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Interactive Effect of Leaders' Influence Tactics and Ethical Leadership on Work Effort and Helping Behavior

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this study was to explore the interactive influence of a) leaders' exemplification and supplication efforts and b) followers' perceptions of the leaders' ethicality on followers' work efforts and helping behaviors. We surveyed 58 leaders and 175 followers who worked for a governmental agency in the United States. Results indicated that the expected positive (negative) relationship between leaders' usage of exemplification and work effort was evident when ethical leadership was high (low). The expected positive relationship between leaders' engagement in supplication and helping behaviors was not present when ethical leadership was high, but the predicted negative relationship was found between supplication and helping when perceptions of leaders' ethicality were low.

Keywords: effort, ethical leadership, exemplification, helping, influence tactics, supplication

A KEY GOAL OF LEADERS IS to manage and direct the behaviors of their subordinates (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1998). One way this goal can be achieved is through the use of influence tactics (Cable & Judge, 2003; Sparrowe, Soetjijto, & Kraimer, 2006). Leaders can use influence tactics to frame the purpose of engaging in a requested or needed behavior in a manner that energizes followers to do so (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). Energized followers may put forth effort to engage in

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the requested behavior to help leaders they admire, respect, or even pity (Gilbert & Jones, 1986).

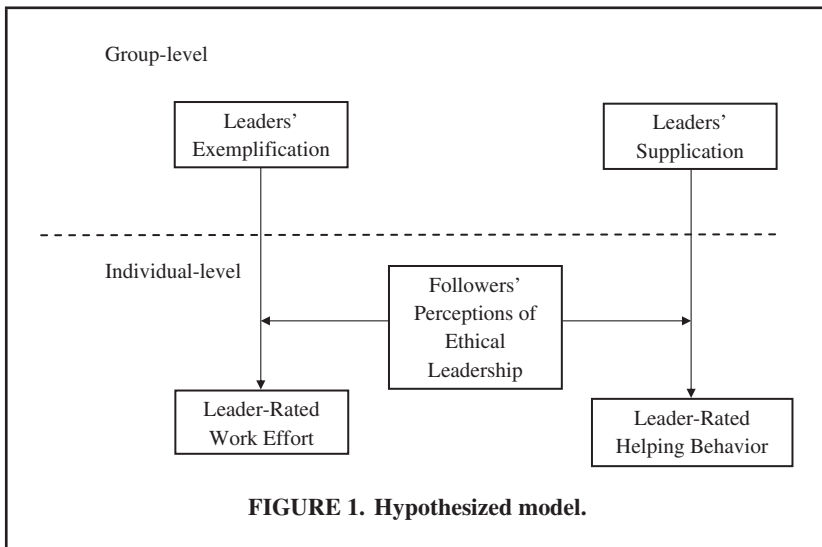
Research has shown that individuals who accept the role of leader frequently possess a specific influence orientation that is composed of tactical acquisitive behaviors (Gardner, 1992; Palmer, Welker, Campbell, & Magner, 2001). We elected to study two tactics that fall into this category, exemplification and supplication, because of their distinctive alignment with our theories and because they represent both assertive and defensive influence tactics. Leaders who use exemplification tactics engage in behaviors that display personal integrity, discipline, moral responsibility, and effectiveness (Brown, Stocks, & Wilder, 2006; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Gardner & Cleavenger, 1998). For example, leaders who keep “workers hours” are engaging in exemplification (Gilbert & Jones, 1986). Subordinates exposed to leaders’ exemplification tactics may adopt a strong work ethic that mimics their leaders (Schütz, 1998). Supplication, on the other hand, occurs when leaders advertise their limitations or lack of experience in an effort to get subordinates to pitch in and help (Nagy, Kacmar, & Harris, 2011). Although the use of this tactic may make leaders look weak, some leaders may use this approach as a means of attracting and rewarding followers who can fill voids in their abilities (Gardner & Cleavenger, 1998). Provided the supplicating leader appears to be in genuine need, followers may be willing to engage in helping behaviors.

Two theoretical approaches can be employed to describe how influence tactics are used to shape follower behaviors: social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Social learning theory suggests that leaders influence followers by serving as role models (Bandura, 1986). Leaders trying to serve as role models can engage in exemplification, or actions that create the image of a dedicated, hard working individual. Applying this influence strategy may produce followers who copy their leaders’ high level of work effort. Therefore, we suggest that social learning theory will predict and explain how leaders’ use of exemplification tactics impact followers’ in-role behavior which we measure as work effort in this study. In compliment, social exchange theory suggests that leaders influence followers based on the reciprocal relationship of obligation (Blau, 1964). Leaders trying to encourage helping behaviors may use supplication, or portraying oneself as needing help, to invoke the norm of reciprocity in followers. Leaders who specifically request help by using supplication tactics create an implied future obligation to their followers. Followers who answer the call for help earn “chips” that they can cash in for future favors. Offering help to leaders also may increase the effect leaders have which can result in a variety of desired outcomes such as positive performance evaluations (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991) and expanded career opportunities (Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997; Westphal & Stern, 2007). This logic suggests that social exchange theory explains how leaders’ use of supplication tactics impact followers’ extra role behaviors, which we measured in this study as helping behaviors.

Not all influence attempts will be successful (Nagy et al., 2011; Sparrowe et al., 2006). For instance, the reputation of the leader engaging in influence tactics will limit or enhance their effectiveness (Gardner & Cleavenger, 1998). Leaders with strong, positive reputations are better positioned to effectively use influence tactics than those with less stellar reputations. While a variety of leadership styles such as charismatic, authentic, spiritual, or transformational could produce a reputation that would allow leaders the ability to effectively use impression management tactics, we elected to focus on ethical leadership. Our decision was predicated on the idea that ethical leadership is more transactional in nature than the other forms of positive leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ongoing ethical interactions with subordinates provide leaders a mechanism through which they can create a reputation that will support the effective use of influence attempts.

Ethical leaders possess positive reputations that stem from their fair, consistent, and trustworthy behavior (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Generally defined, ethical leadership is “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships” (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). Given the strong positive reputation ethical leaders develop through their interactions with subordinates, we suspect that followers’ perceptions of the ethicality of their leaders will moderate the strength of the relationship between leaders’ use of influence tactics and follower behavior.

The relationships we test are depicted in the model shown in Figure 1. According to the model, followers’ perceptions of ethical leadership moderate the relationship between leaders’ use of exemplification and the level of effort followers expend in completing their assigned work tasks (i.e., in-role behaviors) as



predicted by social learning theory. In addition, following social exchange theory, the model depicts followers' perceptions of ethical leadership moderating the relationship between leaders' use of supplication and followers' willingness to help others even when it is not required of them to do so (i.e., extra role behaviors). For both of these moderating effects, we suspect that the predicted relationships will be positive when perceptions of ethical leadership are high and negative when they are low.

Our research makes a number of contributions to the literature. First, our study explores the usefulness of two complimentary theories, social learning theory and social exchange theory, in describing and predicting the impact of influence tactics on follower behaviors. Overall, the field of influence tactics is notorious for a lack of theory to explain and predict how these tactics work (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). Utilizing both theories to describe how two specific influence tactics operate advances the field by answering the call for more theoretically driven work in this area (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008). Second, we introduce influence tactics into the ethical leadership research area. While both of these streams of literature examine the behavior of the leader, they have yet to be explored simultaneously to understand when and if ethical leadership plays a role in the use of influence tactics. Further, the theoretical approaches we use meld well with the ethical leadership literature as Brown et al. (2005) used both social learning theory and social exchange theory to explain the process through which ethical leaders influence their followers. Finally, the current study both complements and extends extant research (Cable & Judge, 2003; Sparrowe et al., 2006). We complement Cable and Judge's (2003) research that found that leadership style plays a role in followers' upward influence attempts by exploring whether the success of downward influence attempts depends on the followers' perceptions of leadership style. Our research extends previous research (Sparrowe et al., 2006) that explored the moderating effect of leadership style on the influence tactic-helping relationship by featuring different influence tactics, a different leadership style, and incorporating an additional outcome variable—work effort. By theoretically and empirically demonstrating that specific influence tactics work with specific outcome variables, we offer a more nuanced understanding of the moderating role of leadership style on influence tactic-outcome relationships.

Theoretical Foundations

Social Learning Theory, Exemplification, and Work Effort

Social learning theory is based on the notion that a leader influences follower behavior via modeling and reinforcing desirable behavior (Bandura, 1986). Followers are likely to notice and emulate the attitudes, values, and behaviors of models who are attractive and credible, such as a leader who uses the influence tactic of exemplification (Gardner, 1992; Gilbert & Jones, 1986). Exemplification behaviors have been described as those that portray the leader as honest, pious,

hard working, and possessing integrity and moral responsibility (Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Gilbert & Jones, 1986). Witnesses of exemplification behaviors view the actor with respect and admiration and strive to reach the same level of performance demonstrated by the actor (Gardner, 1992).

The construct of work effort captures the energy put into the tasks required by the job itself (Kacmar, Zivnuska, & White, 2007). Leaders who use the influence tactic of exemplification to model and reward consistent effort and a strong work ethic can influence the behavior of their followers. Followers who observe the dedication and persistence of their exemplifying leaders, and who recognize that their leaders always reward those who put forth similar levels of work effort, will emulate this behavior (Treviño, 1992; Treviño, Brown & Hartmann, 2003). Thus, as social learning theory predicts, exemplification by the leader will be positively related to follower work effort.

Social Exchange Theory, Supplication, and Helping Behavior

Social exchange theory is a complementary theory that can inform our understanding of the influence of leader supplication on a different type of follower behavior, helping. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Homans, 1958) posits that the social exchange between two entities entails obligations, and when one entity does something for the other, there is an expectation of future return (Gouldner, 1960). When leaders use supplication, they portray themselves as in need of help to make their followers feel obligated to assist them (Brown et al., 2006). Followers who succumb to the leaders' plea for help expect that their extra-role behaviors will earn them future favors from their leaders (Sparrowe et al., 2006; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003).

While in-role behaviors such as work effort are critical to the success of the organization, extra-role behaviors, or those that go beyond the job requirements, have been shown to contribute to the organization by increasing efficiency and enhancing production (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002; Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). One example of extra-role behavior is helping (Organ, 1988). Helping behaviors can be defined as voluntarily helping others with work-related problems (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). As social exchange theory predicts, employees who engage in helping behaviors at the request of their supplicating leader will look forward to their now obligated leader paying them back.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership, as developed by Brown et al. (2005), incorporates both a role modeling component (i.e., transformational) and an exchange component (i.e., transactional) as the construct was developed using both social learning and social exchange theories. Turning first to the transformational component,

the ethical leadership construct focuses most closely on the idealized influence component as this is where the ethical feature of transformational leadership resides. Essentially, leaders who demonstrate idealized influence are those who do the right thing and expect others to do so as well. The transactional component of ethical leadership is how the ethical message gets verbalized and reinforced. Ethical leaders engage in and promote two-way communication. During these interactions, appropriate behavior is reinforced and behavior that does not adhere to the ethical standards is extinguished.

Ethical leadership falls under the umbrella of positive forms of leadership which are receiving increasing research attention (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011; Walumbwa, Peterson, Avolio, & Hartnell, 2010). Other leadership styles included in this category are charismatic (Conger & Kanungo, 1998), authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), spiritual (Fry, 2003), and transformational (Bass, 1985). Isolating the theoretical and empirical similarities and distinctions among these forms of leadership has been an ongoing process (Avery, Palanski, & Walumbwa, 2001; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Similarities include individual characteristics assigned to leaders who fall into any of these categories such as altruism, integrity, and role modeling (Brown & Treviño, 2006). In other words, positive leaders possess positive characteristics.

However, ethical leadership can be distinguished from other forms of leadership in several ways. First, ethics is only a component of each of the other forms of leadership noted above while it is the sole focus in ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2009). Thus, while the overlap among these forms of leadership should create significant correlations among them, the specific focus of ethical leadership allows it to explain variance above and beyond the other forms of leadership (Brown et al., 2005; Treviño et al., 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Second, ethical leadership is more transactional in nature than the other forms of positive leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006). For instance, ethical leaders focus on directly communicating through words and deeds how each follower should act. Thus, rather than offering a global vision that everyone shares, ethical leaders connect individually with their followers through personal actions and interpersonal relationships (Brown et al., 2005; Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). This perspective suggests that the individualized perceptions followers have of their ethical leaders are best captured at the individual, rather than group level.

Combining Influence Tactics and Ethical Leadership

We expect that the outcomes resulting from the use of the influence tactics of exemplification and supplication will be positive when the person enacting them

is viewed as ethical and negative when the person enacting them is not viewed as ethical. Exemplification occurs when actors engage in behaviors designed to make them appear dedicated or proficient (Bolino et al., 2008). To accomplish this goal leaders may do more than is necessary when completing tasks or exceed expectations with respect to delivery date or mode of delivery. Followers who witness their leaders rolling up their sleeves and investing energy in their tasks may elect to model these behaviors. However, as social learning theory suggests, this will occur only if the leader is viewed as a credible role model. Since leaders perceived as ethical are likely to be viewed as an influential role model, we submit that the relationship between exemplification and work effort will be positive when the leaders are viewed as ethical. Conversely, when perceptions of ethical leadership are low, followers do not view their leader as trustworthy, which reduces the credibility of the leader as a role model and the motivation of the follower to emulate their leaders' actions resulting in a negative relationship between exemplification and work effort. Taken together we predict:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Perceptions of ethical leadership moderate the relationship between leaders' use of exemplification behaviors and work effort such that this relationship is positive when perceptions of ethics are high and negative when perceptions of ethics are low.

Similarly, we predict that perceptions of ethical leadership will moderate the relationship between the use of the influence tactic of supplication and follower helping behaviors. Supplication occurs when actors depict themselves as needing help or actively acknowledge that they need help from others (Bolino et al., 2008). Followers who view their leader as ethical, as compared to those who view the leader as less ethical, may be more likely to extend themselves and help their supplicating leader because the expectation of future pay back is likely to occur. In other words, followers will go beyond their required tasks and help their leaders and coworkers because they are creating an obligation with someone they view as likely to reciprocate (Sparrowe et al., 2006). The same cannot be said when perceptions of ethical leadership are low. Followers who do not trust their leaders may view extending themselves as a risky proposition as the possibility of receiving sufficient future payback is uncertain. In addition, leaders viewed as ethical may be able to encourage their followers to help others through supplication behaviors because they appear to be voicing a legitimate need. On the other hand, when perceptions of ethical leadership are low, the request for help may not appear genuine, reducing the likelihood of followers engaging in the requested helping behavior. Therefore, we propose:

H2: Perceptions of ethical leadership moderate the relationship between leaders' use of supplication behaviors and helping behaviors such that this relationship is positive when perceptions of ethical leadership are high and negative when perceptions of ethical leadership are low.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The respondents for this study were employees of a branch of a state government responsible for dealing with statewide disease-related issues. Data collection began with the director sending an invitational email to all branch employees. Key components of this email included the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that the results would be kept confidential. Next, the respondents received a personalized email from the researchers. Included in this email was an explanation of the survey's goal, an assurance of the confidentiality of their responses, and a link to the online survey. Respondents were given a one-month window during which to complete the survey. Once the follower emails had been sent, we asked their immediate supervisors to provide ratings of the work effort and helping behaviors of their followers as well as report the level of exemplification and supplication they used. These ratings served as our dependent and independent variables, respectively. In order for us to match the followers' responses to those of their immediate supervisor, employees' surveys included the name of their supervisor.

Eliminating responses with missing data or those that were unable to be matched resulted in a sample size of 175 (84% response rate). In terms of demographics, followers were 64% female, the average age was 42.9 years, the average job tenure was 4 years, and their average organizational tenure was 5.91 years. In total, 58 supervisors provided ratings, resulting in an average of 3.02 ratings per supervisor. For the supervisors, the demographic breakdown was 40% male, the average age was 47.9 years, the average job tenure was 4.79 years, and their average organizational tenure was 7.73 years.

Measures

Unless otherwise stated, a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), was used for responses to all survey items. Scale items were averaged to create an overall score for each construct. Scales were coded such that high values represent high levels of the constructs.

Follower Measure

Ethical leadership. We measured perceptions of ethical leadership with Brown et al.'s (2005) 10-item scale ($\alpha = .95$). Sample items included "My supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards," "My supervisors defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained," and "My supervisor has the best interests of employees in mind." To confirm the appropriateness of using individual-level rather than group-level perceptions of ethical leadership we ran a number of analyses. Our first analysis was to calculate an ICC(1) value,

which demonstrates the percentage of variance in ethical leadership due to the leader. Our results revealed an ICC(1) value of .13, which can be considered moderate. Next we calculated the ICC(2) value, which represents the reliability of the ratings within each group. Our ICC(2) was .30, which is well below recommended cutoffs. Finally, we calculated within group agreement (r_{wg}), which is another form of reliability. We found this value to be .55. Both our ICC(2) and r_{wg} values indicated considerably low reliability and fall below the recommended cutoffs of .70 (Bliese, Halverson, & Schriesheim, 2002) or .60 (Glick, 1985). Additionally, the .55 r_{wg} value (for groups of 2 or more) or .52 r_{wg} value (for groups of 3 or more) were both below the traditionally used value of .70 that would recommend aggregation to the next level of analysis (LeBreton, Burgess, Kaiser, Atchley, & James, 2003). Taken together, these results support our decision to use perceptions of ethical leadership as an individual-level variable.

Leader Measures

Work effort. Leaders used Brown and Leigh's (1996) 5-item scale to rate their follower's work effort ($\alpha = .93$). A sample item was, "When there's a job to be done, this follower devotes all his/her energy to getting it done."

Helping behaviors. Leaders responded to Settoon and Mossholder's (2002) 5-item scale to measure the helping behaviors of their followers ($\alpha = .92$). A sample item was, "This subordinate helps coworkers who are running behind in their work."

Exemplification. We measured leaders' usage of the influence tactic of exemplification with Bolino and Turnley's (1999) 4-item scale ($\alpha = .80$). They were instructed to think about "how often you behave this way" in response to each of the scale items (e.g., "stay at work late so people will know you are hard working"). The response scale ranged from 1 (*never behave this way*) to 5 (*often behave this way*).

Supplication. We measured leaders' use of the influence tactic of supplication with Bolino and Turnley's (1999) 5-item scale ($\alpha = .95$). In response to each of the five items (e.g., "act like you need assistance so people will help you out"), they were instructed to think about "how often you behave this way." The response scale ranged from 1 (*never behave this way*) to 5 (*often behave this way*).

Control Variables

Based on our review of the extant literature, we controlled for follower organizational tenure, relationship (leader-follower) tenure, and age when running

our analyses. These variables have been theoretically suggested and empirically shown to be related to the dependent variables of interest in this study (e.g., Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006; Sturman, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2011), thus we controlled for them to eliminate spurious relationships. All of our control variables were supplied by the follower and were measured in years and months.

Analysis Approach

The design of our study created a nesting effect. Specifically, followers were nested within leaders because leaders rated their own level of exemplification and supplication, as well as providing work effort and helping ratings for more than one follower. To model the hypothesized relationships and account for the non-independence in our data, we used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2004) to perform our analyses. We ran two separate HLM analyses, one for each dependent variable. Each analysis included four steps. In the first step, we entered our control variables. In the second step, we entered both influence tactics as level-2 main effects. In step 3, we entered ethical leadership, the moderator, as a level-1 predictor. In the fourth step, we entered both level-2 influence tactics on the level-1 ethical leadership variable to create interaction terms. Per the recommendation of Hofmann and Gavin (1998), we used group-mean centering because we estimated cross-level interactions. We used Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula to calculate our variance explained.

Results

Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix for the variables in this study. As expected, our control variables were positively and significantly related to one another. In addition, the two influence tactics were significantly and positively related to one another, as were the two dependent variables. As some of our correlations between our focal variables approached .55, we elected to explore the discriminant validity of our scales. To do this, we followed the procedure outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and calculated the square root of the average variance explained for each of the scales in our study. This value, which we present on the diagonal in Table 1, represents the variance accounted for by the items that compose the scale. To demonstrate discriminant validity, this value must exceed the corresponding latent variable correlations in the same row and column. If this condition is met, then we have evidence that the variance shared between any two constructs (i.e., the correlation) is less than the average variance explained by the items that compose the scale. As shown in Table 1, this condition is met for all of our scales.

TABLE 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 1 variables ^a								
1. Ethical leadership	3.74	0.85	.84					
2. Work effort	4.11	0.73	0.19*	.87				
3. Helping	3.92	0.69	0.15*	0.54***	.74			
4. Organizational tenure	5.91	5.89	0.02	0.08	0.03			
5. Tenure with supervisor	2.28	2.30	0.01	0.05	0.16*	0.57***		
6. Age	42.94	10.43	0.05	0.05	−0.07	0.42***	0.26**	
Level 2 variables ^b								
1. Exemplification	1.51	0.53	.66					
2. Supplication	1.17	0.30	0.33**	.83				

^a*N* = 175. ^b*N* = 58. Values on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance explained which must be larger than all zero-order correlations in the row and column in which they appear to demonstrate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

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

The HLM results predicting work effort are shown in Table 2, and those predicting helping behaviors are provided in Table 3. We used a hierarchical analysis approach, stepping in variables one block at a time. While we used the results from each step to calculate the variance explained by the inclusion of the variables in that block, we interpret only the final step as it incorporated all of the relationships in our model. As shown in Step 4 in Tables 2 and 3, none of the control variables were significantly related to either outcome variable. Further, the main effects for exemplification and supplication were not significant for work effort or helping behaviors, but there was a positive main effect for ethical leadership with both dependent variables. Finally, Step 4 in Table 2 indicates that the interaction between leaders' use of exemplification and ethical leadership was significant for work effort, and the final step in Table 3 demonstrates that the interaction between leaders' use of supplication and ethical leadership was significant for helping behaviors.

To determine whether the significant cross-level interactions are consistent with our hypotheses, we graphed the results. Specifically, we plotted two slopes, one at one standard deviation below the mean and one at one standard deviation above the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). Figure 2 shows the exemplification by ethical leadership interaction on work effort. As can be seen, there was a positive relationship between exemplification and work effort when ethical leadership was high and a negative relationship when ethical leadership was low. Simple slope tests indicated that both slopes were significantly different from zero (low *t* =

TABLE 2. Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for Work Effort

Item	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4	
	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE
Step 1: Controls								
Organizational tenure	.01	.01	.01	.01	.02	.01	.02	.01
Tenure with supervisor	.00	.04	.00	.04	-.01	.04	-.01	.04
Age	-.00	.01	-.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01
Step 2: Level 2 independent variables								
Exemplification			.01	.13	.12	.12	.05	.12
Supplication			.06	.18	-.02	.16	.04	.19
Step 3: Level 1 moderator								
Ethical leadership					.20*	.09	.24*	.09
Step 4: Cross level interactions								
Exemplification $\times$ ethical leadership							.28*	.13
Supplication $\times$ ethical leadership							-.09	.20
ΔR^2	.00		.00		.08		.02	

$N = 175$. R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formulas.

* $p < .05$.

2.25, $p < .05$ and high $t = 2.41$, $p < .05$). These results provide support for *H1* as the slope for high perceptions of ethical leadership was positive and the slope was negative for low perceptions of ethical leadership. As predicted, the interaction between leaders' use of supplication and perceptions of ethical leadership on helping behaviors (Figure 3) shows that the supplication-helping behavior relationship was negative when perceptions of ethical leadership were low. When perceptions of ethical leadership were high, the slope of the line was positive, but essentially flat. Simple slope tests indicated that only the slope for the low ethical leadership line was significantly different from zero when helping behavior was the outcome variable (low $t = 2.23$, $p < .05$ and high $t = -1.15$, ns). Thus, *H2* was partially supported.

Finally, it is important to note that our results clearly align with the theoretical logic we offered, as both interactions were included in the final equations, but the results were not significant on the non-predicted outcome. That is, perceptions of ethical leadership did not moderate the supplication-work effort relationship or the exemplification-helping behavior relationship.

TABLE 3. Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for Helping Behavior

Item	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4	
	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE
Step 1: Controls								
Organizational tenure	-.00	.01	-.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01
Tenure with supervisor	.05	.04	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03
Age	-.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.01	.01
Step 2: Level 2 independent variables								
Exemplification			.03	.12	.07	.13	.06	.13
Supplication			-.17	.21	-.19	.21	-.25	.22
Step 3: Level 2 moderators								
Ethical leadership					.14*	.08	.18*	.07
Step 4: cross level interactions								
Exemplification $\times$ ethical leadership							.13	.11
Supplication $\times$ ethical leadership							.36*	.18
ΔR^2	.00		.00		.13		.03	

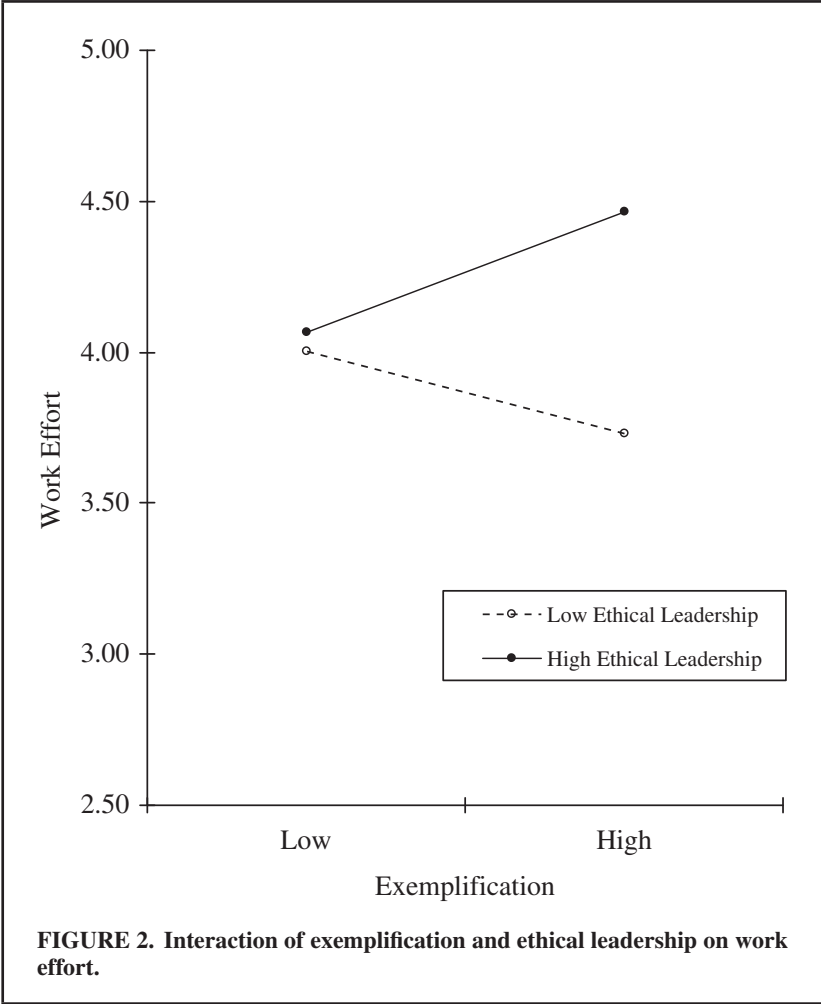
$N = 175$. R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formulas.

* $p < .05$.

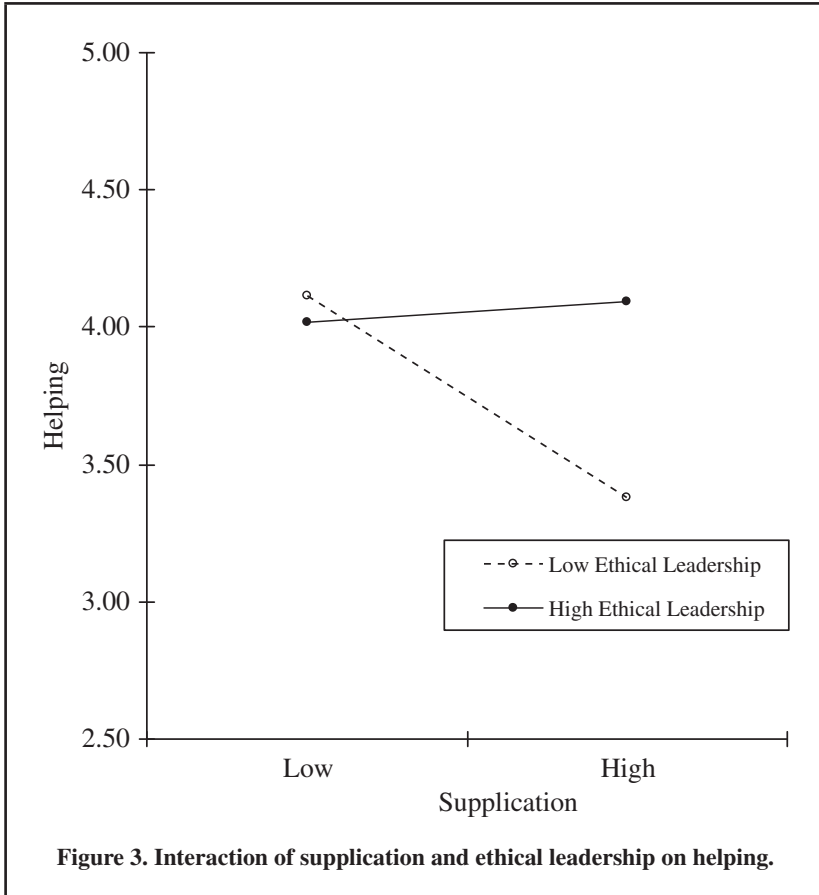
Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the usefulness of two theories in explaining and predicting the interactive effect of leaders' use of influence tactics and followers' perceptions of ethical leadership on follower behaviors. Our results demonstrate that social learning theory was a useful theoretical foundation for predicting the moderating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between leaders' exemplification and followers' work effort. As predicted, when perceptions of leaders' ethicality were low, the relationship between exemplification and work effort was negative, indicating little willingness on the part of the followers to imitate their leader. However, when leaders perceived as ethical exemplified the behavior of appearing dedicated, followers exerted more work effort than when these leaders refrained from engaging in exemplification. This clearly demonstrates the role-modeling component of ethical leadership.

Social exchange theory provides a theoretical explanation for the moderating effect of perceptions of ethical leadership on the relationship between supplication and helping behaviors. In this case, followers who did not view their leader



as ethical withdrew their helping behaviors. Followers who view their leader as untrustworthy may doubt the genuineness of the request for help decreasing their motivation to pitch in. It also is possible that followers reporting to a leader they do not view as ethical will recognize the risk inherent in engaging in a social exchange that may never be reciprocated and elect to not respond to the call for help. Interestingly, while the relationship between supplication and helping for leaders perceived as ethical was not positive, it also was not negative. This finding suggests that supplication efforts enacted by a leader perceived as ethical neither encourages nor discourages helping behavior in followers.



Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our study both complements and extends extant research. We complement Cable and Judge's (2003) research that found that leadership style plays a role in followers' upward influence attempts by demonstrating that leadership style also plays a role in downward influence attempts. Specifically, we show that the impact of supervisors' use of supplication and exemplification depends on the followers' perceptions of ethical leadership. Our research also extends previous research (Sparrowe et al., 2006) that found that LMX moderates the relationship between leaders' influence attempts and followers' helping behavior by exploring different influence tactics—exemplification and supplication—and an additional outcome variable—work effort. By theoretically and empirically demonstrating

that specific influence tactics work with specific outcome variables, we offer a more nuanced understanding of the moderating role of leadership style on influence tactic-outcome relationships.

We contribute to theory by introducing leaders' use of influence tactics into the ethical leadership domain. Our results demonstrate that exploring influence tactics only as main effects would have resulted in the conclusion that neither impacts the behaviors of followers. Our lack of main effects for influence tactics is not unique. Sparrowe et al. (2006) also reported no main effects when studying the interactive effect of LMX and influence tactics on helping behaviors. We agree with their conclusion that our integration of influence tactics and ethical leadership offers a contribution to the literature by highlighting the "importance of incorporating the relational context in which leaders employ influence tactics" (p. 1205).

A final contribution offered by the current study lays in the use of both social learning and social exchange theories to explore the moderating role of perceptions of ethical leadership. Brown et al. (2006) relied upon both of these theories when they introduced the construct of ethical leadership to the literature. Our results confirm that both of these theories are necessary to explain and predict the influence of ethical leadership. However, our results also uncovered the fact that the influence of ethical leadership may be more complicated than simple main effects.

This research also has several practical implications for leaders. Overall, this research continues to support previous findings that ethical leadership produces desirable organizational outcomes. Thus, organizations need to select, develop, and retain leaders that best fit the ethical leader profile. However, our results also suggest that ethical leaders can engage in specific behaviors to further motivate requested and valued behaviors in followers, such as hard work and dedication to the job. Engaging in exemplification provides leaders perceived as ethical an additional tool for directing and controlling follower behavior. Another practical finding is that leaders viewed as ethical may have a larger range of perceived acceptable behaviors than those not perceived as ethical. As shown in our study, followers' level of helping behaviors did not change when they reported to leaders perceived as ethical who engaged in supplication behaviors. The same was not true for leaders who were not perceived as ethical. Rather, the level of helping behaviors of followers, whose leaders were not viewed as ethical and who engaged in supplication behaviors, dropped significantly. This suggests that leaders who are viewed as ethical need to be sure not to abuse their reputations but rather continue to act in a trustworthy and genuine manner. Leaders may wish to continuously monitor their reputations by actively seeking feedback from their direct reports or colleagues who might hear about the way they are perceived, or providing anonymous feedback opportunities (e.g., suggestion boxes) to ensure that their intended leadership style is the one they are broadcasting.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

One potential limitation of our study is that we collected all of our data from one organization. In addition, our organization was a public state agency. Past research suggests differences among employees in the public and private sectors (Utgoff, 1983). Thus, it is unclear whether the results from the current study generalize to the private sector or to other public organizations. Future research examining these relationships in the private sector or across multiple organizations is needed to address this issue. Another possible limitation is that our data were collected at one point in time, eliminating the possibility of exploring causality. We hope future researchers will examine potential alternative representations of the variables in our study with longitudinal data, additional outcome variables, and additional influence tactics. Further, some may view the source of our data for the independent variables as a limitation. Although asking the actors to report their use of influence tactics is common practice in the field (e.g., Baron & Tang, 2009; DeCuyper & DeWitte, 2010; Zhao & Liden, 2011), it is possible that this design creates socially desirable ratings. Extant research on the social desirability of self-report influence tactics suggests that for such an effect to exist, responses to positive tactics should be high, responses to negative tactics should be low, and responses to positive tactics should be much higher than responses to negative tactics (Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Given that this pattern of results was not found in our data, we submit that we offer additional evidence supporting the notion that asking actors to report their level of influence tactics usage does not create a social desirability problem (Boonstra, & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 1998; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl, Flabe, & Youn, 1993). That said, future researchers may wish to collect non-self-report influence tactic data in the future to confirm a lack of social desirably responding. Finally, while ethical leadership was theoretically relevant to the current study, future research efforts may wish to incorporate multiple forms of positive leadership (e.g., charismatic, transformational) so that comparisons can be offered.

The limiting factors of this study notwithstanding, the data and methodology employed are strengths of the study. The data were collected from both leaders and followers, which helped to alleviate common method variance concerns and provided a stronger test of the relationships of interest. However, the design of our data collection efforts created a nesting issue that had to be addressed. Using HLM as our analysis technique allowed us to control for the non-independence in our data. Another approach future research efforts could employ would be to treat ethical leadership as a group level variable by aggregating responses to the leader-level (e.g., Walumbwa et al., 2011). To provide the most stringent test possible, we included the cross-level interaction terms of both exemplification and supplication in all analyses and found that they followed the theoretical logic and worked only for the hypothesized dependent variable. Our ability to find two significant cross-level interactions that explained considerable amounts of variance is another

strength of our study. Although cross-level interactions reflect reality (i.e., leader variables interacting with follower variables) they are difficult to find and are infrequently investigated. This research also melded the ethical leadership literature with the influence tactics literature to provide a thorough explanation for how leaders affect the behavior of followers. Combining ethical leadership with other individual organizational behaviors such as political behavior or additional influence tactics are potential avenues for future researchers to consider. Finally, regulatory focus theory has been shown to play a mediating role in how leaders manage and direct employee behaviors (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008). Future research may benefit by examining how both regulatory focus behaviors and influence tactics work simultaneously to impact the behavior of followers.

AUTHOR NOTES

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