

Leadership Behavior and Follower Work Behavior: The Influence of Follower Characteristics

C. Allen Gorman, PhD
and
Jason S. Gamble



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Overview

- Leadership
- Transformational & Transactional Leadership
- Leadership Outcomes
- Study 1 - Transformational Leadership, Regulatory Focus, and Contextual Performance
- Study 2 – Transformational Leadership, Work Ethic, and Proactive Work Behaviors



Leadership

What is leadership?

How does one lead?



Transformational Leadership

- Transformational leadership suggests that leaders work by **motivating and inspiring** their **followers** to exert effort above and beyond minimal levels.

(Bass, 1985)



Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

- Idealized Influence
- Inspirational Motivation
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Individualized Consideration

(Barling, Christie, & Hopton, 2001)



Transactional Leadership

- Transactional leadership is a form of leadership whereby leaders gain **compliance** from their **followers** via the use of either explicit or implied give and take relationships.

(Bass & Avolio, 1997)



Standards of Transactional Leadership

- Error seeking
- Punishment / reprimand
- Reward / compensation
- Quid pro quo

(Barling, et al., 2011)



Work Outcomes

People leave -or- stay

Morale is higher -or- lower

Individual output higher -or- lower

Over all productivity higher -or- lower



“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a LEADER.”

-John Quincy Adams



Study 1

- Motivational constructs have been identified as key components in leadership theories such as transformational leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993)
- But, the leadership literature has generally paid little attention to the underlying mechanisms by which leader behavior motivates followers (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007)



Transformational Leadership and Regulatory Focus

- Regulatory focus theory addresses many of the motivational mechanisms through which transformational leadership operates (Moss, Ritossa, & Ngu, 2006)
- Brockner and Higgins (2001) suggested that leaders can activate followers' promotion focus through the use of rhetoric focused on ideals and aspirations, which suggests that transformational leadership may naturally engage promotion-focused followers



Transformational Leadership and Promotion Focus

- Stam, Van Knippenberg, and Wisse (2006), found that follower-focused visionary leadership fosters the development of an ideal possible self in followers
- Transformational leaders, who nurture the growth and development of their followers (e.g., Kark & Shamir, 2002), are likely to foster a promotion focus among their followers (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007)



Outcomes of Transformational Leadership and Promotion Focus

- Whitford and Moss (2009) reported enhanced engagement for promotion-focused followers under transformational leadership
- Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, and Sassenberg (2011) found that transformational leadership reduced turnover intentions in followers who were highly promotion-focused
- Neubert et al. (2008) found that leaders adopting a service focus inspired helping behaviors and creativity for promotion-focused followers



Transactional Leadership and Prevention Focus

- Transactional leadership behaviors are intended to increase compliance to organizational rules and regulations (Yukl, 2013)
- Leaders who draw followers' attention to responsibilities, obligations, and activities they are supposed to do are likely to elicit the adoption of a prevention focus (Brockner & Higgins, 2001)
- Transactional leadership behaviors fit well with prevention-focused individuals' preferences for obligations, stability, short-term details, and concern with avoiding mistakes (Forster & Higgins, 2005; Higgins, 1997, 1998; Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Idson, Ayduk, & Taylor, 2001; Johnson, Chang, & Yang, 2010; Liberman et al., 1999)



Outcomes of Transactional Leadership and Prevention Focus

- Hamstra et al. (2011) found that transactional leadership reduced turnover intentions for highly-prevention focused followers
- Transactional leadership has also been associated with the follower values of security and conformity (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007)



Importance of Model Specification

- Researchers tend to examine transformational and transactional effects in isolation without specifying how each dimension simultaneously contributes to the influence on mediating processes and outcomes
- Thus potentially misspecifying or overestimating transformational effects (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013)



Hypothesis Development

- We suggest that leader behavior impacts follower behaviors through follower characteristics
- We hypothesize that promotion focus will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB, whereas prevention focus will mediate the relationship between transactional leadership and CWB



Study 1 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership will be positively related to OCB

Hypothesis 2: Transactional leadership will be negatively related to CWB

Hypothesis 3: Promotion focus will be positively related to OCB

Hypothesis 4: Prevention focus will be negatively related to CWB

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership will be positively related to promotion focus

Hypothesis 6: Promotion focus will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB

Hypothesis 7: Transactional leadership will be positively related to prevention focus

Hypothesis 8: Prevention focus will mediate the relationship between transactional leadership and CWB



Hypothesized Model

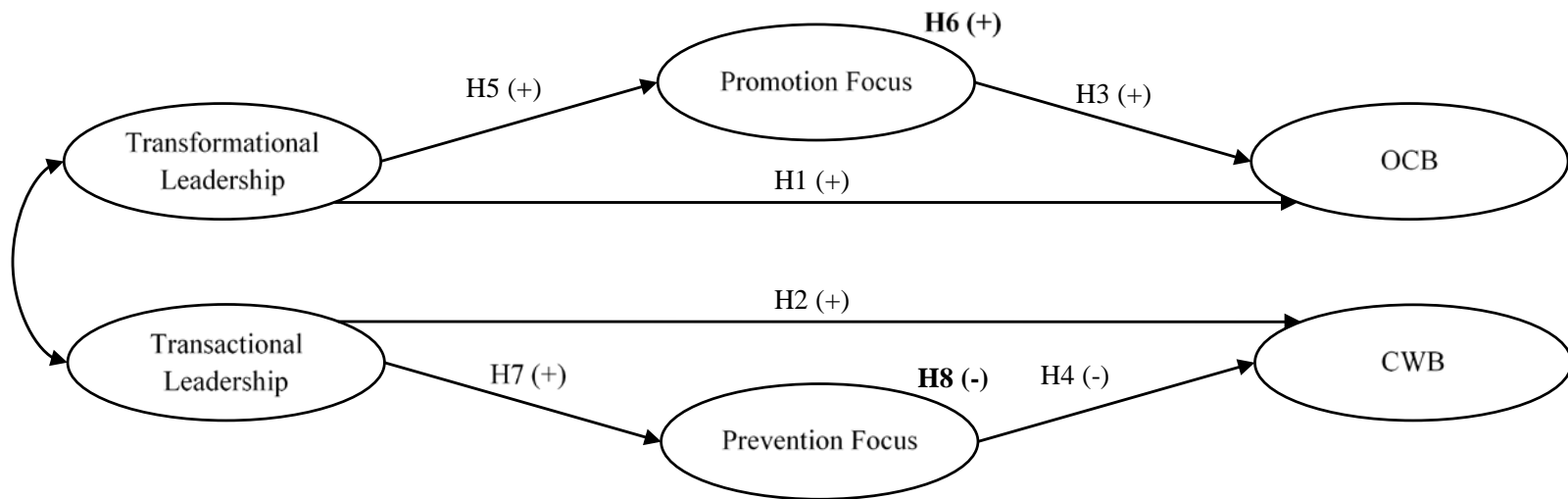


Figure 1. Hypothesized relationships among study variables.



Study 1 Procedure

- 493 employed psychology and management students at a large metropolitan university in the US
- Participants were asked to rate their supervisor's transformational and transactional leadership
- Participants completed the regulatory focus measure, and were asked to report of the frequency in which they exhibit OCB and CWB



Study 1 Measures

Transformational and Transactional Leadership – MLQ-5X (Avolio & Bass, 2004)

Regulatory Focus – Work Regulatory Focus Scale (Neubert et al., 2008)

OCB - 9-item scale developed by Tsui et al. (1997)

CWB – Organizational Deviance subscale of the Workplace Deviance Scale (Bennett and Robinson, 2000)



Study 1 Results

Table 1

Correlations among study variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. OCB	4.75	1.36	(.94)					
2. CWB	1.92	1.03	-.00	(.93)				
3. Promotion Focus	3.73	.58	.35*	-.25*	(.79)			
4. Prevention Focus	3.94	.55	.25*	-.33*	.78*	(.83)		
5. Transformational Leadership	3.28	.81	.11*	-.08	.30*	.31*	(.94)	
6. Transactional Leadership	3.18	.66	.08	.03	.27*	.31*	.70*	(.70)

Note. Reliability estimates are on the diagonal. *Significant at $p < .05$



Study 1 Results

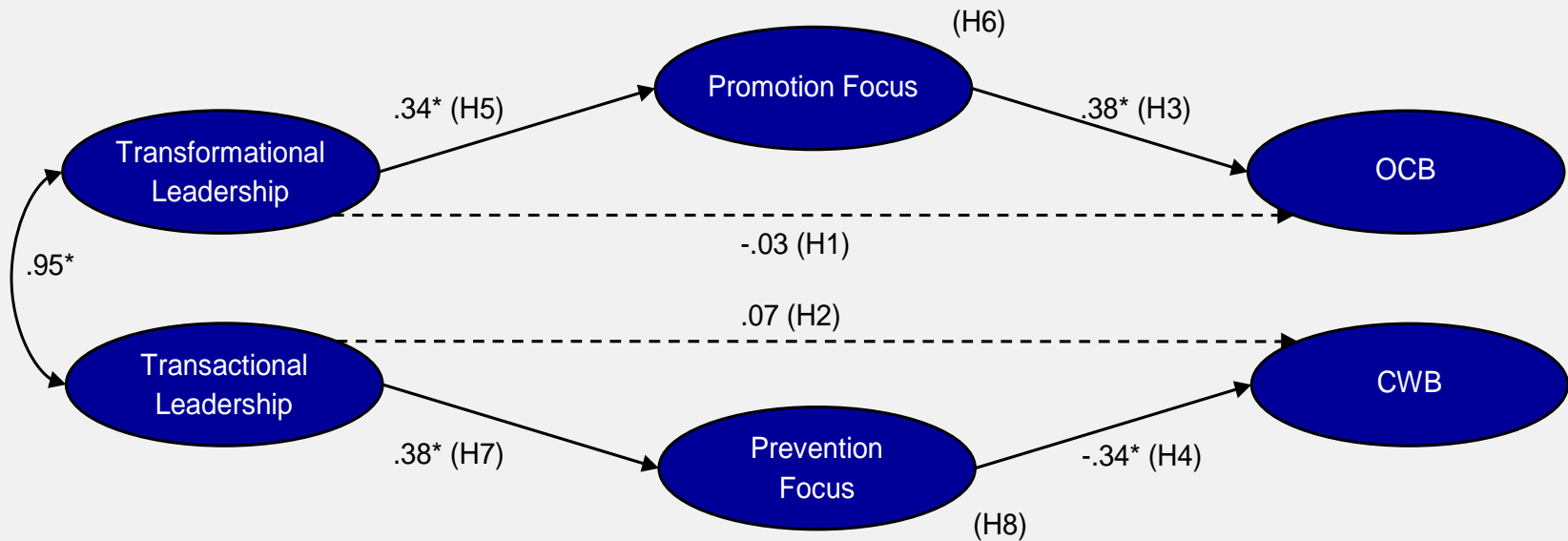


Figure 1. Hypothesized model with standardized parameter estimates. * Significant at $p < .05$. Hypothesized paths are in parentheses. Solid lines represent paths retained in complete mediation model. Dashed lines represent non-significant paths dropped from complete mediation model.



Study 1 Discussion

- Findings advance both regulatory focus theory and leadership theory by investigating how regulatory focus mediates the relationships between leadership and organizational outcomes
- Results of this study offer the new perspective that promotion focus mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB



Study 1 Discussion

- Contrary to expectations, results did not support a direct relationship between transactional leadership and CWB
- However, results provide evidence supporting the existence of a negative indirect effect
- If leaders rely on transactional behaviors to influence followers, this could result in a climate where followers are fearful of making mistakes and being reprimanded, therein decreasing CWB, but also not facilitating other positive behaviors such as OCB



Study 2 Intro

- In the lab, work ethic has been found to predict
 - intrinsic motivation (Meriac, 2015)
 - task persistence (Greenberg, 1977; Merrens & Garrett, 1975; Meriac, Thomas, & Milunski, 2015)
 - choice of task (Parkhurst, Fleisher, Skinner, Woehr, & Hawthorne-Embree, 2011)
- Little research on the relationship between work ethic and proactive behavior at work



Proactive Work Behavior

- The 21st century workplace requires employees who are high in initiative (Crant, 1995; Kickul & Gundry, 2002; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006)
- Research on antecedents of proactive work performance is sparse (Parker et al., 2006)



Work Ethic and Proactive Work Behavior

- Individuals high in work ethic tend to strive for achievement and believe that hard works results in desirable outcomes (Christopher, Zabel, & Jones, 2008)
- They also tend to avoid leisure and wasting time (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002)
- However, a positive association between work ethic and proactive work behavior does not explain the *process* by which work ethic leads to proactive performance

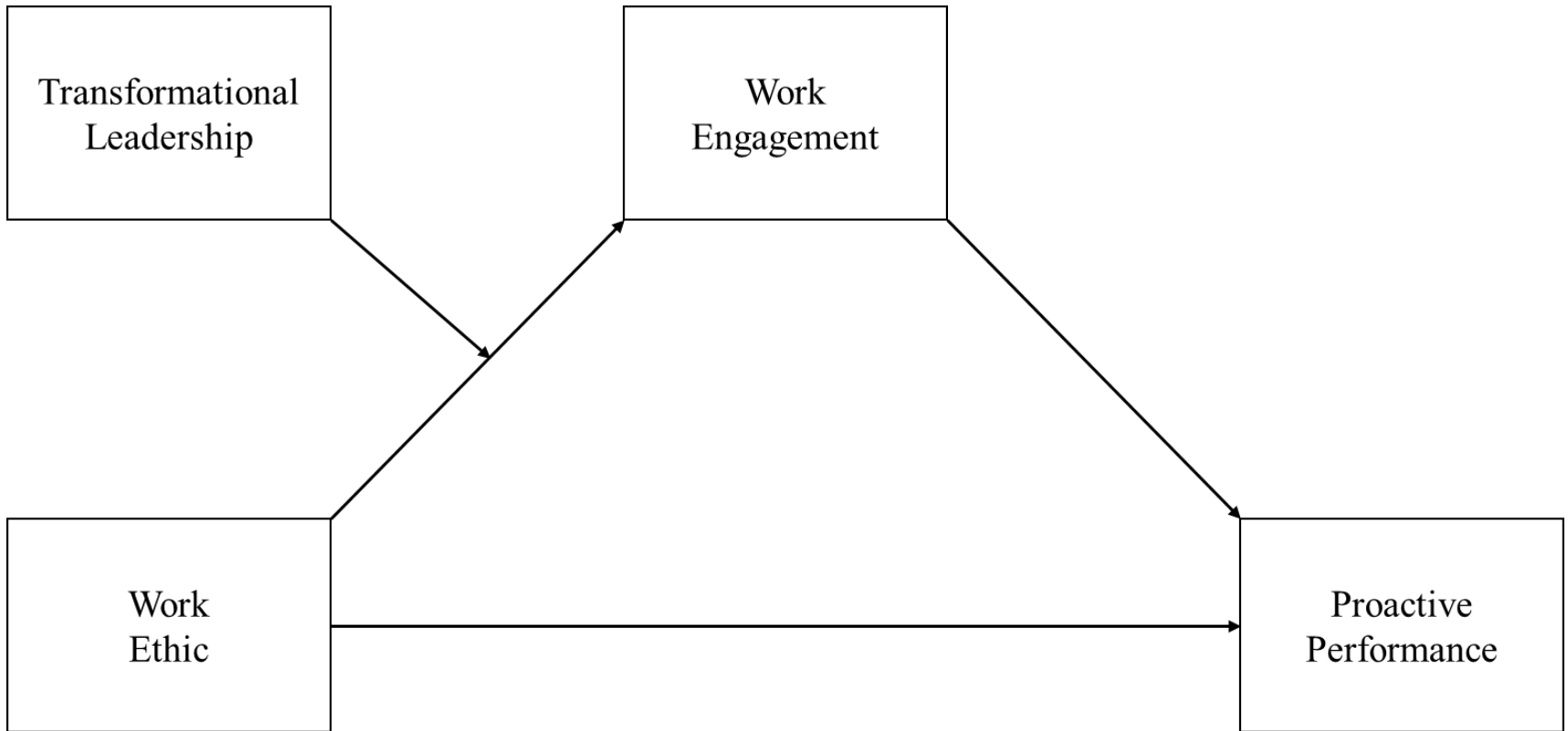


Work Ethic, Transformational Leadership, and Proactive Performance

- We suggest that work ethic alone does not explain proactive work behavior, but the influence of work ethic on proactive performance works indirectly through work engagement
- Moreover, given that transformational leadership is positively associated with work engagement (Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009), we also propose that supervisors' transformational leadership would serve as a contextual moderator of the relationship between work ethic and work engagement



Hypothesized Model



Study 2 Procedure

- Data were collected in 2 waves from 191 matched pairs of employed individuals and their work supervisors
- Participants were recruited from leadership development courses in business and MBA programs at a university in the southeastern United States
- Participants completed self-report measures of work ethic and work engagement scale, and also completed ratings of their supervisor's transformational leadership
- The participants' supervisors were given the proactive performance measure to complete regarding the participants



Study 2 Measures

- **Work Ethic.** Meriac et al.'s (2013) short form of the multidimensional work ethic profile (MWEPE)
- **Work Engagement.** Short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006)
- **Transformational Leadership.** 20 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Short Form; Bass & Avolio, 2004) that measure transformational leadership
- **Proactive Performance.** Supervisors rated the proactive performance of employees using 3 items measuring job proactivity from Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007)

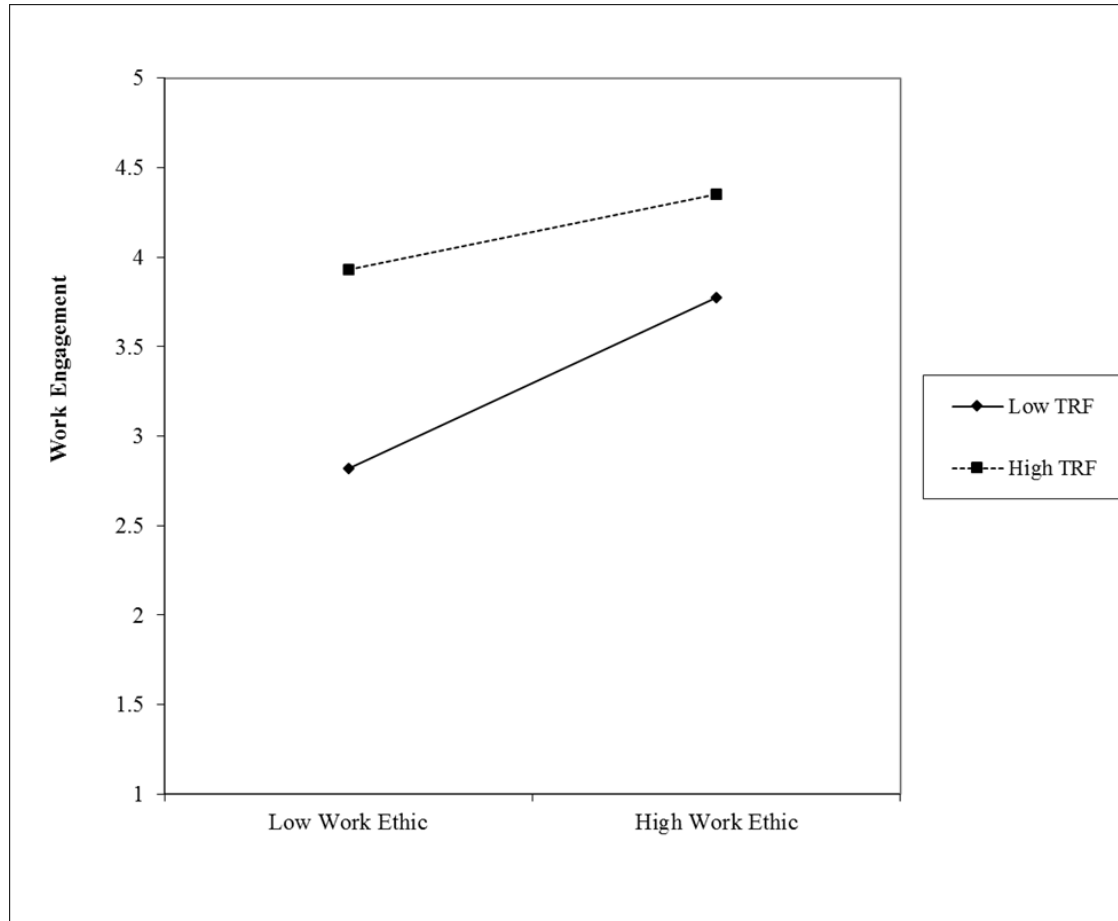


Study 2 Results

Variable	First stage dependent variable = Work engagement			Second stage dependent variable = Proactive performance		
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Work ethic	2.21	.57	3.88***	.29	.21	1.35
TRF	.12	.04	2.87**			
Work ethic x TRF	-.02	.01	-2.32*			
Work engagement				.17	.07	2.31*
<i>F</i>		27.99***			5.54**	
<i>R</i> ²		.31			.24	



Study 2 Results



Study 2 Discussion

- Overall, the present study sheds light on the mechanisms by which work ethic influences proactive performance
- Beyond just examining individual differences and behaviors, the study also confirms the important role transformation leadership can play in inspiring subordinate performance



Study 2 Discussion

- Findings suggest that the effects of work ethic work through employees' work engagement to influence proactive behavior at work, but....
- Supervisors' transformational leadership behavior may be most effective at fostering work engagement for employees who are lacking in work ethic



Overall Conclusions

- Followers matter!
- Leadership effectiveness cannot be understood without considering the characteristics of the followers
- Regulatory focus and work ethic represent two individual differences relevant for leader effectiveness



Final Recommendations

- Avoid sweeping statements regarding leadership styles/behaviors
- Learn what motivates your employees
- Consider the leadership context
- Collect data on follower characteristics
- Think about leader effectiveness from a multivariate perspective



QUESTIONS?

For more information:
please contact

GORMANC@etsu.edu

-or-

GAMBLEJS@etsu.edu

