effects were proposed on the two dependent variables, task-related unethical behavior and task-related OCBs. H5 and H6 were not supported since ethical leadership did not significantly relate to either unethical behavior or OCBs ( $\beta = -.11$ , n.s.;  $\beta = .14$ , n.s., respectively). H7a, proposing state-LGO would negatively relate to task-related unethical behavior was not supported, however the effect was in the hypothesized direction ( $\beta = -.11$ , n.s.). The paths from state-PGO and state-AGO to unethical behavior were positive but not significant ( $\beta = .07$ , n.s.;  $\beta = .09$ , n.s., respectively), indicating a lack of support for H7b and H7c. H8a, proposing state-LGO would positively relate to task-related OCBs was not supported ( $\beta = -.02$ , n.s.). State-PGO also did not significantly relate to task-related OCBs (H8b,  $\beta = .10$ , n.s.). State-AGO did significantly negatively relate to OCBs in support of H8c ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

I also proposed a conditional direct effect for each dimension of state goal orientation on task-related unethical behavior and task-related OCBs with follower internalization as a moderator. The paths from the state-LGO x internalization, state-PGO x internalization, and state-AGO x internalization interactions to task-related unethical behavior were all not significant indicating a lack of support for H11a, H11b, and H11c. H12a, H12b, and H12c proposing the same interactions on task-related OCBs were also not supported. It is likely that statistical power was lacking to test all of the interactions simultaneously in the same model (Aiken & West, 1991).

#### Indirect effects

In order to more precisely analyze my mediation hypotheses, I ran the full path model again using nonparametric bootstrapping (i.e., 10,000 bootstraps) to test the

significance of the direct ( $c'$ ), indirect ( $ab$ ), and total effects ( $c$ ) of the variables in the model (c.f., Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Preacher & Kelley, 2011). The sampling distributions of  $c'$ ,  $ab$ , and  $c$  (i.e.,  $c'+ab$ ) were then bootstrapped to derive 95% confidence intervals. The results of this mediation analysis for Hypothesis 4, proposing ethical leadership partially mediates the effects of each leader trait goal orientation dimension on each respective dimension of follower state goal orientation, are reported in Table 3-7. The effect of trait-LGO on state-LGO was fully mediated by ethical leadership in partial support of H4a as the indirect but not the direct effect was significant (indirect effect = .05,  $p < .05$ ). H4b was not supported as only the direct effect, and not the indirect effect, of trait-PGO on state-PGO was significant (indirect effect = .00, n.s.). Full support was found for H4c since ethical leadership partially mediated the effect of trait-AGO on state-AGO (indirect effect = -.05,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 3-7 Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects for Mediation Analysis (Hypothesis 4)

Mediator: Ethical Leadership	Direct Effects			Indirect Effects			Total Effects		
	Effect	LLCL	HLCL	Effect	LLCL	HLCL	Effect	LLCL	HLCL
T-LGO -> S-LGO	.11	-.03	.26	.05*	.01	.09	.15*	.01	.32
T-PGO -> S-PGO	.16*	.02	.30	.00	-.01	.02	.16*	.02	.30
T-AGO -> S-AGO	.10*	.01	.20	.05*	.01	.10	.15*	.05	.25

Notes: 10,000 bootstraps; LLCL = 95% lower-level confidence interval; HLCL = 95% higher-level confidence interval; \* = "0" is not in the 95% bootstrapped confidence interval

The mediation analyses for H9a, H9b, H9c and H10a, H10b, H10c are detailed in Table 3-8. Hypothesis 9a proposes the effect of ethical leadership on task-related OCBs is partially mediated by state-LGO. This hypothesis was not supported (H9a, indirect effect = -.01, n.s.). Likewise, state-PGO did not mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and task-related OCBs (H9b, indirect effect = .01, n.s.). H9c was partially



supported as the negative effect of state-AGO was indirectly related to task-related OCBs through ethical leadership (H9c, indirect effect = .03,  $p < .05$ ). For the outcome of task-related unethical behavior there were no significant direct, indirect, or total effects indicating no support for Hypothesis 10a, 10b, or 10c. Thus, in this study, ethical leadership was not significantly directly related to task-related unethical behavior nor did it indirectly affect the outcome through state-LGO, state-PGO, or state-AGO.

### *Supplemental Analyses*

#### Conditional indirect effects

To further analyze the conditional indirect effects of ethical leadership on the two outcomes through various levels of the state goal orientation x internalization interaction I used the second-stage moderated mediation model explained by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). In each scenario, ethical leadership is the predictor variable, a specific dimension of follower state goal orientation is the mediating variable, and the relationship between each criterion variable and the mediator is moderated by internalization. Bootstrapped confidence intervals (with 10,000 bootstrap samples) were utilized to determine the significance of the conditional indirect effects of ethical leadership on the outcomes. The results are displayed in Table 3-9.

Conditional indirect effects were analyzed for significance at both high (+1 s.d.) and low (-1 s.d.) levels of internalization. The only significant conditional indirect effects occurred through state-AGO on task-related OCBs at high (indirect effect = .04,  $p < .05$ ) but not low levels of moral identity internalization (indirect effect = .03, n.s.). There were no significant results for ethical leadership through state-LGO and state-PGO on task-related OCBs at high- or low-levels of internalization. Also, there were no significant

Table 3-8 Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects for Mediation Analysis (Predictor: Ethical Leadership)

Dependent Variable	Mediator	Direct Effects			Indirect Effects			Total Effects		
		Effect	LLCL	HLCL	Effect	LLCL	HLCL	Effect	LLCL	HLCL
Task-Related OCBs	State-LGO	.15	-.01	.31	-.01	-.09	.08	.14	-.01	.30
	State-PGO	.15	-.01	.31	.01	-.01	.05	.16*	.01	.32
	State-AGO	.15	-.01	.31	.03*	.004	.09	.19*	.03	.34
Task-Related Unethical Behavior	State-LGO	-.05	-.16	.03	-.02	-.05	.01	-.07	-.17	.01
	State-PGO	-.05	-.16	.03	.004	-.003	.02	-.05	-.16	.03
	State-AGO	-.05	-.16	.03	-.01	-.03	.00	-.06	-.16	.01

Notes: 10,000 bootstraps; LLCL = 95% lower-level confidence interval; HLCL = 95% higher-level confidence interval  
 \* = "0" is not in the 95% bootstrapped confidence interval

Table 3-9 Conditional Indirect Effects of Ethical Leadership on Outcomes

Dependent Variable	Mediator	Moral Identity Internalization	Indirect Effects
Task-Related OCBs	State-LGO	High	-.08
		Low	.07
	State-PGO	High	.03
		Low	-.01
	State-AGO	High	.04*
		Low	.03
Task-Related Unethical Behavior	State-LGO	High	.01
		Low	-.05
	State-PGO	High	-.001
		Low	.01
	State-AGO	High	-.01
		Low	.01

Notes: 10,000 bootstraps; \* = "0" was not in the 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals

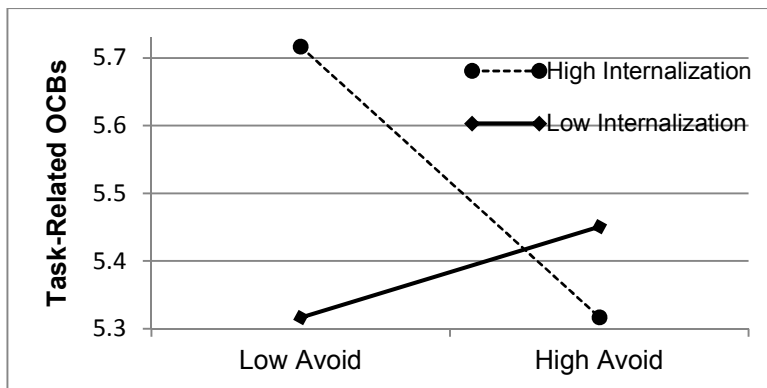
effects for ethical leadership through any dimension of follower state goal orientation on task-related unethical behavior at high or low levels of moral identity internalization.

A graph of the conditional indirect effects of ethical leadership on task-related OCBs (see Figure 3-3) indicates the effect of ethical leadership is strongest when state-AGO is low and internalization is high. The indirect and total effects of ethical leadership at high (+1 s.d.) and low (-1 s.d.) levels of internalization are listed in Table 3-10 revealing the total effects of ethical leadership through state-AGO are significant at both high- and low-levels of internalization, however, the indirect effects are only significant when internalization is high.

Table 3-10 Indirect Effect of Ethical Leadership on OCBs through State-AGO at High and Low Levels of Internalization

Moral Identity Internalization	Indirect Effects			Total Effects		
	Effect	LLCL	HLCL	Effect	LLCL	HLCL
High	.04*	.002	.13	.19*	.04	.34
Low	.03	-.01	.10	.18*	.01	.35

Notes: 10,000 bootstraps, high = +1 sd, low = -1 sd, \*="0" not in 95% confidence interval



Notes: Variables are mean centered. High = +1 s.d., Low = -1 s.d.

Figure 3-3 Effect of Ethical Leadership on Task-Related OCBs Through State-AGO x Internalization Interaction

Trait-LGO x trait-AGO interaction

Given the proposed orthogonal nature of the dimensions of goal orientation (Button et al., 1996; Payne et al., 2007), I also wanted to examine whether or not the leader trait goal orientation measures might interact to predict ethical leadership. In particular, whether or not leaders with high trait-LGO and low trait-AGO would be more likely to be perceived as ethical leaders than leaders high on both dimensions or low on both dimensions. I analyzed this by regressing ethical leadership on the control variables in step one, the three dimensions of trait goal orientation in step two, and on the interaction of trait-LGO and trait-AGO in step three. All three dimensions of goal orientation were mean centered to reduce the effects of multicollinearity and for ease of interpretation.

As Table 3-11 indicates, the final model with the interaction variable was significant, accounting for 12% of the variance in ethical leadership ( $F_{(226, 7)}=4.253$ ,  $R^2=.12$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The interaction between trait-LGO and trait-AGO was a significant variable in the model ( $b = .16$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Table 3-11 Regression Results of Ethical Leadership on Trait Goal Orientation

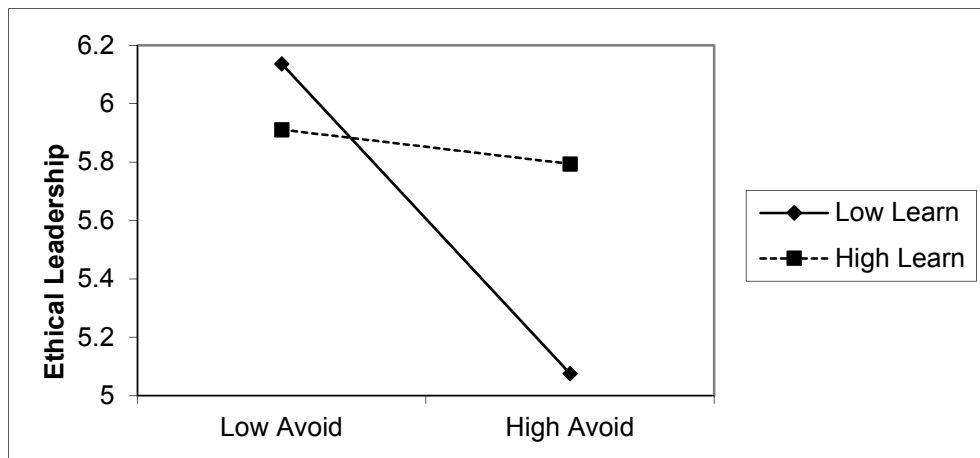
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Intercept	5.72 (.33)	5.76 (.32)	5.73 (.32)
Employee Age	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Employee Sex	-.10 (.15)	-.13 (.14)	-.08 (.14)
Tenure w/Supervisor	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Trait-LGO		.10 (.09)	.10 (.09)

Table 3-11—Continued

Trait-PGO		.01 (.06)	.02 (.06)
Trait-AGO		-.24** (0.06)	-.23** (.06)
LGO x AGO			.15* (.06)
R <sup>2</sup>	.00	.09**	.12**
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		.09**	.02*

Notes: N=234 dyads, unstandardized beta coefficients  
 \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

To better interpret the interaction, a graph of the simple slopes analysis is provided in Figure 3-4 for high and low levels of trait-LGO and trait-AGO. As the graph illustrates, being low on trait-AGO seems to be the driving factor in ethical leadership perceptions. The highest ethical leadership perceptions occur under conditions of low trait-AGO and low-LGO. The most detrimental effects on ethical leadership perceptions occur when a leader is high trait-AGO and low trait-LGO.



Variables are mean centered. High = +1 s.d., Low = -1 s.d.

Figure 3-4 Simple Slopes Analysis of Trait-LGO x Trait-AGO Interaction

## Discussion

Major gaps in the extant ethical leadership literature include our limited understanding of antecedents and process variables (Brown & Treviño, 2014). The purpose of this study was to address these gaps by proposing leader trait goal orientation as an antecedent to ethical leadership and follower state goal orientation as a process variable through which it influences key employee outcomes. The results of this study indicate leader trait-avoid as a significant negative antecedent of ethical leadership and follower state-avoid as a significant process variable through which ethical leaders influence task-related OCBs.

Of the goal orientation dimensions, leader trait-AGO was the strongest and only significant predictor of ethical leadership perceptions in the model. This is of interest as the majority of scholarly work on goal orientation and leadership focuses primarily on the positive influences of LGO (e.g., Coad & Berry, 1998; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Pappadopoulos, 2005; Sosik, Godshalk, & Yammarino, 2004). This study suggests it is of more benefit to an organization to find a leader low on trait-AGO than one high on trait-LGO since leaders who exhibit avoid mindsets, such as fear of failure and negative appraisal, are less likely to be perceived as ethical. Leaders high on trait-AGO may not be upfront about their mistakes and may lack transparency, making them appear less honest and forthright. They may also be willing to engage in misconduct to elevate their performance and meet expectations as to not be perceived as lacking in ability. These behaviors reduce ethical leadership perceptions and in turn influence followers' state goal orientation.

Ethical leadership perceptions were positively related to follower state-LGO and negatively related to follower state-AGO. As ethical leaders conduct themselves with honesty, fairness, and integrity—exhibiting sincere interest in the development of

others—they invoke a safe environment for their followers to challenge themselves and to continually learn and grow. This will often produce healthy social comparisons that build employees up rather than dysfunctional comparisons resulting in negative self-evaluations (Bandura & Jourden, 1991). The moral manager aspect of ethical leadership, focusing on giving clear moral behavioral guidelines, gives followers well-defined boundaries for which risks are acceptable and which are not. This aligns with meta-analytic evidence linking leader trustworthiness behaviors such as integrity and benevolence positively with employee risk-taking behaviors and negatively with counterproductive work behaviors (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007).

This study also contributes to the goal orientation literature by finding organizational evidence of leader trait goal orientation influencing follower state goal orientation. Specifically, leader trait-PGO directly predicted follower state-PGO while leader trait-LGO and –AGO indirectly affected follower state-LGO and –AGO, respectively, through ethical leadership. This substantiates the importance of the social learning and role modeling process in leader-follower dyads (Bandura, 1986; Brown et al., 2005; Ogunfowora, 2014).

Although previous theory in the educational sciences proposed student goal orientations as malleable by teacher behaviors (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986), in management, only a few studies have explored the relationship between leader and follower goal orientation (e.g., Alexander & Van Knippenberg, 2014; Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012). For example, Dragoni (2005) initially proposed leader achievement pattern orientation to influence group-member state goal orientation through group climate and psychological climate. Later empirical work by Dragoni and Kuenzi (2012) found support for leader trait goal orientation interacting with group structure (i.e., organic versus mechanistic) to influence unit level goal orientation.

The findings of this study suggest a leader's trait goal orientation relates to the pattern of behaviors they exhibit and expect from their followers. This pattern of behaviors then influences the follower's approach to his/her tasks. This occurs in part to the extent the leader's pattern of behaviors are perceived as ethical. For example, a leader with high trait-AGO may promote the underreporting of mistakes to "save face." Not only does this directly role model such behaviors to followers but it also comes across as unethical and therefore indirectly influences the same behaviors among followers.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

As with all empirical research, this study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration regarding the interpretation of results. Perhaps the strongest limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data, making reverse-causal order a possibility. For example, a follower's state goal orientation may actually predict the extent to which they perceive their leader as ethical. Although this is plausible, my proposed causal order aligns with a substantial amount of theoretical and empirical evidence indicating a leader's influence on his/her followers. Early empirical studies, such as Porter and Kaufman (1959) and Cooper (1966), found evidence of employees patterning their interactions and task approaches to that of their supervisors. These findings align with the social learning theoretical perspective suggesting individuals emulate the behaviors of role models and leaders to conform to accepted norms (Bandura, 1977; Mayer et al., 2009). Recent research confirms that leaders have a strong influence on both individual and group behavior and cognition with leader OCB influencing group OCB (Yaffe & Kark, 2011) and servant leadership behaviors engendering other-oriented actions and attitudes among followers (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Despite this support, however, longitudinal field studies would greatly



enhance our ability to understand and interpret the causal ordering of leader traits and follower states on employee outcomes.

Another limitation exists in my interpretation of follower *state* goal orientation and my proposed linkage between leader trait and follower state goal orientation. Since I did not measure follower *trait* goal orientation, I cannot rule out the extent to which a follower's *trait* goal orientation influences or is even different than his/her *state* goal orientation. It is generally accepted that traits predict states and that states are less stable and more situational than traits (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) and prior goal orientation research does indicate significant correlations between follower trait and state goal orientations. For example, Dragoni and Kuenzi (2012) found strong and significant correlations between average trait goal orientation dimensions in a team and corresponding team goal orientation dimensions (LGO,  $r = .50$ ; PGO,  $r = .59$ , AGO,  $r = .66$ ). Likewise, Payne and colleagues' (2007) meta-analysis revealed equally strong correlations between trait and state goal orientation (LGO,  $\rho = .55$ ; PGO,  $\rho = .58$ , AGO,  $\rho = .55$ ). These findings make an attraction-selection-attrition (Schneider, 1987) theoretical explanation plausible, where leaders may actually attract, select, and retain followers with similar goal orientations. To further examine the theoretical processes at work, future research should analyze the extent to which a leader's trait goal orientation affects a follower's state goal orientation above and beyond the follower's trait goal orientation.

The lack of significance in this study for ethical leadership and state goal orientation in deterring unethical behavior is disheartening. Although a significant negative correlation existed between ethical leadership and task-related unethical behavior ( $r = -.19$ ), significant path coefficients were not found in the full model. This was surprising given the extant ethical leadership research finding such support (e.g., Hannah

et al., 2014; Khuntia & Suar, 2004; Mayer et al., 2012, Schaubroeck et al., 2012; Tang & Liu, 2012). It is possible that my limited focus on task-related unethical behavior instead of overall unethical behavior contributed to the lack of findings. Also, several scholars have found significant relationships between ethical leadership and workplace aggression outcomes, which looks at deviant behaviors more broadly (e.g., Mayer et al., 2009). Future research would be beneficial in examining the differences between ethical leadership and task-related versus organization-related unethical behavior. Also, more robust theoretical development is needed to differentiate between unethical behavior and workplace aggression or counterproductive work behavior.

### *Conclusions*

Amid the devastating financial effects of employee misconduct, the importance and relevance of ethical leadership is growing. As the public demands more accountability and higher moral standards from business leaders, scholarly research is necessary to better understand what specific traits ethical leaders possess and how they impact their followers. This study informs research and practice by finding ethical leadership goes above and beyond morality to entail how leaders approach their work tasks. Specifically, leaders with a high trait-AGO, who desire to avoid looking incompetent and fear revealing a lack of ability, are less likely to be perceived as ethical leaders. In turn, such leaders influence their followers to perceive goal attainment in a similar manner in the work domain impacting extra-role performance. It is my hope that these results increase our understanding of ethical leadership and spawn more exploration into how goal orientation might increase or decrease moral self-regulation and ethical behaviors in the workplace.

## Chapter 4

### Moral Person and Moral Manager: A Meta-Analytic Mediation Model of Ethical Leadership

Only about 22% of Americans rate business executives as having high levels of honesty and ethical integrity (Gallup, 2013). For some reason, business and ethics don't seem to go hand in hand. High profile ethical scandals among top organizational leaders certainly do not help this perception. In recent years, top executives have been in the news for inappropriate intimate relationships with subordinates (e.g., Brian Dunn, Best Buy; Mark Everson, American Red Cross; Harry Stonecipher, Boeing), lying to a judge (e.g., John Browne, BP), and expense account abuse (e.g., Thomas Coughlin, Walmart) ("Decades Top Ten," 2010).

Given the salience of ethical scandals in the news media, business ethics has become a highly desired teaching and research field in business schools. The major attention these scandals get in the popular press coupled with the validation of the Ethical Leadership Scale by Brown, Treviño, & Harrison (2005) has led to a proliferation of scholarly research on ethical leadership (EL). EL is a behavior-based construct focused on subordinate perceptions of how trustworthy, fair, and transparent a focal organizational leader is. Originally conceptualized as a social learning construct, a review by Brown and Treviño (2006) also proposed that social exchange theory is useful in explaining EL's follower outcomes, specifically organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Ng and Feldman (2014) utilized meta-analytic methods proposing trust as a proxy for both social exchange and social learning processes together. Trust was found to be a significant mediator between EL and a wide-range of employee attitudes and behaviors.

While the literature is clear that EL influences work outcomes through both social exchange and social learning processes and that these processes often work in tandem, more robust theoretical linkages are required to distinguish what aspects of ethical leadership influence social exchange outcomes and what aspects influence social learning outcomes. The purpose of this study is to propose a more complete and nuanced theoretical model of EL based upon Treviño and colleagues' (2000, 2003) earlier conceptual work. Using leader-member exchange (LMX) as a proxy for social exchange processes and ethical climate as a proxy for social learning processes, I test a model using meta-analytic techniques to compare the usefulness of social learning theory versus social exchange theory for explaining the relationship between EL and employee outcomes.

I begin this study with a background in theory on the ethical leadership construct, building out of the two pillars of EL (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000), which emphasize the importance of ethical leaders being both moral persons and moral managers. I propose the moral person pillar of ethical leadership primarily influences work outcomes through social exchange and the moral manager pillar through social learning. I then propose that social learning and social exchange affect different employee attitudes and behaviors. For example, the effect of EL on follower ethical behaviors, such as ethical decision-making and the reporting of coworker unethical behavior, tends to be explained more appropriately through social learning theory. Conversely, I propose the effect of EL on task performance, OCBs, and commitment is explained mainly through a social exchange lens. I then test my model (see Figure 4-1 below) using a meta-analysis of all relevant ethical leadership empirical papers through 2014 and discuss the results.

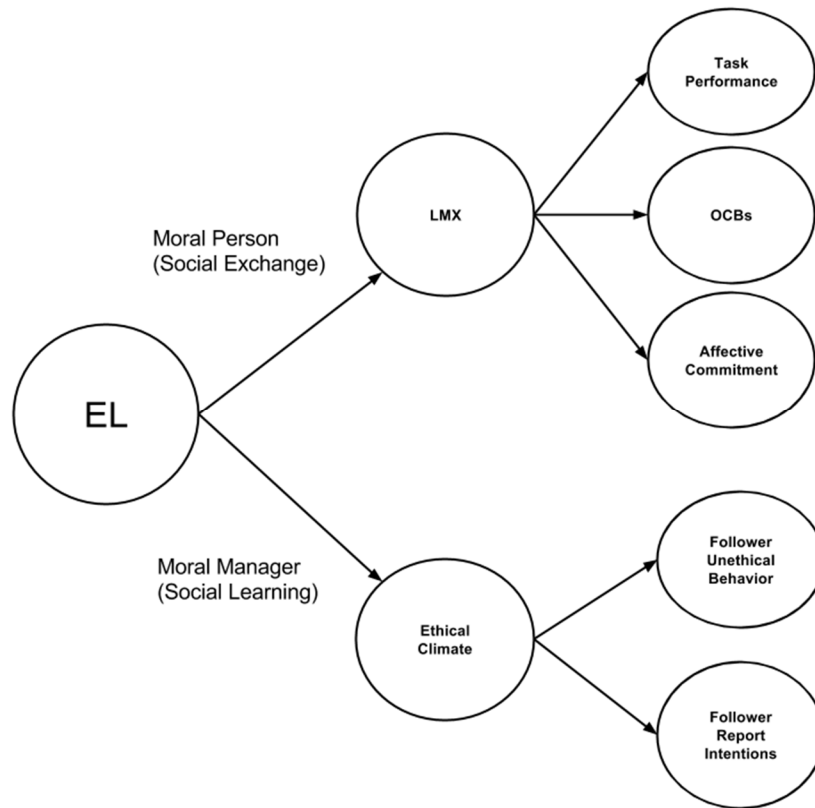


Figure 4-1 Hypothesized Mediation Model

#### Theoretical Background

Ethical leadership is defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). Qualitative analysis of senior business leaders and corporate ethics officials led to the conceptualization of the two major pillars of EL: moral person and moral manager (Treviño et al., 2000; Treviño et al., 2003). As moral people, ethical leaders have high levels of integrity and consistently demonstrate honesty and garner the trust of those around them. Ethical leaders are also moral managers who communicate regularly about the importance of ethics and motivate their followers to

engage in ethical conduct through the use of rewards and punishments (Treviño et al., 2000).

#### *Moral Manager and Social Learning*

Moral manager, as the transactional component of EL, aligns well with a social learning theoretical perspective. Fundamental actions associated with being a moral manager include communicating regularly about the importance of ethics, intentionally role modeling ethical behavior, and rewarding and punishing (un)ethical behavior among subordinates (Treviño et al., 2000). Each of these actions creates a resource for followers as they move through the various steps of ethical decision-making (Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006).

The four sequential steps of the ethical decision-making process include moral awareness, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral behavior (Rest, 1984). The *moral awareness* step suggests that an individual must first recognize that a particular issue has moral ramifications. Secondly, once someone is aware there is a moral concern, a person must make a *moral judgment* as to what the normatively appropriate decision or action would be in the given situation. Next, an individual needs sufficient *moral motivation* to act in accordance to the judgment they deem appropriate. The final step is *moral behavior*, where the individual actually carries out the behavior they judged to be right for the situation in question.

Moral managers are likely to influence each of the four components of the ethical decision-making process of their followers. Through regular communication about ethics and the exposition of the task-specific ethical issues that exist in their organization, moral managers heighten the moral awareness of their followers in the work environment. Next, the intentional role modeling that moral managers engage in will give employees a roadmap to follow when making moral judgments (Posner & Schmidt, 1984). Thus, when

followers are not certain what the right or wrong moral action is in a given situation, they can recall the previously observed actions their manager chose in similar situations. Finally, both the moral motivation and moral behavior steps of ethical decision-making will likely be influenced by the rewards and punishments moral managers impose for (un)ethical behaviors. This extrinsic accountability provides followers with the appropriate motivation to actively engage in normatively appropriate conduct.

Outcomes indicating the strength of the influence of the moral manager dimension will be those that signal sound ethical decision-making among followers and follower commitment to the ethical reputation of their organization. Two constructs that signal such behavior include follower (un)ethical behavior (e.g., lying, cheating, and stealing) and follower reporting behavior (e.g., whistleblowing). Unethical behavior is formally defined as “any organizational member action that violates widely accepted (societal) moral norms” (Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010, p. 2) and is considered conceptually different than workplace deviance behaviors which have a more retaliatory intent (Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). Reporting behavior entails an employee’s commitment to report the misconduct of peers and other organizational employees (Mayer, Nurmohamed, Treviño, Shapiro, & Schminke, 2013; Treviño & Victor, 1992). I propose the effect of EL on these outcomes occurs predominantly through the social learning process and propose ethical climate as a social learning mediator.

Ethical climate as a social learning mediator

Ethical climate refers to the institutionalized organizational norms that exist in an organization informing policies, procedures, actions, and decisions with ethical consequences (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Mayer, Kuenzi, and Greenbaum (2010) suggest ethical climate as an indicator of the social learning processes of ethical leadership. As

ethical leaders signal the importance of ethical decision-making to the functioning of the organization, employees are likely to perceive a stronger ethical climate.

As with most employee outcomes, an individual difference approach is helpful but insufficient in predicting individual ethical behavior (Blasi, 1986; Kurtines, 1986). Schneider and Reichers (1983) use a symbolic interaction perspective (Mead, 1934) to suggest that climates emerge from the shared interactions individuals have with one another (see Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009 for a review on organizational climate). This perspective explains how different workgroups in the same organization may have different ethical climates. As workgroup members interact they develop a shared perception and interpretation of organizational ethical policies and procedures (Trevino, 1986). Leaders, often the most influential group members, will have a strong impact on the shaping of these shared perceptions (Wimbush & Shephard, 1994).

As strong moral managers, ethical leaders will intentionally communicate and enforce organizational codes of conduct and use their own actions as a model to establish normatively appropriate conduct, thereby impacting workgroup ethical climate and ultimately employee ethical behavior (Mayer et al., 2010; Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005). I propose ethical climate as a proxy for the strength of the social learning process and that it will, therefore, mediate the effects of EL on social learning outcomes.

Hypothesis 1: EL is positively related to ethical climate.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between EL and (a) follower unethical behavior and (b) follower reporting intentions is mediated by ethical climate.

#### *Moral Person and Social Exchange*

The moral person pillar of ethical leadership, implying that ethical leaders are trustworthy, fair, and are concerned about the treatment of others (Treviño et al., 2000),



influences employee outcomes primarily by invoking social exchange processes (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Blau (1964) posited that social exchange guides social interactions such that “a person for whom another has done a service is expected to express his gratitude and return a service when the occasion arises” (p. 4). When applied to organizations, social exchange processes imply that, when a supervisor extends fair and positive treatment to employees, employees will feel an obligation to reciprocate with future positive behaviors (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Among the commodities viewed as acceptable for social exchange by employees, *task performance*, *OCBs*, and *organizational commitment* are among the most common in the literature (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

As ethical leaders are transparent with their employees, respectful of their needs, and focused on their development (Trevino et al., 2003), they are likely to induce feelings of obligation among their employees to reciprocate by working harder, going above and beyond, and remaining committed to the leader and organization. Extant research corroborates this conceptualization indicating a positive relationship between ethical leadership and followers' task performance (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011), OCBs (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011), and organizational commitment (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009).

LMX as a social exchange mediator

A construct consistently utilized in the organizational science literature as an indicator of the quality of the social exchange relationship in a supervisor-subordinate dyad is LMX (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000; Wayne et al., 1997). The strength of the relationship between leaders and their employees develops as each party tests the responses of the other to determine if

reciprocation can be expected consistently (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Relationships where exchange is positive and reliable, and where the critical components of trust, respect, and obligation are developed, are considered high quality (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Those where reciprocation does not occur in a manner that meets the expectations of the other party are viewed as low quality (Uhl-Bien, 2000). High-quality LMX relationships are predictive of positive work behaviors and attitudes across several organizational levels (Gerstner & Day, 1997). I propose LMX as a proxy indicator of the strength of the social exchange process in the relationship between ethical leadership and task performance, OCBs, and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3: EL is positively related to LMX.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between EL and (a) task performance, (b) OCBs, and (c) organizational commitment is mediated by LMX.

#### *Social Exchange Versus Social Learning*

The extant EL literature primarily suggests a both/and approach to the social exchange and social learning theoretical explanations for EL's influence on work outcomes. Although I agree there is plausibly an interactive influence of both social learning and social exchange processes in the effects of EL, a more theoretically robust model of EL is needed. Thus, I propose the social learning process is primarily explained by the moral manager pillar of EL and will have a stronger influence on social learning outcomes than the social exchange process. Conversely, I propose the social exchange process is primarily invoked by the moral person pillar of EL and will have a stronger influence on social exchange outcomes than the social learning process.

Hypothesis 5: The indirect effects of EL on (a) follower unethical behavior and (b) follower report intentions will be stronger through ethical climate than LMX.

Hypothesis 6: The indirect effects of EL on (a) task performance, (b) OCBs, and (c) affective commitment will be stronger through LMX than ethical climate.

## Method

### *Literature Search*

I conducted an extensive and cross-disciplinary search for empirical papers analyzing ethical leadership. This search encompassed both published and unpublished papers through 2014 where the term *ethical leadership* was listed either in the abstract or in the keywords. I identified articles using electronic searches of PsycINFO, Web of Knowledge, Business Source Complete, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. I also searched all articles that cited Brown et al. (2005), one of the primary ethical leadership scale validation studies. In addition, all papers on ethical leadership from the *Academy of Management Conference Proceedings* back to 2012 were included. From this search I generated 116 empirical articles consisting of 72 published journal articles, 24 conference papers, and 20 dissertations.

### *Inclusion Criteria*

In order to be included in the final round of coding, each empirical paper needed to meet the following criteria. First, articles needed to provide the necessary information for calculating an effect size. Second, since my focus was on supervisor-subordinate level measures, each article needed to have the supervisor as the referent of the ethical leadership measure as rated by subordinates. Finally, the study needed a recorded relationship between ethical leadership and one of the variables in the model. This resulted in the inclusion of 81 studies with an overall sample size  $N=19,101$ .

### *Coding Procedures*

Prior to the commencement of the coding process, a formal training regime was used where four coders met over the course of a full semester to design the coding

spreadsheet and to work through common coding questions. Through this training process, all four coders independently coded five randomly selected articles and came together as a team to discuss disagreements. Following this initial coding arrangement, three coding dyads were created with each dyad dual coding three articles each. All coding disagreements were discussed and resolved in each dyad. Following this training phase, the three coding dyads coded the remaining articles and discussed disagreements within each dyad. Therefore, all articles were at least double-coded. If any disagreements could not be resolved they were brought to the full group of coders for resolution.

#### *Meta-Analytic Procedures*

The Hunter and Schmidt (2004) random effects meta-analysis method was used to estimate population-level effect sizes (see Table 4-1 below). As denoted in the Hunter-Schmidt method, observed correlations from individual samples were corrected for sampling error and reliability. If a study failed to report reliabilities I used the average weighted value from other studies included in this meta-analysis.

Table 4-1 Meta-Analytic Results for the Effects of Ethical Leadership on Hypothesized Variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\bar{r}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b><math>\bar{r}_c</math></b>	<b>SD<sub>c</sub></b>	<b>90% CV</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
<b>Mediators</b>							Low, High	Low, High
Ethical Climate <sup>9</sup>	18	3745	.45	.16	.52	.16	[0.26, 0.78]	[0.45, 0.59]
LMX <sup>9</sup>	10	2458	.69	.09	.76	.11	[0.59, 0.94]	[0.69, 0.83]
<b>Social Exchange Outcomes</b>								
Affective Commitment <sup>9</sup>	26	6625	.36	.11	.41	.13	[0.20, 0.63]	[0.36, 0.46]
Task Performance	13	3002	.22	.10	.24	.11	[0.06, 0.43]	[0.18, 0.3]
Self-rated	3	1054	.28	.00	.32	.00	[0.32, 0.32]	[0.32, 0.32]
Other-rated	10	1948	.18	.12	.20	.13	[-0.01, 0.42]	[0.12, 0.28]
OCBI - all raters <sup>9</sup>	18	3638	.24	.09	.27	.10	[0.11, 0.43]	[0.22, 0.32]
Self-rated <sup>9</sup>	5	1085	.25	.05	.29	.06	[0.20, 0.39]	[0.24, 0.34]

Table 4-1—Continued

Other-rated <sup>g</sup>	13	2553	.23	.10	.26	.10	[0.09, 0.43]	[0.21, 0.31]
<b>Social Learning Outcomes</b>								
Report Intentions <sup>g</sup>	7	1290	.41	.20	.45	.21	[0.10, 0.80]	[0.29, 0.61]
Unethical Behavior <sup>g</sup>	11	2453	-.20	.00	-.23	.00	[-0.23, -0.23]	[-0.23, -0.23]
Self-rated	7	1786	-.21	.00	-.23	.00	[-0.23, -0.23]	[-0.23, -0.23]
Other-rated	4	667	-.20	.00	-.21	.00	[-0.21, -0.21]	[-0.21, -0.21]

Notes: *k* = number of studies; *N* = cumulative sample size;  $\bar{r}$  = sample size weighted uncorrected correlation;  $\bar{r}_c$  = sample size weighted corrected correlation; SD = standard deviation of  $\bar{r}$ ; SD<sub>c</sub> = standard deviation of  $\bar{r}_c$ ; CI = confidence interval for  $\bar{r}_c$ ; CV = credibility interval for  $\bar{r}_c$ ; <sup>g</sup>group and individual-level variables combined; <sup>m</sup>contains studies with manipulated variables

### Meta-Analytic Path Analysis

The hypothesized model was tested using meta-analytic SEM with Mplus version 7.2 (Müthen & Müthen, 2012). With this method, a meta-analytic correlation matrix is developed and input in Mplus as summary data to test the mediating model with path analysis (see Table 4-2). To complete the correlation matrix all relationships between EL and the study variables were input using the effect sizes derived from this meta-analysis. Whenever possible, the remaining effect sizes were derived from other published meta-analyses. For those relationships where a published meta-analysis did not exist, studies used in this meta-analysis and/or external studies were utilized to obtain the effect size.

Table 4-2 Meta-Analytic Correlations Between Variables in Path Analyses

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ethical Leadership							
2	LMX	.76 <sup>a</sup> 10/2,458						
3	Ethical Climate	.52 <sup>a</sup> 18/3,745	.45 <sup>b</sup> 2/582					
4	Affective Commitment	.41 <sup>a</sup> 27/6,847	.41 <sup>e</sup> 21/8,118	.63 <sup>b</sup> 5/957				
5	OCBI	.27 <sup>a</sup> 18/3,638	.38 <sup>d</sup> 27/5,296	.36 <sup>b</sup> 2/356	.21 <sup>g</sup> 54/5,133			

Table 4-2—Continued

6	Task Performance	.24 <sup>a</sup> 13/3,002	.34 <sup>e</sup> 108/25,322	.37 <sup>b</sup> 5/1,128	.16 <sup>f</sup> 25/5,938	.47 <sup>c</sup> 24/7,947		
7	Unethical Behavior	-.23 <sup>a</sup> 12/2,615	-.18 <sup>a</sup> 1/249	-.27 <sup>a</sup> 3/582	-.20 <sup>b</sup> 4/733	-.07 <sup>a</sup> 1/162	-.25 <sup>b</sup> 2/340	
8	Report Intentions	.45 <sup>a</sup> 7/1290	.40 <sup>a</sup> 2/167	.28 <sup>h</sup> 8/2,947	.03 <sup>h</sup> 8/2,170	.23 <sup>a</sup> 1/162	.05 <sup>h</sup> 2/1315	-.16 <sup>a</sup> 2/334

Notes: Meta-analytic *r* is reported on the first line of each cell and below is the cumulative *k/N* from which the meta-analytic *r* is based; <sup>a</sup>derived from studies in this meta-analysis; <sup>b</sup>derived from studies not in this meta-analysis; <sup>c</sup>derived from Podsakoff et al., 2009; <sup>d</sup>derived from Ilies et al., 2007; <sup>e</sup>derived from Dulebohn et al., 2012; <sup>f</sup>derived from Meyer et al., 2002; <sup>g</sup>derived from LePine et al., 2002; <sup>h</sup>derived from Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005.

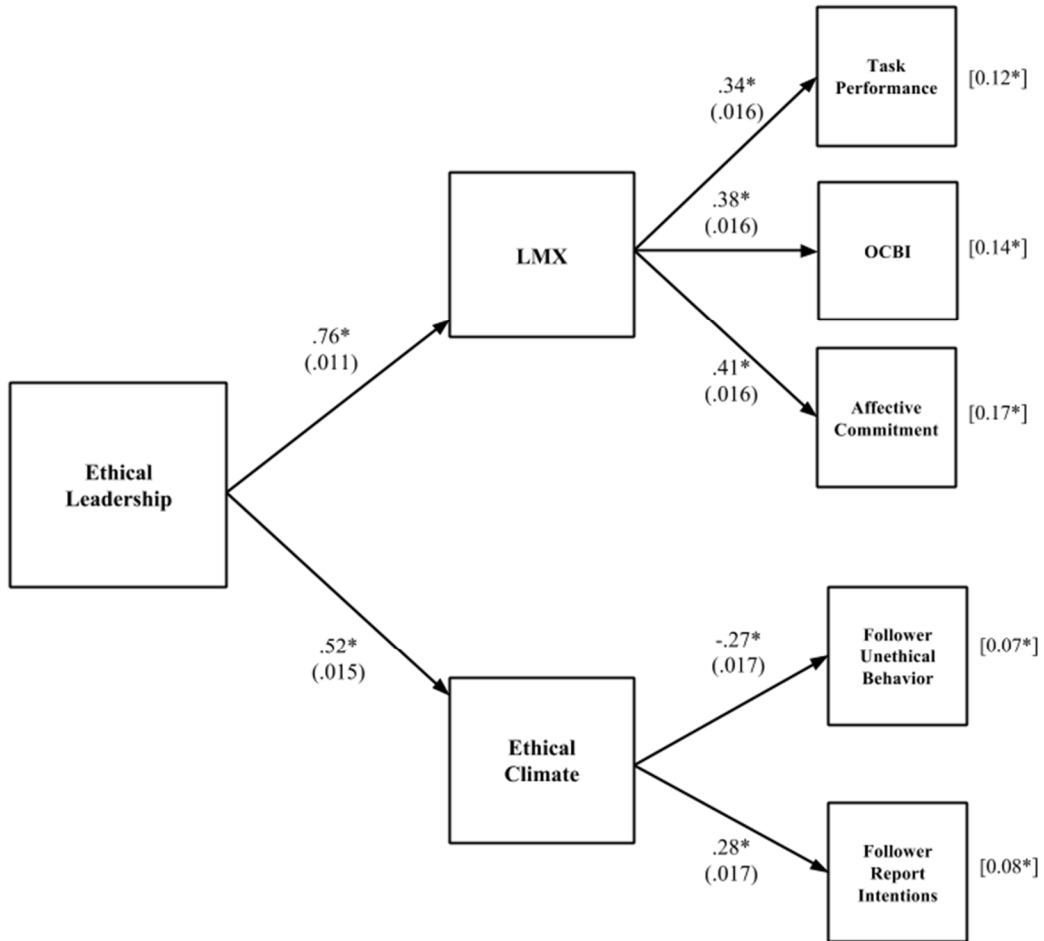
### Results

To examine the first four hypotheses, my proposed mediation model was tested using the procedures outlined previously. The maximum-likelihood parameter estimates associated with the model are reported in Figure 4-2. In support of social learning hypothesis 1, EL significantly predicted ethical climate ( $\beta = 0.52, p < .01, R^2 = 0.27$ ). Hypothesis 2a proposing the negative relationship between EL and follower unethical behavior as mediated by ethical climate was supported (indirect effect =  $-0.14, p < .01$ ). Support was also found for hypothesis 2b with EL indirectly affecting follower report intentions through ethical climate (indirect effect =  $0.15, p < .01$ ).

On the social exchange side, hypothesis 3, proposing EL as a significant positive predictor of LMX was supported ( $\beta = 0.76, p < .001, R^2 = 0.58$ ). Hypothesis 4a was supported with the positive effect of EL on task performance being significantly mediated by LMX (indirect effect =  $0.26, p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 4b was also supported with LMX mediating the positive effect of EL on OCBI (indirect effect =  $0.29, p < .01$ ). Finally, hypothesis 4c proposing LMX as a mediator between EL and affective commitment was supported (indirect effect =  $0.31, p < .01$ ).

To test Hypothesis 5 and 6 to determine the strength of the social learning and the social exchange processes, a second model was run with parameters estimated

between the social exchange mediator (LMX) and all five outcomes as well as the social learning mediator (ethical climate) and all five outcomes in order to specify the alternative



Notes: Harmonic mean sample size = 3,327; Standardized path coefficients shown; Standard errors in parentheses; R<sup>2</sup> reported in brackets for each DV; \*p<.01

Figure 4-2 Path-Analytic Parameter Estimates for the Hypothesized Model

pathway than predicted. The indirect effects of EL on each of the outcomes through each mediator are reported in Table 3. I contrasted the indirect effects of EL for each outcome through the mediators of social exchange versus social learning and calculated the significance of these different specific indirect effects to test my hypotheses.

Table 4-3 Comparison of the Indirect Effects of EL on all Outcome Variables Through Ethical Climate and LMX

Mediator	Social Learning Outcomes		Social Exchange Outcomes		
	Follower Unethical Behavior	Follower Report Intentions	Task Performance	OCBI	Affective Commitment
Social Learning (Ethical Climate)	-.12* (.010)	.07* (.009)	.14* (.010)	.12* (.010)	.29* (.011)
Social Exchange (LMX)	-.06* (.014)	.26* (.014)	.17* (.013)	.21* (.013)	.12* (.011)

Notes: Unstandardized indirect effects are reported. Standard errors in parentheses. Harmonic mean sample size = 3,327; \* $p < .01$

Partial support was found for the social learning hypotheses (H5a and H5b).

Hypothesis 5a was supported such that the indirect effect of EL on follower unethical behavior was stronger through the proposed social learning mediator, ethical climate, than the proposed social exchange mediator, LMX ( $\Delta$  indirect effect = .07,  $SE = .020$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 5b, however, was not supported, as the test of differences in indirect effects for follower report intentions indicated a significantly stronger indirect effect through LMX than ethical climate ( $\Delta$  indirect effect = -.20,  $SE = .019$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

For the social exchange outcomes (H6a, H6b, and H6c), the support was mixed. Specifically, for Hypothesis 6a, although the indirect effect of EL on follower task performance through LMX was larger than the indirect effect through ethical climate (indirect effect through LMX = .17, indirect effect through ethical climate = .14), the difference in indirect effects was not significant ( $\Delta$  indirect effect = .02,  $SE = .019$ , *n.s.*). Full support was found for hypothesis 6b with the indirect effects of EL on OCBI significantly stronger through LMX than ethical climate ( $\Delta$  indirect effect = .09,  $SE = .019$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 6c was not supported as, opposite predictions, the indirect effect of



EL on affective commitment was significantly stronger through ethical climate than LMX ( $\Delta$  indirect effect = -.17,  $SE$  = .018,  $p < .01$ ).

### Discussion

EL is a unique leadership construct as it conceptually influences not only positive work attitudes and behaviors but also the development of ethical followers who learn how to behave ethically and enhance the ethical reputation of the organization (Treviño, et al., 2000). The process by which EL influences these different outcomes is typically explained as being a result of the combined effects of social learning and social exchange processes (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Ng & Feldman, 2014). In an effort to better understand which specific mechanisms of EL influence social learning versus social exchange processes, I proposed the moral person pillar of EL would predominantly be associated with social exchange and the moral manager pillar with social learning. Results largely supported this, with the influence of a leader as both a moral person and a moral manager having combined and separate effects on employee attitudes and behaviors.

The theoretical linkage between EL and the development of ethical followers is generally explained by social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1986). Social learning theory posits that behaviors are often learned vicariously through the observation of others and that such observations are cognitively encoded to later serve as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977). Social learning is enhanced in the presence of attractive, credible role models who provide external reinforcement to motivate followers to act out modeled behavior (Brown et al., 2005). Using this as a theoretical explanation for the effects of EL primarily aligns with the moral manager pillar. Consistent with this explanation, the proposed social learning mediator, ethical climate, did significantly

mediate the relationship between EL and follower unethical behavior and follower report intentions.

Brown and Treviño (2006) also introduced social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as relevant for explaining the relationship between EL and employee outcomes such as performance, OCBs, and commitment. As moral people, ethical leaders care about the well-being of their followers, are honest about their motives, and evoke the trust of others from their high levels of integrity (Treviño et al., 2000). Reliably behaving in this manner creates a sense of obligation from followers to reciprocate such positive treatment back to their supervisors, coworkers, and organization (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Organ, 1997). Linkage of moral person behaviors with social exchange was confirmed with my findings that LMX was a significant mediator between EL and the social exchange employee outcomes of OCBs, task performance, and affective commitment.

A fine-grained analysis into the strength of the social exchange and social learning process of EL revealed that, although both had a significant effect on each of the outcomes, there were differences in their relative influences. As predicted, the effect of EL on employee OCBs was primarily explained through the social exchange mediator, LMX. This confirms extant research suggesting OCBs to be an important means for employees to reciprocate virtuous treatment from a supervisor (Colquitt et al., 2013; Gouldner, 1960; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). This finding is also concordant with the linkage of moral person behaviors such as trustworthiness, fairness, and respect for others as predominantly influencing outcomes through social exchange.

My proposition of follower unethical behavior generally being explained by the social learning aspects of EL was also confirmed. As a leader behaves as a moral manager, they make a clear statement about what behavior is or is not acceptable (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012). By rewarding and punishing (un)ethical

behavior and communicating regularly about ethics to followers, a leader becomes a credible role model (Bandura, 1986) and instigates a climate conducive for the perpetuation of normatively appropriate conduct among organizational employees (Brown et al., 2005).

The task performance of followers was found to have approximately equal influence from both the social exchange and social learning processes of EL. Although I hypothesized task performance would tend to be explained more strongly by social exchange, it certainly is plausible that employees might also vicariously learn from a leader the importance of performing their jobs well. In fact, as the moral person traits of EL are displayed, it will make the leader more attractive as a role model and in turn gain the respect and admiration of followers making it more likely that they follow their moral manager's behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Thus, followers may feel an obligation to their leaders to perform well and also learn from their leaders the ethical obligation they have to the organization to perform at the best of their ability (Lennick & Kiel, 2007). This interplay between both social exchange and social learning processes may best explain my findings of relatively similar indirect effects of EL through both ethical climate and LMX on follower task performance.

The most unforeseen findings include the primary influence of social learning for follower affective commitment and social exchange for follower report intentions. Affective commitment is a classic social exchange variable, with Colquitt and colleagues (2013) recently finding it a significant social exchange mediator in a meta-analysis of the justice literature and Kehoe and Wright (2013) determining it as a mediator between high performance HR practices and employee OCBs, turnover intentions, and absenteeism. Although I did find significant indirect effects for EL on affective commitment through LMX, the indirect effects through the social learning mediator, ethical climate, were

significantly stronger. This implies that in the EL model, subordinates primarily develop affective commitment through the observation of their leader's level of commitment. A recent study by Loi, Lai, and Lam (2013) did find this explanation plausible with a supervisor's level of affective commitment significantly impacting their subordinates affective of commitment. Future research on the social learning effects of leader commitment is necessary to further explore this explanation.

Follower report intentions were best explained through a social exchange influence in my model. I proposed that followers would primarily develop the hardiness and willingness to report the unethical transgressions of their peers through observing their leaders engage in similar actions. Results instead imply the intentions to report unethical peer behavior is influenced more by a desire to reciprocate the fair and trustworthy treatment received from a leader. As an ethical leader displays these moral person behaviors it is tenable that a byproduct of the exchange relationship ensued is a willingness to report coworker misconduct. Congruent with this social exchange explanation, much of the early whistleblowing literature categorizes whistleblowing as an extra-role behavior that employees engage in due to the quality of their LMX relationship (Dozier & Miceli, 1985; Miceli & Near, 1985; Treviño & Weaver, 2001). Again, future research would be helpful in further analyzing the efficacy of the social learning versus the social exchange influence on follower report intentions.

### *Conclusions*

It was my hope to develop a more refined model of EL by examining a meta-analytic mediation model exploring the relative effects of social learning and social exchange influences on follower work outcomes. The conclusions of this study contribute to the ethical leadership literature by confirming the dual efficacy of social exchange and social learning explanations while also extending theory by linking moral person

behaviors primarily with social exchange outcomes and moral manager behaviors specifically with social learning outcomes. Findings also demonstrate the need for an ethical leader to be both a moral manager and a moral person in order to affect key desirable follower attitudes and behaviors.

Specifically, I found moral person behaviors to have the strongest influence on follower OCBs and moral manager behaviors to be a strong deterrent to follower unethical behavior. Additionally, I uncovered avenues for future research to explore the social learning impact of EL on affective commitment and the social exchange impact on follower report intentions. It is my hope that the findings of this meta-analytic model enhance and expand EL theorizing in the future.

Appendix A

Study Measures With Factor Loadings and Reliabilities

**Trait Goal Orientation (Vandewalle, 1997)**

<b>Trait-LGO (Learn)</b>		<b>Full</b>	<b>Modified</b>
I am willing to select a challenging task that I can learn a lot from.		.78	.78
I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks where I'll learn new skills.		.82	.84
I prefer to be in situations that require a high level of ability and talent.		.65	.65
4. I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and opportunities.		.45	.43
5. For me, development of my ability is important enough to take risks.		.38	drop
	$\alpha$	.75	.76

<b>Trait-PGO (Prove)</b>			
I'm concerned with showing that I can perform better than others.		.35	drop
I enjoy it when others are aware of how well I am doing.		.60	.60
I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others.		.73	.73
I prefer to work on projects where I can prove my ability to others		.78	.79
	$\alpha$	.67	.74

<b>Trait-AGO (Avoid)</b>			
I would avoid taking on a new task if there was a chance that I would appear rather incompetent to others.		.77	.77
I'm concerned about taking on a task if my performance would reveal that I had low ability.		.68	.68
Avoiding a show of low ability is more important to me than learning a new skill.		.62	.62
I prefer to avoid situations where I might perform poorly.		.75	.75
	$\alpha$	.80	.80

**State Goal Orientation (adapted from Vandewalle, 1997)**

<b>State-LGO (Learn)</b>		<b>Full</b>	<b>Modified</b>
When I'm around my manager, I am willing to select a challenging task that I can learn a lot from.		.85	.85
When I'm around my manager, I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks where I'll learn new skills.		.82	.84
When I'm around my manager, I prefer to be in situations that require a high level of ability and talent.		.65	.65
When I'm around my manager, I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and opportunities.		.75	.73
For me, development of my ability is important enough to take risks when I'm around my manager		.66	drop
	$\alpha$	.86	.85

<b>State-PGO (Prove)</b>			
When I'm around my manager, I'm concerned with showing that I can perform better than others.		.58	drop
When I'm around my manager, I enjoy it when others are aware of how well I am doing.		.57	.57
When I'm around my manager, I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others.		.78	.75
When I'm around my manager, I prefer to work on projects where I can prove my ability to others		.83	.86
	$\alpha$	.77	.77

<b>State-AGO (Avoid)</b>			
When I'm around my manager, I would avoid taking on a new task if there was a chance that I would appear rather incompetent to others.		.71	.71
When I'm around my manager, I'm concerned about taking on tasks if my performance would reveal that I had low ability.		.71	.71
When I'm around my manager, avoiding a show of low ability is more important to me than learning a new skill.		.69	.68
When I'm around my manager, I prefer to avoid situations where I might perform poorly.		.71	.73
	$\alpha$	.80	.80



**Moral Identity Internalization (Aquino & Reed, 2002)**

Items	Full	Modified
It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.	.83	.85
Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	.80	.85
I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics. (reverse-code)	.45	drop
Having these characteristics is not really important to me. (reverse-code)	.67	.58
I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	.70	.70
	$\alpha$ .79	.80

**Ethical Leadership (Brown et al., 2005)**

Items	Full
Listens to what employees have to say	.73
Disciplines employees who violate ethical standards.	.55
Conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner.	.62
Has the best interests of employees in mind.	.86
Makes fair and balanced decisions.	.87
Can be trusted	.84
Discusses business ethics or values with employees.	.67
Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.	.82
Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained.	.82
When making decisions, asks what is the right thing to do?	.76
	$\alpha$ .93

**Task-Related OCBs (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002)**

Items	Full
This employee takes on extra responsibilities in order to help coworkers when things get demanding at work.	.90
This employee helps coworkers with difficult assignments, even when assistance is not directly requested.	.92
This employee assists coworkers with heavy work loads even though it is not part of his/her job.	.88
This employee helps coworkers who are running behind in their work activities.	.85
This employee helps coworkers with work when they have been absent.	.83
This employee goes out of his/her way to help coworkers with work-related problems.	.84
	$\alpha$ .95

**Task-Related Unethical Behavior (Akaah, 1996)**

Items	Full
This employee conceals his/her errors	.70
This employee passes blame for errors to an innocent coworker	.74
This employee claims credit for someone else's work	.64
This employee calls in sick to take a day off	.71
This employee takes longer than necessary to do a job	.69
	$\alpha$ .81

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