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## Judged by the Bottom-line But Expected to Lead Ethically: A Leader's Catch 22

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**JUDGED BY THE BOTTOM-LINE BUT EXPECTED TO LEAD ETHICALLY: A  
LEADER'S CATCH-22**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Management  
in the College of Business Administration  
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Orlando, Florida

Spring Term  
2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of the presented research is to explain the importance of integrating the literatures on leader bottom-line mentality (BLM) and behavioral ethics and to demonstrate that leader BLM can adversely impact followers' perceptions of ethical leadership. By doing so, several contributions can be made. First, I identify an antecedent of ethical leadership. Predominantly, most ethical leadership research has focused on identifying its outcomes (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Second, I will offer new theoretical insights regarding the antecedents of ethical leadership. Past ethical leadership research has primarily relied on social exchange (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) and social cognitive (Bandura, 1977, 1986) theories, whereas I will draw on trait activation and cognitive stress theories to examine the relationship between BLM and ethical leadership. By integrating these two theories I will demonstrate Kerr's (1975) example of "the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B." Third, I will explain and demonstrate why follower BLM and leader stress perceptions are important boundary conditions regarding the primary relationship of interest and overall model. Comprehensively, I examine and demonstrate the potential of a backfiring effect that can be strengthened or weakened. This research aims to shed light on the often *disregarded catch-22* leaders face in world that is increasingly concerned about bottom-line outcomes, while also demanding an immaculate standard of ethical behavior from leaders.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*“The bottom line is winning. I want to do what we need to do to win.”* - Mike Singletary

Although the opening quote is from a former National Football League (NFL) head coach in reference to wanting to win on the football field, this coach, like many of his peers, was well aware of the results-driven environment of the NFL. Although the constant hiring and firing of NFL head coaches may seemingly justify this simplistic way of thinking, it is important to acknowledge that this type of mentality, which places a heavy emphasis on the bottom-line is not only confined to the NFL. In the American model of capitalism (i.e., another results-driven context), many leaders in modern day organizations also demonstrate this same mentality regarding an almost exclusive emphasis on objective outcomes. Indeed, in the current age of cut-throat capitalism (Boone & Ozcan, 2014), many organizational leaders wrestle with an insatiable organizational demand and an immense amount of pressure regarding *getting the results*. Although it might be nice to think that getting favorable results is a “team effort,” this outcome-driven demand and pressure falls primarily on the shoulders of organizational leaders. As such, similar to many NFL head coaches and general managers, many leaders have bought into the old adage of *you can’t argue with the results*. This can be attributed to the reality that leaders are evaluated on specific, objective, and tangible short-term outcomes such as market, financial, and accounting metrics of organizational performance (Latham & Locke, 2007; Piccolo, Greenbaum, & Eissa, 2012). Securing bottom-line outcomes, which are predominantly evaluated in terms of financial consequences (Wolfe, 1988), is normally considered beneficial to organizational profitability (Brenner & Molander, 1977; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000). As such, leaders are primarily evaluated on their ability to deliver positive bottom-line results (Latham & Locke, 2007). Consequently, the rewards for achieving financial

objectives are quite enticing (e.g., stock options packages, lucrative bonuses), however, the punishment for failing to deliver financial results can be very severe (e.g., termination, demotion; Crotts, Dickson, & Ford, 2005; Latham & Locke, 2007; Piccolo et al., 2012). Greenbaum, Mawritz, and Eissa (2012) also suggested that leaders may be less likely to treat followers poorly because they are likely to have assigned bottom lines that are contingent on their followers' performance. Consequently, virtually all leaders are aware of the importance of the bottom-line.

Although it is quite sensible for organizations to want their leaders to be aware of their respective bottom-line, a rampant organizational demand to deliver favorable bottom-line results can have some negative side-effects at the leadership level and to the broader organization. A potential side-effect of this inescapable reality for those in leadership roles is that it may be triggering a bottom-line mentality among organizational leaders. Greenbaum and her colleagues (2012) defined bottom-line mentality (BLM) as one-dimensional thinking that revolves around securing bottom-line outcomes to the neglect of competing priorities. To this end, management scholars have noted that a simplistic concentration on financial outcomes can be very problematic with respect to adhering to ethical principles (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). This is evidenced by the recent string of organizational scandals that are largely attributed to a disregard of ethical values (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Correspondingly, it has become common to hear neologisms such as *evil corporations*, *prophets of profit*, and *organizations gone wild* directed at organizational leadership (e.g., Adams, Highhouse, & Zickar, 2010; Greve, Palmer, & Pozner, 2010). Consequently, there has also been a heightened expectation for organizational leaders to behave and lead ethically.

Ethical leadership has been 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, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). Research has demonstrated that ethical leadership has been positively linked to critical organizational concerns such as performance, senior-level executive effectiveness, citizenship behaviors, work satisfaction, ethical climate, and organizational commitment (e.g., De Hoog & Den Hartog, 2008; Mayer et al., 2009; Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Mayer and his colleagues (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Mayer et al., 2009) have also revealed that ethical leadership is negatively related to employee deviance and team conflict.

Interestingly, a *catch-22* exists that puts organizational leaders in an unenviable position. In line with the rationale of Kerr (1975), this suggests that organizations are rewarding leaders for *results*, while also hoping for *ethical leadership*. Additionally, this folly isn’t simply a “results-or-ethics” dilemma, but more of an examination of how leaders reconcile their organizational ownership of quantifiable and bottom-line results and their expected adherence to ethical norms. In other words, it is a precarious balancing act between an objective, and sometimes cruel reality (i.e., being responsible for the bottom-line; be subject to potential termination if the results are subpar) and expectations that are subjective and yet shared widely at the societal level (i.e., leading ethically), which leaders must perform skillfully. Otherwise, a danger lies ahead, namely, the more leaders focus only on the bottom-line (i.e., their objective reality), the less stable their adherence to ethical principles (i.e., the subjective expectation) becomes.

Although I expect a negative relationship to exist between leader BLM and ethical leadership, this particular folly is not without its boundaries. While leaders are primarily

responsible for organizational results, followers also share some of the responsibility. Similar to how some NFL players (i.e., followers of NFL head coaches) also want to win at all costs, followers of leaders may also adopt this mentality. Research has also demonstrated that a connection exists between leader BLM and follower BLM (Greenbaum et al., 2012). As such, if this tendency is triggered in followers, this can impact the primary relationship of interest. BLM should impact leaders and followers in a similar manner. Thus, if followers have strong BLMs, they are less likely to be aware of any ethical violations of the leader or the ethical violations of the leader, even if noticed, do not matter as much to them, given their sharp focus on the bottom-line. Consequently, as BLM increases in followers, this should weaken the negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership.

An interesting boundary condition of the leader BLM and ethical leadership relationship may exist at the leader-level as well. Uniquely, the same organizational pressure for results that is triggering BLM may also be a source of stress for leaders. This can be attributed to how their employment is linked to organizational outcomes (Latham & Locke, 2007; Piccolo et al 2012). Stress researchers have begun to distinguish between two types of stressors: hindrance stressors (i.e., job demands viewed as obstacles to personal growth or demands that interfere with or hinder one's ability to achieve valued goals; Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000) and challenge stressors (i.e., job demands viewed by employees as rewarding work experiences that create opportunity for personal growth Cavanaugh et al., 2000). On the basis of cognitive theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), I propose that leaders may fold (stress hinders them) or focus (stress challenges them) under pressure. Folding under the pressure for results should intensify the negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership, whereas focusing under the pressure should weaken the same negative relationship.

A downstream ironic twist may also occur as a result of high leader BLM. Recently, research has suggested that neglecting ethical leadership can drive up turnover and counterproductive behavior (Mayer et al., 2009; 2012; Ruiz, Ruiz, & Martinez, 2011). Accordingly, these two outcomes can decrease an organization's bottom-line (Huselid, 1995). Given the financial implications of these two outcomes, somewhat paradoxically, the more they are focused on achieving favorable bottom-line results, the less likely leaders will be able to actually achieve their desired results. Consequently, being perceived as less ethical due to being overly focused on the bottom line may ultimately reveal an unforeseen backfiring effect.

I aim to make several contributions with this present research. First, I will integrate the BLM and behavioral ethics literatures and demonstrate that leader BLM can adversely impact ethical leadership. By doing so, I identify an antecedent of ethical leadership. Predominantly, most ethical leadership research has focused on identifying its outcomes (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Second, I will offer new theoretical insights regarding the antecedents and outcomes of ethical leadership. Past ethical leadership research has predominantly relied on social exchange and social cognitive theories, whereas I will draw on trait activation and cognitive stress theories to examine the relationship between BLM and ethical leadership. By integrating these two theories I will demonstrate Kerr's (1975) example of "the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B." Third, I will explain and demonstrate why follower BLM and leader stress perceptions are important boundary conditions regarding the overall model. Comprehensively, I examine and demonstrate the potential of a backfiring effect that can be strengthened or weakened. This research aims to shed light on the often *disregarded catch-22* leaders face in world that is increasingly concerned about bottom-line outcomes, while also demanding an immaculate standard of ethical behavior from leaders. Ultimately, understanding how leaders handle this

particular balancing act can provide further insight regarding behavioral ethics at the leader level, which has broader organizational and societal implications.

## **CHAPTER ONE: THEORY AND HYPOTHESES**

The effect of leader BLM on ethical leadership can be explained via trait activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Trait activation theorists (Tett & Burnett, 2003) have suggested that trait expression viewed by others as favorable, in light of organizational demands, is likely to be met with praise, acceptance, and tangible rewards (e.g., monetary incentives, promotion opportunities). Conversely, trait expressions viewed as unfavorable can elicit negative responses (e.g., demotion and termination). As such, I argue that BLM among leaders may be a trait-like response that is prompted by many organizations due to the situational cue that they are primarily linked to their respective organizations' bottom-lines. The stark contrast of continued employment and lucrative rewards versus future demotion or even termination is primarily predicated on a leader's ability to deliver a favorable bottom-line (Locke & Latham, 2007; Piccolo et al., 2012) As such, BLM seems to be frequently triggered among leaders (i.e., to varying degrees) in an organizational context. It is important to note that the triggering is not inherently a negative thing. Leader BLM becomes problematic when the bottom-line is the only thing that matters (i.e., unbalanced).

A key proposition of BLM research is that at very high levels, it creates an almost exclusive focus on a particular factor or consideration that is identified as being most important, while the importance of everything else is minimized (Greenbaum et al., 2012; Wolfe, 1988). Greenbaum and her colleagues reasoned that in the sole pursuit of a single outcome, individuals pay little to almost no attention to whether their actions have an effect on competing organizational expectations or priorities. Specifically, these researchers also suggested that important considerations such as treating others properly and ethical consequences of their behavior may become negligible in their pursuit of the bottom-line. As noted earlier, the key behaviors associated with ethical leadership are treating followers fairly, modeling ethical

behavior, being collaborative, reducing interpersonal conflict, and actively managing morality in the workplace (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2012; 2009; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Therefore, if leaders are willing to neglect treating their followers fairly and the ethical consequences (i.e., lowered adherence to ethical principles) of their behavior due to BLM, this should adversely impact their followers' perceptions of ethical leadership. Individuals with high BLM are likely to engage in obstructive behaviors (Greenbaum et al., 2012). Taken together, I expect that a negative relationship exists between leader BLM and ethical leadership.

*Hypothesis 1. Leader BLM is negatively related to ethical leadership.*

Remaining consistent with trait activation theory, followers' traits may also be triggered by situational cues, such as the organizational demand to help achieve favorable results and their respective leader's focus on the bottom-line (Greenbaum et al., 2012). As noted earlier, I expect BLM to impact followers in a similar manner as leaders. As such, followers will also identify the bottom-line as the most important factor and minimize the importance of everything else. This should impact the primary relationship in two ways. First, followers with high BLMs should demonstrate a certain *tunnel vision* regarding the bottom-line. Therefore, any ethical violations that a leader commits will fall outside of their focus and go unnoticed. Second, given that everything outside of the bottom-line is trivialized (Wolfe, 1988), even if they notice ethical lapses from their leaders, followers with high BLMs are likely not to be as concerned about these ethical lapses, in comparison to followers who have low BLMs. Sims (1992) also concluded that this line of thinking supports bottom-line success as the only value to be considered. He also suggested that it promotes short-term solutions that are immediately financially sound, even though they cause problems for others within the organization or the organization as a whole and

reduce ethical awareness in general. Consequently, I hypothesize that the negative leader BLM-ethical leadership relationship will be weaker when followers have strong BLMs.

*Hypothesis 2. The negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership is mitigated as follower BLM increases.*

As mentioned earlier, most organizational leaders are evaluated on specific, objective, and tangible short-term outcomes (Piccolo et al., 2012). This type of bottom-line emphasis can also place an immense amount of pressure on leaders to achieve favorable results. Leaders may respond to this stress in various ways. According to the cognitive theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), organizational or job demands that surpass an individual's resources are responsible for the experience of psychological stress. Job demands include the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical, cognitive, or emotional effort or skills and are therefore associated with physiological and/or psychological costs.

I argue that the demand to achieve certain bottom-line outcomes may be a source of stress, but the stress associated with this pressure will be psychologically processed differently among leaders. Some leaders may perceive this type of stress more as a hindrance, whereas others will perceive it more of a challenge. The term *hindrance stressors* refers to job demands viewed as obstacles to personal growth or demands that interfere with or hinder one's ability to achieve valued goals (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Red tape (i.e., performing a job in a certain manner), role ambiguity, role conflict (i.e., rewarding A, hoping for B), and hassles are examples of hindrance stressors. Scholars have suggested that when individuals perceive stress as a hindrance, they are likely to react in a negative manner, becoming more withdrawn and less engaged in their work (LePine, Podsakoff, LePine, 2005; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007;

Rodell & Judge, 2009). As such, when leaders feel highly hindered by stress, they can only concentrate on one task.

Regarding ethical ramifications, Margolis (1998) suggested that when job pressures heighten and conflicts among a variety of responsibilities intensify, individuals tend to express their dominant responses (e.g., general tendencies, strong habits, and personality traits). This scholar specifically reasoned that instead of meeting ethical responsibilities with the necessary cognitive and behavioral resources, individuals retreat into familiar patterns of behavior (e.g., BLM) and fail to address the complex situation (e.g., a folly) at hand. This type of reaction to stress is also consistent with the work regarding threat-rigidity effects (Cowen, 1952a, 1952b; Luchins, 1942; Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981; Yerkes & Dodson, 1908; Zajonc, 1965, 1966). Additionally, hindrance stressors have been negatively related to job satisfaction, commitment, burnout, emotional exhaustion, withdrawal, and counterproductive behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2007; Rodell & Judge, 2009). Taken together, this suggests that if leaders perceive their job demands as a hindrance stressor, they are likely to become more psychologically withdrawn from their work (i.e., skillfully managing this balancing act) and revert back to their dominant response (i.e., focusing on the bottom-line), which makes leaders even more likely to minimize other job responsibilities due to the strengthening of cognitive rigidity.

*Hypothesis 3. The negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership is stronger to the extent that leaders feel highly hindered by stress.*

The concept of *challenge stressors* refers to job demands viewed by employees as rewarding work experiences that create opportunity for personal growth (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Examples of challenge stressors include workload, job responsibility, and job complexity.

Researchers have proposed that when individuals view stress as a challenge, they are likely to react in a positive manner, becoming more engaged and committed to their work (Podsakoff, et al., 2007; Rodell & Judge, 2009). As such, when they feel highly challenged by stress, they will rise to the occasion and concentrate on multiple tasks. Challenge stressors have also been positively linked to job satisfaction, commitment, and citizenship behavior (Podsakoff, et al., 2007; Rodell & Judge, 2009). Therefore, it is likely that if leaders feel highly challenged by stress this may have a buffering effect due to their ability to cope with stress better and it is less likely that leaders will minimize competing priorities such as ethical leadership. The effects of cognitive rigidity should be weaker when leaders feel highly challenged by stress. Leaders should display a lower degree of cognitive rigidity when they are more psychologically engaged in their work and aware of their job responsibilities.

*Hypothesis 4. The negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership is weaker to the extent that leaders feel highly challenged by stress.*

The overemphasis on the bottom-line may lead to decisions and rationalizations that not only hurt individuals in the long run, but threaten the very existence of organizations themselves (Sims, 1992). Research has revealed that minimizing the importance of ethical leadership, as a consequence of high leader BLM, can adversely impact the functionality of organizations (Greenbaum et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2009; 2012; Ruiz et al., 2011). Ruiz and his colleagues demonstrated that a low level of ethical leadership adversely impacts turnover. Similarly, Mayer and his colleagues (2009) demonstrated that a low level of ethical leadership increases counterproductive work behavior among followers. The outcomes of ethical leadership are often explained through social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Similarly, I argue that when leaders with high BLMs trivialize ethical leadership (i.e., lowered ratings on perceived

ethicality), this establishes a negative interpersonal exchange with their respective followers. Accordingly, followers will reciprocate in kind with increased turnover intentions and counterproductive work behavior. Therefore, leader BLM adversely impacts turnover and counterproductive work behavior through ethical leadership. Remaining consistent with my prior rationale, I expect this mediating effect to be dependent upon the moderators.

*Hypothesis 5a. Ethical leadership mediates the relationship between leader BLM and turnover intention.*

*Hypothesis 5b. The conditional indirect effect of leader BLM on follower turnover intentions through ethical leadership is weaker when follower BLM is high.*

*Hypothesis 5c. The conditional indirect effect of leader BLM on follower turnover intentions through ethical leadership is stronger when the leader feels highly hindered by the stress.*

*Hypothesis 5d. The conditional indirect effect of leader BLM on follower turnover intentions through ethical leadership is weaker when the leader feels highly challenged by the stress.*

*Hypothesis 6a. Ethical leadership mediates the relationship between leader BLM and follower deviant behavior.*

## **CHAPTER TWO: STUDY 1 METHOD AND RESULTS**

I collected data from direct supervisor-direct report dyads (i.e., leader-follower) from various organizations located in the southeastern United States. The industries represented in the sample included banking, accounting, hospitality, retail, food services, social services, education, and manufacturing. I administered surveys through the Internet. Students were presented an extra credit opportunity to aid as organizational recruits and recruit a working adult (i.e., works 20 hr. per week or more) who was willing to serve as a follower (i.e., direct report). If the student met the working adult criterion, he or she could be a participant (i.e., direct report). The focal participant then asked his or her direct supervisor to fill out the leader survey. Management researchers have used similar approaches when collecting data to examine the antecedents and outcomes of ethical leadership (e.g., Mayer et al., 2009; Piccolo et al., 2010).

In line with past research (e.g., Mayer et al., 2012), I took several steps to verify that the surveys were completed by the appropriate individual. First, I emphasized the significance of truthfulness in the scientific process in the introduction of the study. I told the participants that it was important for the direct report and direct supervisor respondents to fill out the appropriate surveys. Second, I examined these data to ensure that the surveys were submitted with distinctive IP addresses and at different times. The extra credit opportunity was presented to 299 undergraduate business students. I received responses from 164 direct reports and 124 direct supervisors. After eliminating missing and suspicious data (e.g., identical IP addresses for both surveys, respondents who failed to answer appropriately regarding a specifically instructed response item), my sample size was 166 participants. Thus, my data analyses were based upon 83 usable leader-follower dyads, for an overall response rate of 28%.

Follower participants were 64% female and 36% male. Forty-seven percent worked full-time and 53% worked part-time. Follower participants were 52% Caucasian, 20% Hispanic-American, 8% African American, 9% Asian American, and the remaining identified as Native American or other. Direct report respondents had an average organizational tenure of 3 years (SD 3.29) and an average age of 26 years (SD 8.07). Leader participants were 46% female and 54% male. Direct supervisors were 51% Caucasian, 21% Hispanic, 7% African American, 13% Asian American, and the remaining identified themselves as Native American and other. Leader participants had an average organizational tenure of 8 years (SD 13.52) and average age of 39 years (SD 12.82). Seventy-three percent of leader participants reported that they had earned a bachelor's degree.

The leader survey contained measures of hindrance stress, challenge stress, follower's counterproductive work behavior, conscientiousness, neuroticism, moral identity, superior's engagement of ethical leadership, and demographics, whereas the follower survey contained measures of leader BLM, follower (i.e., self) BLM, ethical leadership of his or her direct supervisor, turnover intentions, and demographics. Unless indicated, all continuous variables were measured using a 7-point Likert format (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

In line with Becker's (2005) prescriptions regarding ruling out alternative explanations, I controlled for the effects of leader conscientiousness, leader neuroticism, moral identity, and leader's superior engagement of ethical leadership. I focused on these specific control variables in an effort to show the distinctive value of leader BLM as a credible predictor of ethical leadership. As such, I had to account for the effect of other established predictors of ethical leadership. Accordingly, prior research has indicated that these specific variables may impact the relationships of interest (Mayer et al., 2012; 2009; Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006;

Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Specifically, leader's superior engagement of ethical leadership accounts for the impact of social exchange and social cognitive theories (Mayer et al., 2009), whereas leader moral identity and leader conscientiousness accounts for other moral reasoning (Mayer et al., 2012; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Consequently, I specifically targeted a combination of situational and individual differences variables as control variables.

BLM was measured using a four-item scale developed by Greenbaum et al., (2012). The referent was my supervisor (leader BLM) and I (follower BLM). Sample items included "My supervisor or ["I treat"] is solely concerned with meeting the bottom line" and "My supervisor or ["I treat"] treats the bottom line as more important than anything else."

Challenge and hindrance stressors were measured by a six-item scale developed by LePine and colleagues (2005). Sample items included "In general, I feel that my job demands hinder my personal accomplishment" and "Working to fulfill my job demands thwarts my personal growth and well-being" for hindrance stressors. Sample items regarding challenge stressors included "In general, I feel that my job demands help my personal accomplishment" and "Working to fulfill my job demands enhances my personal growth and well-being."

Ethical leadership was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Brown et al. (2005). Sample items included "My supervisor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics" and "My supervisor defines success not just by results, but also the way that they are obtained."

Counterproductive work behavior was measured using a 12-item scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000); in this case, a 5-point Likert format (1 = Never, 5 = All the time) was used. Sample items included "Falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses" and "Dragged out work in order to get overtime."

Turnover intentions ratings were measured using a three-item scale developed by Cook and colleagues (1981). Sample items included “I often think about quitting” and “I will likely actively look for a new job in the next year.”

Moral identity was measured using Aquino and Reed’s (2002) ten-item scale. Leaders read the following statement. “Caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind. The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.” Sample items that leaders responded to included “It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics” and “I strongly desire to have these characteristics.”

The public domain International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) developed by Goldberg et al. (1998) was used to measure conscientiousness and neuroticism. Sample items included “I pay attention to details” and “I am always prepared” for conscientiousness; “I dislike myself” and “I am often down in the dumps” for neuroticism.

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations are located in Table 1. I conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), via LISREL (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) to demonstrate variable distinctiveness and assess model fit. Regarding my hypothesized model, the CFA results suggested that my full seven-factor model was acceptable regarding model fit (CFI = .91; IFI = .91; RMSEA = .08; SRMSR = .08; Hox, 2002; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). Additionally, my hypothesized model was superior to several alternative models. The alternative models included a six-factor model that combined hindrance stressors and challenge stressors (CFI = .87; IFI = .87; RMSEA = .10; SRMSR = .12), a six-factor model that combined leader

BLM and follower BLM (CFI = .87; IFI = .87; RMSEA = .11; SRMSR = .10), and a five-factor model that combined (1) leader BLM with follower BLM and (2) hindrance stressors with challenge stressors (CFI = .84; IFI = .84; RMSEA = .12; SRMSR = .14).

An examination of the d-statistic (1.84) suggested that there was no presence of autocorrelation and confirmed the uniqueness of each observation. In testing all of my hypotheses, I conducted several separate analyses. I ran analyses with only the control variables, on the full model (leader BLM and all the control variables), a specific model that only included leader BLM and control variables that demonstrated a significant impact on the specific outcome, and a model with only leader BLM. Despite the various models, as depicted in Table 2, the results were very similar for hypothesis predictions (i.e., level of significance, standardized coefficient, boot effect, and confidence intervals). In line with Becker's (2005) recommendation, I report the analyses without the control variables. He reasoned that if the results do not differ (i.e., same conclusions can be drawn from the data), then researchers can rule out control variables as alternative explanations.

Simple regression was used to test Hypothesis 1. The data revealed that leader BLM had a negative and significant impact on ethical leadership ( $\beta = -.48, p < .01$ ). Thus, H1 was supported. Table 2 depicts the regression results for Hypothesis 1. The remaining hypotheses were tested the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013), along with the Edwards and Lambert (2007) methodology (plotting conditional indirect effects for first-stage moderated-mediation). Simple interaction effects can be seen in Table 3. Hypothesis 2 stated that the negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership would be weaker when follower BLM is high. The data revealed a positive and significant interaction effect between leader BLM and follower BLM ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) on ethical leadership. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Hypothesis 3

suggested that the negative relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership would be stronger when leaders feel highly hindered by stress. The data revealed a negative and significant interaction between leader BLM and leader hindrance stress ( $\beta = -.11, p < .01$ ) on ethical leadership. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported. Hypothesis 4, however, was not supported (the predicted effect of challenge stress—rather than hindrance stress—was not obtained).

Hypothesis 5a proposed that ethical leadership would mediate the relationship between leader BLM and turnover. As evidenced by the data located in Table 4, this hypothesis was supported. Notably, the data also revealed that leader BLM does not have a direct effect on turnover intentions, which suggests full mediation. The remaining fifth set of hypotheses stated that the conditional indirect effect of leader BLM on turnover intentions would be moderated when follower BLM is high (Hypothesis 5b), leader hindrance stress is high (Hypothesis 5c), and when leader challenge stress is low (Hypothesis 5d). Although Hypothesis 5d was not supported, Hypotheses 5b and 5c were supported. The conditional indirect effect of leader BLM on turnover intentions when follower BLM is high was (the following:  $\beta = .10$ ; LCI = .02, UCI = .28). When follower BLM was low, the conditional indirect effect was as follows ( $\beta = .22$ ; LCI = .07, UCI = .54). Given the moderating effect of follower BLM on the leader BLM, smaller boot effect, and smaller confidence interval, this suggests that the conditional indirect effect is weaker when follower BLM is high compared to when follower BLM is low. Thus, Hypothesis 5b is supported. Supporting Hypothesis 5c, the conditional indirect of leader BLM on turnover intention was stronger when leader hindrance stress was high ( $\beta = .19$ ; LCI = .07, UCI = .45) than when leader hindrance stress was low ( $\beta = .04$ ; LCI = -.06, UCI = .25). Zero does not appear in the confidence interval when leader hindrance stress is low, suggesting that the conditional indirect effect is stronger when leader hindrance stress is high.

Hypothesis 6a stated that ethical leadership mediates the relationship between leader BLM and follower deviant behavior. As demonstrated by the data located in Table 4, this hypothesis was supported. Leader BLM did not have a direct effect on counterproductive work behavior. Accordingly, the data suggest ethical leadership fully mediates the relationship between leader BLM and counterproductive work behavior. The other hypotheses in the sixth set (i.e., 6b, 6c, and 6d) were not supported.

The current study offers several strengths. First, the data were multi-source. As such, one person in the dyadic relationship was not responsible for rating all the variables, so it is unlikely that the overall model was significantly influenced by single-rater bias. Leaders and followers rated specific moderators and outcomes. Second, the study reveals that leader BLM has a unique and powerful impact on ethical leadership, more than the other known predictors of ethical leadership included in the study. Leader moral identity, leader conscientiousness, leader neuroticism, and leader's superior engagement of ethical leadership demonstrated no impact on ethical leadership in the presence of leader BLM. This suggests that amoral concepts can offer a unique explanation of a moral or ethical concept such as ethical leadership. Consequently, amoral theoretical models, such as trait activation theory may enhance our understanding of ethical leadership. Third, Study 1 found that boundary conditions exist at the follower (i.e., follower BLM) and leader (i.e., hindrance stress) levels regarding the leader BLM and ethical leadership relationship. Finally, the data provide insight on a hidden backfire effect. Although no direct relationship was found, ethical leadership mediated the leader BLM-outcome relationship. Consistent with my rationale, leader BLM was indirectly (i.e., in a hidden fashion) associated with turnover intentions and deviant behavior. Consequently, by minimizing the importance of

ethical leadership, leaders with high BLM may ultimately be producing future quitters and deviant followers.

As with any study, Study 1 is not without its limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits any empirical inferences regarding causality. Nonetheless, it is conceptual illogical to propose that follower counterproductive work behavior predicts leader BLM. On the other hand, based upon key ethical leadership propositions (Brown et al., 2005), one could logically argue that ethical leaders should generally reject a focus purely on the bottom-line, given that ethical leaders are concerned about how results are obtained. Second, followers could have targeted leaders with whom they had the most favorable relationships, resulting in evaluations of behaviors that may be positively biased (e.g., ethical leadership, low level of BLM, and low leader ratings of follower deviant behavior). To counteract this possibility, the participants were assured that all responses were confidential (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Finally, my sample size was on 166 participants. Subsequently, this is a relatively small sample size. Nonetheless, power calculations suggested that I had sufficient power to test the hypothesized relationships. Additionally, despite the small size, the sample was representative of the current American society based upon U.S. Census data. Another caveat is that I can reduce the possibility that the sample size is influencing significant correlations, which in a sense makes the data more compelling.

### **CHAPTER THREE: STUDY 2 INTRODUCTION**

Study 2 was designed to overcome some of the key limitations of Study 1. Given the prevalence of research that shows the beneficial outcomes of ethical leadership (for a review, see Brown & Mitchell, 2010), I chose to strengthen the causal inferences regarding the impact of leader BLM on ethical leadership. Additionally, in line with Lykken's (1968) prescriptions, I wanted to offer a constructive replication of the direct effect of leader BLM on ethical leadership and how this primary relationship of interest can be moderated. Consequently, I designed a policy capturing study for Study 2. A policy-capturing study was ideal because it overcomes two key limitations of Study 1. First, by experimentally manipulating leader BLM, a greater confidence of causality is established regarding the leader BLM and ethical leadership relationship. As a result, I reduce the plausibility of the alternative explanation that ethical leaders tend to reject this type of simplistic thinking regarding the presented research. Second, I overcome having the same rater for the primary relationship of interest. The possibility of a positive bias in evaluations of behavior due to followers seeking out leaders with whom they have a favorable relationship with is eliminated. A policy-capturing method allows for an implicit assessment of respondent values, thereby reducing concerns about the socially desirable responding that can occur with more direct measurement approaches, such as survey data. Given these distinct strengths, researchers have used this type of experimental vignette methodology to assess individuals' judgment regarding various organizational topics, such as selection, compensation, fairness, and other ethical-relevant behavior (Karren & Barringer, 2002; Nicklin, Greenbaum, McNall, Folger, & Williams, 2011; Rousseau & Anton, 1991; York, 1989). This type of experimental vignette methodology is also effective in testing relationships involving sensitive topics (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), such as leader BLM and ethical behavior.

It is important to note that policy-capturing is an experimental vignette methodology that is utilized by researchers in an effort to assess how individuals use and combine available information when making evaluative judgments (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Karren & Barringer, 2002). It entails asking participants to make decisions in response to a series of scenarios in which targeted pieces of information (i.e., cues) are manipulated, and then regressing the decisions on the cues to make inferences about a participant's judgment, such as ethical leadership. Consequently, experimental manipulation of cues (e.g., leader BLM, leader hindrance stress) helps clarify the causal nature of relationships. I dropped leader challenge stress for two reasons. In Study 1, leader challenge stress did not moderate the primary relationship of interest, so this particular policy capturing study would not legitimately serve as a constructive replication regarding that particular hypothesis. Second, it would have significantly complicated and lengthened the design of the study, as I manipulated leader BLM, and leader hindrance stress, and assessed the participants individual BLM.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY 2 METHOD AND RESULTS**

Sixty-two undergraduate business students at a large southern university participated in Study 2. These sample demographics were 60% male participants, and 39% of the participants identified themselves as minorities. Participants were asked to take on the role of chief strategy officer responsible for succession management and ethical evaluations regarding several managers. They were provided with 360-degree evaluations of six mid-level managers who were up for evaluation. In an effort to control for order effects, the order in which the manager profiles were presented was randomized. The profiles contained information regarding four competencies: financial orientation (i.e., BLM), stress coping skill (hindrance stressor), talent management, and proactivity. In line with study, my predictions about (a) leader BLM and (b) leader hindrance, only these two characteristics were manipulated (i.e., high/low) across the leader profiles of specific interest. The other cues were used as extraneous bits of information that were held constant and clearly marked in the moderate range but included to prevent participants from paying attention exclusively to the manipulations.

Four profiles were fully manipulated. Thus, I used a 2 (no concern: does not focus only on the bottom-line, vs. high concern: focuses only on the bottom-line) x 2 (no concern: low level of hindrance stressor, vs. high concern: high level of hindrance stressor as stress coping skills) design. To avoid demand characteristics, we included one control profile wherein financial orientation and stress coping skill were moderate and talent management was given a low ranking and proactivity was given a high ranking. The sixth profile was a duplicate scenario of the undesirable financial orientation and desirable stress coping skill. Rater reliability is often a potential weakness of policy capturing studies (Aiman-Smith et al., 2002). Nonetheless, the reported mean difference between my manipulated conditions ( $M = 3.70$ ) and its duplicate

condition ( $M = 3.65$ ) regarding ethical leadership (i.e., Brown et al., 2005) was not statistically different. Thus, the rater reliability seems to be consistent. Responses to the control profile and duplicate profile were removed prior to analysis (Aiman-Smith et al., 2002). As such, our analyses were based on 248 observations (62 participants  $\times$  4 profile ratings). The d-statistic was 2.04. Thus, the presence of auto-correlation is absent from the data, suggesting that we have 248 unique evaluations.

Within each 360-degree leader evaluation, both descriptive and numerical ratings (i.e., cues) were provided for each of the hypothetical leaders' assessed characteristics. Following Aiman-Smith et al.'s (2002) recommendation, I supplemented written information with graphical depictions of the cue levels. Specifically, I manipulated leader BLM and leader hindrance with various cues: (i) with percentile scores, where values (on a 1-100 scale) indicated a leader scored at or above this percentage of other mid-level leaders; (ii) with graphics (i.e., bar charts and tables); and (iii) with color, such that green signaled desirable and red indicated undesirable levels of respective leader competencies. The Appendix includes one sample profile. In the *no concern leader BLM condition*, financial orientation were scored at 92 or 94 out of 100, and the leader's ratings of "is solely concerned with meeting the bottom-line," "only cares about the business," "treats the bottom line as more important than anything else," and "cares more about profits than employee well-being" (operationalized via items from Greenbaum et al.'s 2012 scale) were noted as "no concern". In the *high concern leader BLM condition*, financial orientation was scored at the 30 or 35 percentile and these leader ratings were noted as "high concern."

Leader stress coping skill was similarly manipulated. In the *no concern leader stress coping skill condition* (i.e., *hindrance stress*), leaders stress coping skill were rated 90 or 91 out

of 100 and the four leader's stress indicators, which were "handles stress well and is cool under pressure," "does not become defensive or irritated when times are tough," "is not knocked off balance by the unexpected," and "reacts to stress in a positive manner were rated as no concern. In the *high concern leader stress coping skill condition*, the stress indicators were rated at 30 or 35 out of 100, and each indicator were rated as a "high concern".

With respect to leader BLM and in line with its conceptualization (Greenbaum et al., 2012; Wolfe, 1988), participants responded to the following item as a manipulation check (5-point Likert, 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree): "This manager demonstrates one-dimension thinking that revolves around securing financial bottom-line to the neglect of competing priorities". One-way ANOVA revealed that participants demonstrated higher levels of BLM in the high concern conditions ( $M = 3.94$ ) than in the no concern conditions ( $M = 2.10$ ),  $t_{(62)} = 75.57, p < .01$ , both being statistically significantly different from the control condition ( $M = 2.88$ ). The leader stress coping skill manipulation check scale item (5-point Likert) was "this manager demonstrates negative stress coping skills." Accordingly, participants indicated a higher level of leader hindrance stress in the high concern condition of stress coping skill ( $M = 4.23$ ) than in the no concern condition ( $M = 1.88$ ),  $t_{(62)} = 140.14, p < .01$ , both being statistically significantly different from the control condition ( $M = 3.17$ ).

Ethical leadership was assessed by asking participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with the 10-item measure developed by Brown and his colleagues (2005). This scale's Cronbach alpha was .92.

Rater BLM was assessed by asking raters to complete a four-item scaled developed by Greenbaum et al. (2012). The scale's Cronbach alpha was .47.

Hypothesis 1 stated that leader BLM should have a negative impact on ethical leadership. One-way ANOVA revealed that leaders in the high concern condition of BLM were rated lower on ethical leadership ( $M = 2.49, SD = .68$ ) than leaders in the no concern condition of BLM ( $M = 3.68, SD = .71$ )  $t_{(256)} = 188.89, p < .01$ . Thus, Hypothesis 1 was again supported. Consistent with study 1, Hypothesis 3a was tested using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). This hypothesis predicted that the negative impact of leader political skill on ethical leadership would be stronger when leader hindrance stress was low. The data did not support Hypothesis 3a. It revealed, however, that leader stress coping skill had a direct effect on ethical leadership. A separate one-way ANOVA revealed that leaders in the high concern condition of hindrance stress were rated lower on ethical leadership ( $M = 2.81, SD = .83$ ) than leaders in the no concern condition of hindrance stress ( $M = 3.35, SD = .92$ )  $t_{(256)} = 24.32, p < .01$ .

In order to examine the impact of rater BLM on the leader BLM-ethical leadership relationship, I used HLM. Given that each participant rated four different leader profiles, I assessed participants BLM by asking them to respond the four item measure created by Greenbaum and her colleagues (2012). As such, this served as a level two variable, whereas leader BLM served as a level one variable. An interaction between leader BLM and follower BLM did not exist. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Furthermore, an inspection revealed that there was a low mean of participant BLM and very little variance ( $M = 2.61, SD = .52$ ). It is also likely that the student sample's BLM was influenced the institution's business education, which infuses ethics throughout its curriculum. Additionally, the Greenbaum et al. (2012) scale of participant BLM was problematic ( $\alpha .47$ ). It is likely that generally assessing participant BLMs in an experimental setting lacks the robustness and variance of BLM in field data, if it is not manipulated.

Study 2 has several strengths. First, the data suggests directional causality regarding the impact of leader BLM on ethical leadership. Consequently, this particular study strengthens the findings of study 1, regarding the primary relationship of interest. Second, this particular type of experimental vignette methodology weakens social desirability effects by indirectly assessing the importance of explanatory variables and, therefore, is considered superior to the self-report attribute method in that regard (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Bretz & Judge, 1994). Third, I experimentally manipulate cue values. As such, I minimized variable intercorrelations and the issue of multicollinearity, which is often found with field data and enhance the ability to assess the independent effects of cues (e.g., Karren & Barringer, 2002; Feldman & Arnold, 1978). Specifically in Study 1, leader BLM and ethical leadership were correlated ( $r = -.48$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Although, this correlation does not imply multicollinearity, it may impact the independence of effects (as both were rated by the follower) to a small degree. Finally, the policy capturing study reflects the best practices according experimental vignette methodologists (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Aiman-Smith et al., 2002; Karren & Barringer, 2002). I limited the number of cues to four. Five is the maximum number of cues that a single scenario should display. Additionally, two to three factors are manipulated in most policy capturing studies. I am consistent with this as I manipulated two factors. My cue range (i.e., desirable vs undesirable) is also ideal. I included extraneous bits of information (talent management and staffing ability) and a control condition to account for demand characteristics. Finally, the presentation of the material created a high level of immersion into the experiment (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

Although Study 2 provides some notable strongpoints and overcomes the key limitations of study 1, it is not without its shortcomings. First, as with any policy capturing study, the issues of realism and external validity cannot be ignored. We used hypothetical situations. Nonetheless,

the policy capturing results replicated the findings of Study 1 regarding the primary relationship of interest. In line with past experimental data and field data (e.g., Stumpf & London, 1981), I found similar results between working professional samples and student samples. Second, I did not have duplicate conditions for all our manipulated conditions. Subsequently, I cannot completely eliminate the concern of rater reliability. As mentioned earlier, I was able to successfully duplicate one condition in an effort to ease the concern of rater reliability. To this end, Cable and Judge (1994) demonstrated that only a small percentage (i.e., 12%) is needed to ease the concern of rater reliability. I duplicated 25% percent of my manipulated conditions (i.e., 1/4). Additionally, the participants were asked to assume the role of a chief diversity officer. Although this was designed to get the participants to assume a manager evaluator role, this may realism

## **CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

I feel the present research offer several theoretical contributions to the field of BLM, behavioral ethics, stress research, and leadership. First, the results of Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that leader BLM is a strong predictor of ethical leadership. In the presence of other known predictors (e.g., leader's superior engagement of ethical leadership, leader conscientiousness, leader neuroticism, and leader moral identity), leader BLM had the strongest impact on ethical leadership. Additionally, the policy capturing study demonstrates causality regarding the leader BLM and ethical leadership relationship. This finding is particularly useful regarding behavioral ethics research. BLM, via trait activation theory, suggests that amoral concept can offer unique explanations regarding the question of "what types of leaders behave ethically." When examining ethical concepts, by including amoral theoretical frameworks, we can enhance and broaden our understanding and the reach of behavioral ethics research. To this end, leader hindrance stress, via cognitive theory of stress, impacts ethical leadership as well. Given that behavioral ethicists have noted that ethical leadership is a difficult task (Treviño et al., 2000), amoral concepts such as leader BLM and leader hindrance stress may provide a sense of guidance regarding the process of leaders excessively prioritizing one task (i.e., deliver favorable results) at the expense of another task (i.e., lead ethically).

To the broader leadership literature, this study highlights the snubbed reality that leaders face in modern day organizations and in society in general. Although it is relatively easy to conclude leaders who violate ethical principles are bad or immoral people, it is also an incomplete and inadequate perspective to take without understanding the context of a leader's particular environment. If leaders are not born, we can safely conclude that it is impossible for leaders to possess an innate focus on the bottom-line. As such, trait activation theory provides a

novel insight as how leaders respond to situational cues in organizational settings. In this paper, the situational cue was simply the job of being a leader, but it is likely that leaders respond to other situational cues.

Organizations and our greater society need to be aware of the seemingly paradoxical position that leaders are placed in, regarding shouldering the burden of bottom-line outcomes while also being expected to lead ethically. Although this situation is not inherently problematic, it becomes disastrous when leaders place an overemphasis on the bottom-line. Organizations and leaders should understand that a wild demand for positive results can be triggering an unhealthy BLM and a great deal of negative stress. Consequently, leaders should not see it as an “either-or” approach but more of a balancing act. Organizations may be able to help leaders manage this balance act by rewarding or formalizing ethics as part of a manager’s evaluation, similar to how organizations measure objective results.

Additionally, organizations and leaders must be aware that an overemphasis on favorable results may backfire. An overemphasis on the bottom-line can adversely impact the bottom-line. Leaders with a high BLM can drive up turnover and deviance. The costs associated with counterproductive work behavior exceed \$4 billion annually (Frost, 2007) and turnover-related financial costs, which include employee replacement, training, and outplacement (Cascio, 2000; Sturman, Trevor, Boudreau, & Gerhart, 2003), are also quite high. As such, any act that adversely impacts these two outcomes is ultimately counterproductive to achieving favorable bottom-line results.

I feel this current research can provide a solid foundation for future research. First, the leader BLM and ethical leadership needs further examination. This research has demonstrated that leader BLM is an antecedent of ethical leadership, however, future research has an

opportunity to identify mediating mechanisms of this particular relationship. One interesting avenue is examining the role leader moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999; Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). It is likely that high BLM prompts moral disengagement, which enables leaders to minimize the importance of ethical leadership. This potential mediator may enhance our understanding of how leader BLM (i.e., amoral concept) impacts ethical leadership (i.e., moral concept). If this type of mediating effect exists, then what are some potential amoral (e.g., Big 5 personality traits, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, leader duty orientation) and moral moderators (e.g., leader moral conviction, moral identity)?

Another direction future researchers may wish to pursue is to investigate the role of prosocial impact (Grant, 2008). It may be likely that as BLM increases within leaders, they have a lower desire to have a prosocial impact, given that they see others as opponents, which ultimately reduces their drive to be ethical leaders. Subsequently, a level's prosocial impact may further clarify the relationship between leader BLM and ethical leadership. Future researchers may also target follower compliance as a moderator. A possibility exists that noncompliant followers may decrease a leader's prosocial impact, which may ultimately impact ethical leadership.

Another avenue to examine is the *fairness of this folly*. It is likely that leaders, themselves, are aware the paradoxical situation in which they find themselves, but assessing how fair they see this situation can be very insightful. For example, if leaders feel this particular paradox is unfair, consistent with prior justice research (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt et al. 2001; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), leaders may react to this perceived unfairness with deviant behavior themselves, further reducing their followers' perceptions of ethicality.

Another interesting path future researchers may wish to pursue is identifying some positive aspects of high BLM. Although it may negatively impact their perceived ethicality, it may be likely that leaders with high BLM engage in goal-focused leadership (Colbert & Witt, 2009), not necessarily ethical leadership. As such, perhaps goal-focused leader behavior potentially mediates the relationship between leader BLM and performance outcomes. If this is the case, then what are some potential boundary conditions? One potentially interesting moderator is leader political skill (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004; Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005). It is likely that leader political skill may strengthen the positive impact of leader BLM on performance outcomes, and mitigate or even possibly negate the impact of leader BLM on ethical leadership. Ferris and his colleagues (2005) noted that politically skilled individuals are good at disguising ulterior motives and appear to be other-focused. As such, high BLM leaders who are also politically skilled may appear more than ethical than leaders who have a lower level of political skill.

The results of Study 2 suggested that a negative rating of stress coping ability greatly impacted a leader's evaluation of ethical leadership. Although a main effect was not revealed in Study 1, future researchers may want to further examine the main effect of stress on ethical leadership. Consequently, conservation of resource theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) may provide additional insight. It is likely that leaders may feel a level of emotional exhaustion (i.e., their resources have been depleted), which may negatively impact their ability to perform the challenging task of ethical leadership. Perhaps leaders can feel drained or too tired to perform the challenging task of ethical leadership. If this is indeed the case, discovering potential boundary conditions would be beneficial as well. For example, does a high level of consciousness or duty orientation buffer the effects of emotional exhaustion on ethical leadership?

Similar to NFL head coaches, organizational leaders are ultimately judged by their ability to get results. Although the old adage of “you can’t argue with the results” is catchy and may indeed be the harsh organizational reality of being a leader in a results-driven world, others have directly challenged this adage by saying “you can argue with the results” (e.g., Brown et al. 2005). Consequently, it is imperative to get the results in a socially responsible and ethical manner. More importantly, this is the largely agreed upon societal expectation that leaders and organizations must also acknowledge.

**APPENDIX: IRB LETTER**

# UCF IRB Letter of Approval



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Darryl B. Rice**

Date: **August 15, 2014**

Dear Researcher:

On 8/15/2014, the IRB approved the following minor modification to human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Modification Type: Two new surveys have been uploaded in iRIS for use with a new student population.  
Project Title: Antecedents and outcomes of anticipatory support  
Investigator: Darryl B Rice  
IRB Number: SBE-12-08557  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 08/15/2014 04:59:49 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

IRB Coordinator

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