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# Leadership: A Resource In The Workplace

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**LEADERSHIP: A RESOURCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

by

**WYATT E. STAHL**

**THESIS**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

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MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY (Industrial-

Organizational)

Approved By:

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Advisor

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my family. Thank you all for your unending support through these most challenging years in my life. I would not be where I am without you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to first acknowledge my parents for supporting me however possible, even through the challenges that life brings. I would also like to acknowledge my loving wife and partner, Kaycee Stahl. Her support has been unmatched through the responsibilities that come with graduate school, providing for our family, and the birth of beautiful daughter, Veda. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sebastiano Fisicaro, Dr. Boris Baltes, and Dr. Marcus Dickson for their support in my progress through graduate school.

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## CHAPTER 1 “INTRODUCTION”

Effective leadership is considered a critical component in workplace outcomes. With organizations investing considerable resources to the development of their leaders, the criticality of effective leadership to organizational success is no foreign concept. Further, research has illuminated the notion that organizational leadership is a complex construct. Several theoretical models for effective leadership have emerged, and have received varying levels of empirical support (Day & Antonakis, 2012). As leadership theory and research has evolved over the past century, a consolidated model of disparate leadership theories has emerged. The full-range leadership theory (FRLT), as described by Day and Antonakis, incorporates multiple leadership models in order to produce a more comprehensive depiction of effective leadership. Full range leadership theory incorporates assessments of charismatic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership to evaluate different elements of effective leadership.

FRLT has been thoroughly explored within the Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychology literature. As a relatively comprehensive model of leadership, FRLT has served as the theoretical framework for much of the leadership research in the recent past. The most commonly used assessment of FRLT, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), is utilized in both the academic and applied practitioner domains. Although FRLT has been thoroughly researched in organizational psychology, it has not been extensively evaluated for differential effects among those of different social classes. The current study aimed to evaluate differential relations between full range leadership components and workplace outcomes for individuals of varying levels of social class status.

## **Social Class**

Social class, as a psychosocial construct, has received considerable interest in psychological research (e.g., in social psychology and developmental psychology). However, social class has not seen comparable interest within the organizational psychology literature. Thus, research on social class contingent effects could inform both theoretical models, and policies, practices, and procedures related to the workplace. Although social class has some inherently workplace relevant elements, as a construct, it has been defined in different ways.

Though social class might be a familiar term to most individuals, attempts to define social class as a psychological construct has resulted in some disparities. Cote (2011) provides a detailed review of social class literature and its incorporation into work-related psychological models. The review details discrepancies between objective and subjective components of social class, and illustrates disparities in operationalization within empirical research. Objective definitions of social class are often used interchangeably with those of socioeconomic status (SES). Typical objective indicators of social class include income, education, and occupational prestige (Adler & Snibbe, 2003). Based on these objective indicators, individuals are considered to be a part of a higher social class based on the extent to which they have high income, higher level educational attainment, and hold a prestigious position. Subjective definitions, however, incorporate perceptions of one's relative rank in society compared to others (e.g., Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009). These subjective perceptions of social class rank are made in reference to appraisals of the extent to which others have more or less money, education, and occupational prestige than one's self.

Cote integrates objective and subjective components of social class status to comprehensively define the construct as *“a dimension of the self that is rooted in objective material resources (income, education, and occupational prestige) and corresponding subjective*

*perceptions of rank vis-à-vis others*” (Cote, 2011, p. 47). Further, Cote adds that social class reflects mental representations of one’s social roles, relationships, behavioral tendencies, and goals that stem from one’s resources. As discussed above, by definition, those of lower social class have lower personal resources than their higher social class counterparts. These lower rates of resource availability, and higher rates of stressors, lead to many adverse outcomes for those of lower social class. For instance, research has suggested that individuals of lower SES endure higher levels of negative health outcomes like stress and anxiety (Saldaña, 1994). Though lower-class individuals may have fewer overall resources, the types of resources that lower-class individuals use are also different from those used by higher-class individuals. Further, it may be that leadership behaviors differentially affect higher and lower social status workers based on differences in social relationships (e.g., social engagement) and personal resources.

### **Social Engagement**

Research on relational factors pertaining to social class have illuminated differences in how higher and lower social class individuals interact with others, particularly with regard to social engagement. Inherent to social class is the notion that individuals from varying levels of social class are immersed in qualitatively different environments/circumstances. For instance, low social class environments are typically described as being more unstable, challenging, and dangerous than their higher-class counterparts (Cote, 2011). Importantly, individuals with lower income are likely to experience a lower sense of control over outcomes in stressful environments (Lachman & Weaver, 1998). The same study showed that those with higher income develop a greater sense of control in favorable environments than individuals with lower income. Further, workers of lower SES (income, education, and occupational prestige) have lower personal control than those of higher SES which consequently leads to poorer health (Christie & Barling, 2009).

With lower levels of personal control, lower-class individuals may seek out alternative resources. Specifically, research has shown that less educated individuals rely more heavily on social relations than do more educated individuals, and that those with lower levels of personal control have higher levels of social engagement (Kraus, Cote, & Keltner, 2010). Thus, those from a lower social class may utilize stronger social bonds to reduce the effect of stressful circumstances, limited resources, or having low personal control over outcomes. Although higher social class individuals tend to have many social connections, they have fewer close bonds than those of lower social classes (Burt, 1992). Additionally, these loose social ties are associated with quicker promotions.

With empirical support for differences in social engagement by social class, it may be beneficial for organizations to consider these differences in interpersonal relations for outcomes of the organization. However, the implementation of social engagement theory to organizational policies and practices should be addressed to avoid potential drawbacks. With higher levels of social engagement, lower-class individuals may conform to the opinions of others out of fear of ostracism (Wilensky & Ladinsky, 1967). Conforming to inefficient/unacceptable behavior can prove problematic of organizational outcomes. Specifically, leader behavior can serve as an example or resource for driving the behavior of followers. In a cross-cultural study by Kohn, Naoi, Scoenbach, Schooler, and Slomczynski (1990), the researchers showed that low social class individuals conformed to external authority as a guide for their own behavior more than those of high social class. Thus, leader behavior is not only likely utilized as a resource for driving follower behavior, but it may be even more impactful for those of lower social class.

## **Conservation of Resources Theory**

Research on occupational health psychology (OHP) has received increased interest in recent decades. Occupational health psychology refers to health related components of the worker-workplace dynamic. Specific interest within this body of research has been around antecedents, outcomes, and processes associated with stress and stress related variables. Although numerous theoretical frameworks for ubiquitous stress phenomena have emerged in OHP, conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) has received considerable attention. Further, conservation of resources theory (COR) has provided a theoretical foundation for stress coping processes, and the outcomes associated with those process.

Hobfoll (1989) describes COR as a testable model of stress that comprehensively explains stress related behavior, and is more parsimonious than previous theoretical frameworks. According to COR, individuals attempt to retain, protect, and build resources. Additionally, threats to resources pertain to potential or actual loss (e.g., use) of those resources. Hobfoll argues that, in accordance with Bandura's social learning theory, COR is based on the premise that individuals seek to maintain personal characteristics and social circumstances in an attempt to increase positive reinforcement opportunities. Further, psychological stress is considered a reaction to a threat of a net loss of resources, actual net loss of resources, or a lack of resources gained following resource investment. In all, Hobfoll illustrates the critical role that resources play in reducing or preventing stress. According to Hobfoll, resources include the objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a *means for attainment* of these objects. Thus, the quality of relations between leaders and followers inherently contains the characteristics of resources for followers. It is likely that the relationship between leaders and followers could be considered a means for the attainment of outcomes.

## **Job Demands-Control and Job Demands-Resources**

Along with COR, the job demands-control (JDC; Karasek, 1979) and job demands-resources (JDR; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) models have been prominent theoretical frameworks for studying health related constructs within the workplace. JDC theory purports that there are characteristics of jobs that are considered stressors in the workplace. Particularly, Karasek argues that the demands of a job serve as (potential) stressors within the workplace. The JDC model encompasses theory on job strain. Herein, job strain is a result of the extent to which one has decision latitude (i.e., control) to deal with job demands (i.e., stressors). Strain is the result of having a high level of job demands coupled with low levels of control. Strain is considered a result of persistent stress and inability to cope with or control that stress.

The JDR model can be considered an extension of the JDC model. The JDR model encompasses the job demands and strain components of JDC; however, decision latitude is expanded to be more inclusive. According to JDR, stress and strain result as a product of high job demands and low job resources. Demerouti et al. (2001) describes job resources as physical, psychological, social, or organizational job components. These resources are used for goal attainment, to reduce the costs of job demands, and to stimulate growth. The JDR model is considered an extension of JDC in that job resources include, but are not limited to, decision latitude (i.e., control).

## **Leadership Theory**

Full range leadership theory (Bass, 1985) could be considered a dominant theory of effective leadership behavior. The multidimensional model of leadership effectiveness has received diverse empirical support across the leadership literature. FRLT encompasses elements

of charismatic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Each of these components reflects a different method with which leaders can be effective or ineffective with respect to leadership behaviors. Further, each component reflects a qualitatively different type of interaction for leaders and followers.

Bass' (1985) transformation-transactional model of leadership (reflected in FRLT) acknowledges that transformational and transactional styles of leadership are not inherently independent from one another. Rather, Bass argued, that they describe different components of leader-follower relations. According to FRLT, transformational leadership contains five subcomponents: 1) Idealized influence attributions 2) Idealized influence behaviors 3) Inspirational motivation 4) Intellectual stimulation 5) Individualized consideration. Transactional leadership is represented by three factors: 1) Contingent reward 2) Management by exception active 3) Management by exception passive. Finally, the model includes a single laissez-faire factor.

According to Bass' model, transformational leaders are leaders that respond well to unstable environments and inspire followers to think creatively. In line with the factor's five components, transformational leaders are perceived as confident and powerful through socialized charisma, and they display charismatic behaviors that reflect values, beliefs, and a sense of mission. Further, the prototypical transformational leader stresses ambitious goals, expresses an idealized vision, and conveys that the mission is attainable for followers and the leader collectively. Lastly, transformational leaders challenge followers to problem solve creatively and advise, supports, and cater to the individual needs of followers. Considering the subcomponents collectively, transformational leaders influence followers to move beyond self-interest to enact collective goals of the organization (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003).

Transactional leaders engage in exchange based process with followers with the goal of setting expectations and managing followers to work toward completion of goals (Antonakis et al., 2003). Transactional leaders achieve this goal by engaging in behaviors that clarify task requirements and by providing reward systems for completion of these tasks (e.g., compensation). Further, transactional leaders may actively engage in behaviors that are aimed at meeting standards, and also respond to circumstances wherein these standards are not being met. Additionally, leaders may fail to be transactional or engage in laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leaders fail to make decisions and do not use the authority necessitated by their role.

Collectively, the factors within FRLT provide a well-rounded framework for effective leadership behaviors. Research has shown that the three leadership styles of FRLT are associated with workplace outcomes. A meta-analysis by Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) suggested that, while there are contingencies regarding relationship strength, transformational and transactional leadership styles are consistently associated with higher ratings of effectiveness. Further, Judge and Piccolo (2004) showed FRLT is related to elements of performance, leader effectiveness, and satisfaction. Bycio, Hackett, and Allen (1995) additionally showed that transformational leadership is associated with higher organizational commitment and lower intent to leave. While the relation between FRLT and workplace outcomes has been tested and replicated, it has not been thoroughly explored as a resource for dealing with workplace stressors. Inherent to the transformational component of FRLT is the notion that effective leaders are socially engaged with the followers. This engagement is evident in the ways in which they influence followers and drive them toward a collective vision. It may be that effective leaders (highly transformational and transactional leaders) may serve as a resource for workers through elements of social engagement.



## CHAPTER 2 “CURRENT STUDY”

The current study was designed to extend research on workplace stress coping by examining leadership as a resource for coping with that stress. In line with current trends in work-stress coping research, this study aimed to test the relation between employee social class and stress related outcomes in the workplace. Further, this study aimed to investigate the role that leadership style plays in providing resources to cope with workplace stressors. In order to assess these relations, a sample of employed individuals were asked to complete a survey detailing characteristics of their direct-report leader and to complete ratings of psychosocial variables as well.

### **Hypotheses**

Though little research has been conducted with regard to social class and workplace outcomes, some evidence for the relations between social class and other outcome domains has been found. For example, research has provided some evidence that social class is associated with various psychosocial outcomes. Specifically, experiences of well-being, stress, and anxiety appear to be related to social class (Saladaña, 1994; Pinguart & Sorensen, 2000). Those of lower social status (or SES) endure higher rates of stress and anxiety and lower well-being than their higher-class counterparts. Based on these previous findings relating social class to psychosocial outcomes, the following were hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 1: a) Social class status is negatively related to experienced anxiety, b) negatively related to stress, and c) positively related to subjective well-being.*

Given the previously stated findings on associations between FRLT and work outcomes, the current study aimed to explore the generalizability of previous research. Based on previous findings, the following were hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 2: a) Transformational leadership is positively related to organizational commitment, b) positively related to job satisfaction, and c) negatively related to intent to leave.*

*Hypothesis 3: a) Transactional leadership is positively related to organizational commitment, b) positively related to job satisfaction, and c) negatively related to intent to leave.*

*Hypothesis 4: a) Laissez-faire leadership is negatively related to organizational commitment, b) negatively related to job satisfaction, and positively related to intent to leave.*

In addition to psychosocial health variables, it is likely that social class is related to workplace attitudes and intentions. According to Spector (1998), exposure to stress can subsequently result in experienced strain. Strain is described as negative outcomes that result from experienced stress. Common workplace strain outcomes include reduced organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and higher intent to leave the organization. Thus, those with fewer resources to cope with stressors experience greater levels of stress and, subsequently, strain. In a study by Gallo, Bogart, Vranceanu, and Matthews (2005), the researchers showed that individuals of lower SES have more social strain than those of higher SES. Given that, by definition, resource availability varies by social class status, those of different social status will likely experience differential rates of strain. Based on resource availability, stress coping, and strain theoretical framework the following were hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 5: a) Social class status is positively related to organizational commitment, b) positively related to job satisfaction, and c) negatively related to intent to leave.*

Social class status inherently carries characteristics of resource availability (i.e., lower social class status is associated with fewer resources). In addition to differences in monetary resource availability, lower social class individuals perceive themselves as having fewer resources beyond that. For instance, Gallo et al., (2005) showed that individuals of lower SES display lower

perceived control than those of higher SES. In addition to differences in resource availability, those of varying social class utilize different resources to cope with stressors. Cote (2011) illustrates how lower social class individuals rely more heavily on social engagement than those of higher social class. Lower class individuals gain resources by developing and maintaining strong interpersonal bonds with others. Whereas, higher social class individuals utilize weaker social bonds and rely less heavily on social engagement as a resource (higher social class individuals have more monetary resources at baseline). Further, research has suggested that those of lower social class tend to conform more to behaviors of authority figures (Kohn et al., 1990). It is likely that the impact of leadership style is greater for those of lower social class than those of higher social class. Based on previous findings and theoretical framework relating to social engagement and stress coping theory, the following were hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 6: Social class status moderates the relation between transformational leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave.*

*-The relation between transformational leadership and these outcomes is stronger for low social class individuals than high social class individuals.*

*Hypothesis 7: Social class status moderates the relation between transactional leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave.*

*-The relation between transactional leadership and outcomes is stronger for low social class individuals than high social class individuals.*

*Hypothesis 8: Social class status moderates the relation between laissez-faire leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave.*

*-The relation between laissez-faire leadership and outcomes is stronger for low social class individuals than high social class individuals.*

## CHAPTER 3 “METHOD”

### Participants

A power analysis was conducted with Gpower using linear multiple regression: Fixed model  $R^2$  increase (i.e., change in variance accounted for) parameters. To achieve a power level of .95 with an alpha level of .05, and based on a  $R^2$  increase of .05, the analysis yielded a minimum sample size of 348. Research and simulations surrounding moderated multiple regression analyses has shed light on potential issues that can deflate power in moderated multiple regression (e.g., Aguinis, 1995). Aguinis has suggested that increasing sample size can help to remedy limitations associated with moderated multiple regression. Thus, the target sample size was 450 participants.

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Inclusion criteria for participants consisted of residing in the United States, currently employed (at least 20 hours a week), 35 years or older, and must have been working in their current position and under one direct report for the previous three months. Additionally, there has been some debate surrounding the quality of the responses provided by participants through the Mturk website (e.g., Peer, Vosgerau, and Alessandro, 2014). In an attempt to mitigate potential inappropriate responding from participants, a minimum approval rating was utilized for participant recruitment. Through the Mturk platform, participants submit their completed responses to the respective researcher for approval. A latency period is provided after this initial submission for researchers to review the submitted data and either approve or reject the submission from a given participant. This process allows researchers to review data for blatant inappropriate responding patterns (e.g., providing the same response for all items, completing a lengthy survey in an inappropriately short amount of time, etc.). If the data do not show signs of inappropriate responding, the researcher approves the submission. Mturk submission approval rates are tracked as part of a participant’s profile. This

approval rating can be used as an exclusion criterion for involvement. In line with this practice, the current survey was only made available to those participants with a 95% approval rating or higher. Participants were asked to complete an online survey administered through Qualtrics. Upon completion of the survey, participants earned a monetary incentive of \$1.00 for participation in the study.

### Sample

Through the Mturk website, 450 participants were recruited. However, upon review of the data, 41 of these participants submitted their responses with the majority of the items unanswered. These individuals were excluded from the sample. Thus, the initial sample consisted of 409 participants. Following data screening, the final sample consisted of 359 participants. The demographic compositions of the initial and final samples were nearly identical (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

<i>Descriptive Statistics for the Initial and Final Samples</i>		
	Initial Sample ( <i>N</i> = 409)	Final Sample ( <i>N</i> = 359)
Gender	% (n)	% (n)
Men	49.88 (204)	49.86 (179)
Women	49.88 (204)	49.86 (179)
Preferred not to answer	0.25 (1)	0.28 (1)
Race		
White	76.04 (311)	76.88 (276)
Black	9.05 (37)	10.03 (36)
Asian	7.33 (30)	6.96 (25)
Latino	5.38 (22)	4.46 (16)
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.73 (3)	0.28 (1)
Other	1.47 (6)	1.39 (5)
Age	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
	44.25 (8.78)	44.84 (8.91)

## **Procedure**

The survey for the current study was administered through the Wayne State University Qualtrics account. Well-established measures were utilized from previous literature. As such, there were disparate instructions and rating scales across the various types of measures included in the survey. Consequently, items were uploaded to the Qualtrics survey in sections based on the type of measure. Thus, as participants received each new group of items, they were provided with the rating scale and response instructions for that group of items.

Prior to recruiting participants for the study sample, three Wayne State University Graduate Students were recruited from the Psychology Department to pilot the survey. The purpose of this pilot was to establish a baseline for the estimated time needed to complete the survey and to identify any technical issues associated with the Qualtrics survey platform in administration. Upon completion of the pilot, no technical issues were identified with the survey platform. Further, time to completion of the pilot survey yielded an expected time-to-completion of 15 minutes. To provide sufficient time to respond, once participants began the survey, they had two hours to submit their responses.

The survey was then uploaded to the Mturk participant recruitment website. The Mturk website utilizes an online platform for researchers to administer surveys to a national sample. Participants earn a small monetary reward for participation in each survey and can participate in a study from any location that has internet access. Potential participants have the opportunity to self-select into any survey that is made available to them. The current survey was posted on the Mturk website with a brief description (see Appendix A) of the criteria for participating, the monetary incentive of \$1.00 for participating in the study, and the purpose of the study. Once participants selected the survey on the Mturk website, they were then presented with a more detailed

description of the purpose of the study (see Appendix B), criteria for participating, time requirements for participating, a statement of confidentiality, and the potential risks and benefits of participating in the study. Following a procedure approved by the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board, respondents were instructed that, by proceeding to the survey, they were providing their informed consent to participate in the study. Participants were also instructed to enter a unique identifier into the Mturk website that was provided at the end of the Qualtrics survey. Upon submitting the unique identifier into Mturk, responses by each participant were considered complete.

Upon reaching the survey, participants responded to questions relating to demographic characteristics, components of stress, judgements of leaders, and workplace outcomes. Participants were instructed that they were free not to answer any question. Additionally, once the survey was complete, respondents were thanked for their participation and were notified that they would be able to receive information on the outcome of the study once it was completed. All participants completed the scales in the same order.

## **Measures**

*Leadership Style.* Leadership style was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ is one of the most commonly utilized assessments of leadership in the I/O literature. The MLQ has gone through numerous revisions since it was originally developed by Bass (1985). The MLQ scale used in this study is a 9-factor assessment (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1995; see Appendix C). Additionally, the scale includes items that assess a single leader effectiveness factor which was excluded from analyses. The scale consists of 45 total items, of which 42 items comprise the eight FRLT factors. The current study utilized the 42 MLQ items to assess the three leadership styles of the FRLT. The MLQ aims to assess transformational

(comprised of four factors), transactional (comprised of three factors), and laissez-faire (single factor) leadership styles in a single measure. Transformational leadership was a composite variable consisting of the four subcomponents: individualized consideration (9 items;  $\alpha = .94$ ), idealized influence (6 items;  $\alpha = .90$ ), inspirational motivation (8 items;  $\alpha = .92$ ), and intellectual stimulation (4 items;  $\alpha = .84$ ). Transactional leadership was a composite variable consisting of the three subcomponents: management-by-exception passive (3 items;  $\alpha = .72$ ), management-by-exception active (3 items;  $\alpha = .52$ ), and contingent reward (4 items;  $\alpha = .51$ ). Laissez-faire was a single factor variable comprised of 5 items ( $\alpha = .90$ )

*Social Class Status.* Given that social class status is a multifactorial construct, the current study attempted to test a composite social class variable that incorporates multiple components of the construct. In accordance with previously discussed operationalizations of social class, the current study utilized both objective and subjective components of the construct. Annual income (U.S. dollars; see Appendix D), educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective social class rank were utilized as indicators of social class. Prior to combining the components of social class into a single composite variable, there needed to be sufficient theoretical and empirical justification to do so. While theoretical support for a composite variable can be found from previous research (e.g., Cote, 2011), the current study also empirically tested the justification of a composite variable by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling.

Education level was measured on a 5-point scale (modified from Christie & Barling, 2009) ranging from 1 = *some high school* to 5 = *graduate degree* (see Appendix E).

Occupational prestige was measured based on occupational title (see Appendix F). In order to obtain occupational prestige scores for the participants in the sample, each job title was assigned



a prestige rating. It was intended that prestige rating would be assigned based on ratings obtained from The General Social Survey (2012). The General Social Survey contains empirically derived prestige ratings for over 800 job titles. However, due to low rates of overlap between titles in the current sample and those in the General Social Survey, the procedure for obtaining occupational prestige ratings was adapted. Two doctoral students in I/O psychology were recruited to assign prestige ratings to each of the job titles in the sample. All other data were removed from the dataset that the ratings were performed on so that the ratings were made while blind to other characteristics of each participant. The raters were instructed to assign prestige ratings based on modified instructions from the General Social Survey. The raters were asked to rate each job title based on how high or low it is in social standing. Consistent with the General Social Survey, ratings were made on a 9-point scale with 1 indicating the lowest social standing, and 9 being the highest social standing. Note that ratings were made with respect other potential jobs in general (i.e., not merely the others in the sample). Thus, ratings from the full, 9-point scale were not required to be assigned (e.g., President of the United States might earn a rating of “9” but was not represented in the sample). After initial ratings were assigned for the 359 participants that included a job title, ratings with large discrepancies were discussed and there was an opportunity for the raters to alter their initial ratings to obtain a final rating. Of the 359 respondents, eight sets of ratings had a discrepancy of 2 points or more (on the 9-point scale) and were reviewed using the previously stated procedure. Interrater reliability was evaluated using the intraclass correlation on the final prestige ratings and reached a sufficient level (interrater reliability of .91). Prestige ratings from the two raters were then averaged to obtain a final occupational prestige score for each participant.

Social class rank was assessed using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status by Adler and Stewart (2007; see Appendix G). This assessment asks participants to place an “x” on

one of nine ladder rungs that represents where the participant feels he or she stands on the “social class ladder.” The social class ladder metaphorically represents social class rank with respect to the social class of others. Selected ladder rungs were converted to quantitative social class standing on a scale from 1-9 (1 indicating lowest social class standing and 9 indicating highest social class standing).

*Anxiety.* Anxiety was assessed using a 5-item subgroup of the Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988; see Appendix H). The scale asks participants to read a statement (i.e., item) and indicate how often one felt in accordance with the statement in the past week (e.g., “I was nervous”). Responses fell on a 4-point frequency scale, and were averaged to produce a final anxiety score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

*Stress.* Stress was assessed using the 9-item job stress scale from Karasek (1979; see Appendix I). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement (e.g., “I often feel bothered or upset in my work”). Items were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and were average to produce a final stress score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

*Well-Being.* Psychological well-being was assessed using a 7-item scale by Ryff (1995; see Appendix J). Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with scale items based a 6-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (e.g., “I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality”). Item scores were averaged to comprise an overall well-being score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

*Affective Commitment.* Affective commitment was assessed using an 8-item subscale from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Allen and Meyer (1990; see Appendix K). Four of these items were negatively worded and therefore were reverse scored prior to analysis.

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement (e.g., “I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own”). Responses were given to items on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and were averaged to produce a final affective commitment score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

*Job Satisfaction.* Employee job satisfaction was assessed with 5 items from the Job Satisfaction Index by Brayfield and Rothe (1951; see Appendix L). Two of the five items were negatively worded and therefore were reverse scored prior to analysis. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement regarding their current position (e.g., “I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job”). Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and were averaged to produce a final job satisfaction score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Intent to leave.* Intent to leave the organization was assessed using a 3-item scale adapted from Walsh, Ashford, and Hill (1985; see Appendix M). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with each item (e.g., “I am actively looking for a job at another organization”). Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and were averaged to produce a final intent to leave score. The scale yielded sufficient reliability in the sample ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Inappropriate Responding.* To help identify inappropriate responding patterns, five items were included throughout the survey that instructed participants to respond with a particular option. The five items were embedded into four different scales through the survey at random (two items in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, one item in the Job Stress Scale, one item in the Psychological Well-Being Scale, and one item in the Affective Commitment Scale). For each

inappropriate responding item, participants were instructed to select a specific response on the respective scale. Any response other than that which participants were instructed to select for each respective scale was considered an incorrect answer. The incorrect responses for each participant on these items were summed to create a total inappropriate responding score. These items were used solely for data screening purposes.

*Demographics.* At the end of the survey, participants were asked to identify their gender, age, and race (see Appendix N).

## CHAPTER 4 “RESULTS”

### **Data Screening**

The initial sample consisted of 409 participants. Prior to conducting data analyses to address the hypotheses, the data were reviewed and screened for problematic response patterns and outliers.

The first step in the screening the data consisted of evaluating the amount of time taken to complete the survey. In reviewing both the amount of time taken to complete the survey and the patterns of responses provided, a 4-minute cutoff was established. Responses provided in less than 4 minutes tended to show inappropriate responding patterns (e.g., selecting the same option for each item within a scale). Given that the survey consisted of 91 items, it is unlikely that the participants with these short responses times devoted sufficient attention and consideration to the items. Through the use of this screening procedure, 40 participants were excluded from further analysis.

The second step consisted of reviewing the inappropriate responding items. A cutoff of three or more incorrect selections out of the five inappropriate responding items was adopted. Participants that incorrectly responded to three or more of the items tended to show potentially inappropriate responding through the rest of the survey (e.g., conflicting response patterns between traditionally scaled and reverse scaled items, highly redundant responses, etc.). Through the use of this screening procedure, three additional participants were excluded from further analysis.

### **Outliers**

Following the initial data screening process, the variables were reviewed for potential outliers. First, univariate outlier analyses were conducted to detect potential extreme cases on individual variables. Boxplots were created for all quantitative variables. Following a procedure

outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), extreme cases (i.e., participants) identified in the boxplots were considered outliers if the score on the respective variable was 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Using this procedure, seven variables were identified that had at least one potential outlier. The transactional leadership variable had two extreme cases. For both of these cases, nearly all of the item responses were at the highest point of the scale. However, scores were not beyond 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Thus, these cases were not considered outliers. The job stress variable had two extreme cases. For both of these cases, all of the item responses were at the high end of the scale. However, scores were not beyond 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Thus, these cases were not considered outliers. The anxiety variable had seven extreme cases. For all of these cases, all of the item responses were at or near the highest point of the scale. Four of these cases had scores more than 3.29 standard deviations from the mean and were excluded from further analysis. The subjective social class rank item had one high extreme case. However, the score was not beyond 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Thus, this case was not considered an outlier. The income variable had 17 extreme cases. One of the cases had an income of more than 3.29 standard deviations above the mean and was excluded from further analyses. The education variable had one extreme case. However, the score was not beyond 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Thus, this case was not considered an outlier. Similarly, the occupational prestige variable had one low and four high extreme cases. However, the scores were not beyond 3.29 standard deviations above or below the mean. Thus, these cases were not considered outliers. In total, 5 participants were considered univariate outliers, and were removed from further analyses.

The last step in data screening consisted of an examination of multivariate outliers. Mahalanobis distances were calculated for each participant in accordance with guidelines provided

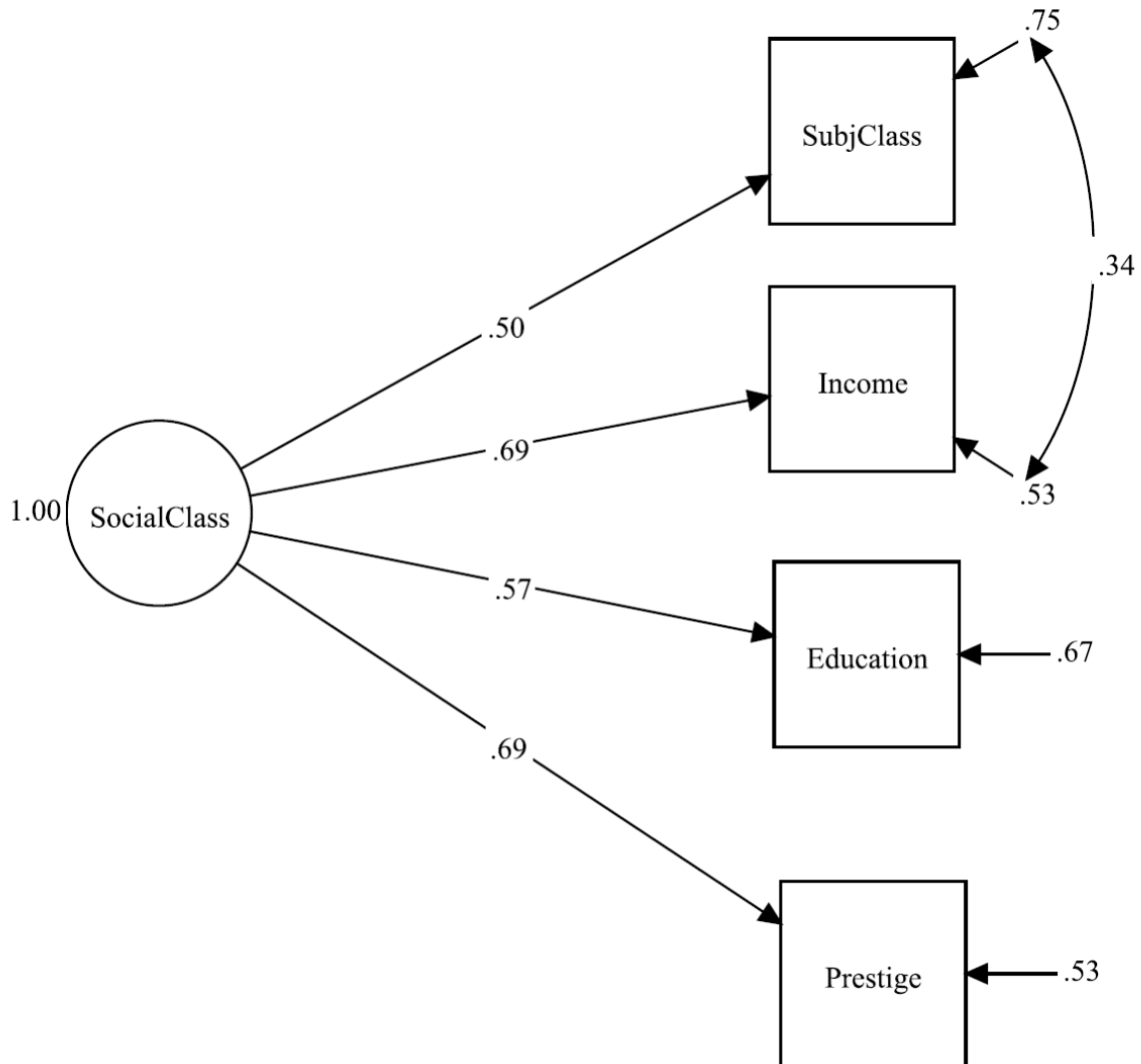
by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Following these recommended guidelines, extreme multivariate outliers were identified via a  $\chi^2$  test. The critical value for the  $\chi^2$  test was 34.53 and was derived from having 13 degrees of freedom (i.e., number of variables) and with an alpha level of .001. Any case with a Mahalanobis distance that exceeded the  $\chi^2$  critical of 34.53 was considered a multivariate outlier. Using this procedure, two cases were identified as multivariate outliers, and were subsequently removed from further analyses. Following the removal of these two multivariate outliers, the final sample for analyses consisted of 359 participants.

### **Social Class Composite**

In order to justify the combination of the four social class components (i.e., income, education, occupational prestige, and subjective social class rank) into a single, composite variable, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. A structural equation model (using Mplus) was utilized to test the loadings of these four components onto the latent social class variable. The initial model consisted of loading estimates for the four social class components onto the latent social class factor. Results suggested that model fit could be improved when accounting for the correlation between income and ratings of subjective social class status.

After accounting for the relationship between income and subjective social class rank, the modification indices did not suggest that the model could be improved. The standardized path coefficients are provided in Figure 1. The analysis yielded strong indices of model fit,  $RMSEA = 0.057$ ,  $CFI = 0.996$ . The chi-square test of model fit was nonsignificant,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.17$ ,  $p = .140$ .

**Figure 1**  
*Social Class Latent Factor Measurement Model*



All path coefficients were statistically significant at the  $p = .05$  level (see Table 2). Collectively, these results provided support for combining the four social class components into a composite social class variable. Following the confirmatory factor analysis, factor scores were computed for each participant for the composite social class variable.



**Table 2**

*Standardized Coefficients of Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

Loading on Latent Social Class Variable	Beta	S.E.
Subjective Social Class Status	.50*	.06
Income	.69*	.05
Education	.57*	.05
Prestige	.69*	.05
Correlation Among Observed Variables		
Income and Subjective Social Class Status	.34*	.07

*Note.* Values that are noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Following the data screening procedure, and after computing a composite social class score for each participant, means and standard deviations for all target variables were obtained. Additionally, correlations were computed to determine the strength of the relationships between the variables of interest. Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between the variables in this study.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Social Class Composite	1										0.00	0.70
2. Transformational	.18*	1									3.49	0.99
3. Transactional	.01	.04	1								3.05	0.60
4. Laissez-faire	-.02	-.61*	.42*	1							2.23	1.13
5. Anxiety	-.08	-.15*	.21*	.25*	1						1.48	0.52
6. Job Stress	-.16*	-.31*	.27*	.38*	.39*	1					2.35	0.59
7. Well-Being	.06	.32*	-.15*	-.37*	-.39*	-.26*	1				4.63	0.95
8. Affective Commitment	.16*	.64*	-.15*	-.43*	-.28*	-.40*	.40*	1			4.33	1.59
9. Job Satisfaction	.19*	.55*	-.18*	-.44*	-.35*	-.50*	.45*	.79*	1		3.49	1.03
10. Intent to Leave	-.17*	-.52*	.23*	.46*	.31*	.48*	-.33*	-.76*	-.79*	1	2.53	1.26

*Note.*  $N = 359$ . Values noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

## Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 stated there is a negative relationship between social class status and a) experienced anxiety, b) job stress, and a positive relationship between social class status and c) subjective well-being. Hypothesis 1a and 1c were not supported,  $r(357) = -.08, p = .134$  and  $r(357) = .06, p = .258$ , respectively.. Hypothesis 1b was supported, such that those of higher social class reported lower levels of experienced job stress,  $r(357) = -.16, p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 2 stated there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and a negative relationship between transformational leadership and c) intent to leave. Hypothesis 2a was supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more transformational were more committed to their organization,  $r(357) = .64, p < .05$ . Hypothesis 2b was supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more transformational were more satisfied with their jobs,  $r(357) = .55, p < .05$ . Hypothesis 2c was also supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more transformational had lower intentions of leaving the organization,  $r(357) = -.52, p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 3 stated there is a positive relationship between transactional leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and a negative relationship between transformational leadership and c) intent to leave. While these hypotheses were not supported, results did show that transactional leadership was significantly related to these three outcomes. However, the relations between these variables were in the opposite direction of those that were hypothesized. Transactional leadership was negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction,  $r(357) = -.15, p < .05$  and  $r(357) = -.18, p < .05$ , respectively. Those that reported their leaders as more transactional were less committed to their organizations and had lower job satisfaction. Additionally, transactional leadership was positively related to intent to leave, such

that those who reported their leaders as more transactional had higher intentions of leaving the organization,  $r(357) = .23, p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 4 stated there is a negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and a positive relationship between transformational leadership and c) intent to leave. Hypothesis 4a was supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more laissez-faire were less committed to their organizations,  $r(357) = -.43, p < .05$ . Hypothesis 4b was supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more laissez-faire were less satisfied with their jobs,  $r(357) = -.44, p < .05$ . Lastly, hypothesis 4c was supported, such that those who rated their leaders as more laissez-faire had greater intentions of leaving their organization,  $r(357) = .46, p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 5 stated there is a positive relationship between social class status and a) organizational commitment, b) job satisfaction, and a negative relationship between social class status and c) intent to leave. Hypothesis 5a was supported, such that those of higher social class status were more committed to their organizations,  $r(357) = .16, p < .05$ . Hypothesis 5b was supported, such that those of higher social class were more satisfied with their jobs,  $r(357) = .19, p < .05$ . Hypothesis 5c was supported, such that those of higher social class had lower intentions of leaving their jobs,  $r(357) = .17, p < .05$ .

To test hypotheses 6-8, a series of hierarchical regressions were conducted. A two-step regression was conducted for each leadership style and each work-related strain outcome. A total of nine hierarchical regressions were conducted. The first step in predicting the outcome variable (i.e., organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or intent to leave) consisted of entering the first order variables of leadership style (i.e., transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) and social class status into the equation. The second step in the regressions consisted of entering the

interaction term for the two respective predictors and evaluating the incremental validity of the interaction term above and beyond the first order variables. Hypothesis 6 stated that social class status moderates the relation between transformational leadership and a) organization commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave. Hypotheses 6a, 6b, and 6c were not supported (see Table 4). Social class status did not significantly moderate the relation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or intent to leave.

**Table 4**

*Interaction Between Social Class and Transformational Leadership*

Predictor	Affective Commitment			Job Satisfaction			Intent to Leave		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$
Step 1	.41*			.31*			.28*		
Transformational Leadership		0.63*	15.36		0.54*	12.00		-0.51*	-11.15
Social Class Status		0.05	1.20		0.10*	2.17		-0.08	-1.73
Step 2	.00			.00			.00		
Transformational Leadership x Social Class Status		0.18	1.17		0.08	0.49		-0.16	-0.90
<i>N</i>	359			359			359		

*Note.* Values that are noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

Hypothesis 7 stated that social class status moderates the relation between transactional leadership and a) organization commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave. Hypotheses 7a, 7b, and 7c were not supported (see Table 5). Social class status did not significantly moderate the relation between transactional leadership and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or intent to.

**Table 5**

*Interaction Between Social Class and Transactional Leadership*

Predictor	Affective Commitment			Job Satisfaction			Intent to Leave		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$
Step 1	.05*			.07*			.08*		
Transactional Leadership		-0.15*	-2.89		-0.18*	-3.50		0.24*	4.64
Social Class Status		0.17*	3.20		0.20*	3.82		-0.17*	-3.42
Step 2	.00			.00			.00		
Transactional Leadership x Social Class Status		0.23	0.93		0.19	0.77		-0.04	-0.17
<i>N</i>	359			359			359		

*Note.* Values that are noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

Hypothesis 8 stated that social class status moderates the relation between laissez-faire leadership and a) organization commitment, b) job satisfaction, and c) intent to leave. Hypotheses 8a, 8b, and 8c were not supported (see Table 6). Social class status did not significantly moderate the relation between laissez-faire leadership and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or intent to leave.

**Table 6**

*Interaction Between Social Class and Laissez-Faire Leadership*

Predictor	Affective Commitment			Job Satisfaction			Intent to Leave		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t(355)$
Step 1	.21*			.22*			.24*		
Laissez-Faire Leadership		-0.43*	-9.04		-0.43*	-9.23		0.46*	9.86
Social Class Status		0.15*	3.26		0.18*	3.91		-0.16*	-3.46
Step 2	.00			.00			.00		
Laissez-Faire Leadership x Social Class Status		0.04	0.41		-0.02	0.82		0.10	0.96
<i>N</i>	359			359			359		

*Note.* Values that are noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

## Supplemental Analysis

Results indicated the relationships between transactional leadership and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and intent to leave to be in the opposite direction of what were hypothesized. To better understand these associations, follow-up analyses were run on the three subcomponents of transactional leadership: management-by-exception (MBE) passive, management-by-exception active, and contingent reward. means and standard deviations for all target variables were obtained. Descriptive statistics and correlations between the three transactional leadership components and the three target outcomes can be found in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Transactional Leadership Components Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. MBE-Passive	1						2.60	1.14
2. MBE-Active	.27*	1					3.04	0.90
3. Contingent Reward	-.29*	.30*	1				3.51	0.81
4. Affective Commitment	-.39*	-.17*	.42*	1			4.33	1.59
5. Job Satisfaction	-.39*	-.18*	.36*	.79*	1		3.50	1.03
6. Intent to Leave	.43*	.22*	-.33*	-.76*	-.79*	1	2.53	1.26

*Note.*  $N = 359$ . Values that are noted with \* are significant at the .05 level.

In conducting supplemental regression analyses for the three transactional leadership components, results showed qualitatively disparate associations with the three outcome variables. Results for MBE passive were in the opposite direction of those stated for transactional leadership in hypothesis 3. Management-by-exception passive was negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction,  $r(357) = -.39, p < .05$  and  $r(357) = -.39, p < .05$ , respectively. Management-by-exception passive was positively related to intent to leave,  $r(357) = .43, p < .05$ . Thus, participants that indicated their leaders were higher in MBE passive were less committed to

their organizations, less satisfied with their jobs, and had higher intentions of leaving their organizations.

Results for MBE active were in the opposite direction of those stated for transactional leadership in hypothesis 3. Management-by-exception active was negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction,  $r(357) = -.17, p < .05$  and  $r(357) = -.18, p < .05$ , respectively. Management-by-exception active was positively related to intent to leave,  $r(357) = .22, p < .05$ . Thus, participants that indicated their leaders were higher in MBE active were less committed to their organizations, less satisfied with their jobs, and had higher intentions of leaving their organizations.

Results for contingent reward were in the same direction as those stated for transactional leadership in hypothesis 3. Contingent reward was positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction,  $r(357) = .42, p < .05$  and  $r(357) = .36, p < .05$ , respectively. Contingent reward was negatively related to intent to leave,  $r(357) = -.33, p < .05$ . Thus, participants that indicated their leaders were higher in contingent reward were more committed to their organizations, more satisfied with their jobs, and had lower intentions of leaving their organizations.

## CHAPTER 5 “DISCUSSION”

As previously discussed, social class has been a relatively unexplored construct within the I/O literature. While research on psychosocial outcomes associated with social class have shown that those of different social classes experience stress and strain at different levels (Cote, 2011), little research has evaluated these associations as they relate to the work context. The current study contributes to the generalization of relationships between leadership styles and workplace outcomes as well as the relationships between social class and stress. Further, this study adds to our understanding of how those of varying levels of social class experience different levels of work-related strain.

### **Implications**

Research on personal resources has provided a well-established theoretical framework for the relations between social class and life outcomes. That is, individuals of lower social class tend to, by definition, have lower levels of personal resources like income and education. According to conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals are likely to experience stress when their resources are threatened. Further, the job demands-control (Karasek, 1979) and job demands-resources (Demerouti et al., 2001) models posit that stress results from threats to one's resources or threats to the attainment of additional resources. Further, higher levels of experienced stress lead to later experienced strain.

The current study replicated and extended findings based in these stress and personal resource theoretical models. Results suggest that individuals of lower social class experience higher levels of stress. Additionally, individuals of lower social class reported higher levels of work-related strain. That is, individuals of lower social class were less committed to their



organizations, had lower levels of satisfaction with their jobs, and had higher intentions of leaving their current organization.

Full range leadership theory (Bass, 1985) has been extensively studied in the I/O psychology literature. Meta-analytic research has shown that the theory's three leadership styles have been tied to organizational outcomes across various studies (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Of these outcomes, some research has shown that the leadership styles of FRLT are associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to leave one's organization (e.g., Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995). Results from the current study provided support for these previous findings. Those with more transformational leaders were more committed to their organizations, were more satisfied with their jobs, and had lower intentions of leaving their organization. Additionally, those with more laissez-faire leaders were less committed to their organizations, were less satisfied with their jobs, and had greater intentions of leaving their organization.

Results showed that transactional leadership was also associated with work-related strain outcomes, however, the direction of these relations were in the opposite directions from those hypothesized. Those with more transactional leaders were less committed to their organizations, were less satisfied with their jobs, and had greater intentions of leaving their organization. To investigate the unanticipated direction of these relations, supplemental analyses were conducted on the three subcomponents of transactional leadership: management-by-exception passive, management-by-exception active, and contingent reward. Results showed that relations between both management-by-exception components and work-related strain outcomes were in the opposite direction of those hypothesized for transactional leadership. That is, individuals who reported their leaders as being more characteristic of using management-by-exception leadership

were less committed to their organizations, less satisfied with their jobs, and had higher intentions of leaving their organization. Conversely, results showed that relations between the contingent reward components and work-related strain outcomes were in the same direction as those hypothesized for transactional leadership. That is, individuals who reported their leaders as being more characteristic of using contingent reward were more committed to their organizations, more satisfied with their jobs, and had lower intentions of leaving their organization.

The disparate results between the components of transactional leadership are likely a product of qualitative differences between the constructs. The management-by-exception components of transactional leadership are marked by reactive (i.e., passive) and proactive (i.e., active) intervention strategies. A leader that is high in these components addresses and resolved issues that arise and monitors process for future potential problems that could arrive, respectively. Inherent to the nature of these components is the notion that the leaders have to address some sort of issue, either before or after the fact. Consistent with typical organizational practice, problematic process and behaviors are likely addressed in ways that negatively affect an employee's attitude (e.g., being assigned blame or taking responsibility for mistakes). Thus, it may be that leaders who engage in more management-by-exception behaviors have more problems, or potential problems, that need to be addressed. It may be that the nature of this dynamic is what leads individuals to have less favorable attitudes and intentions toward their work contexts when they have leaders who have to engage in more management-by-exception behavior.

The contingent reward component of transactional leadership is marked by rewarding employees for engaging in desirable behaviors (e.g., receiving a bonus for exceptional work). As such, the results were consistent with the previously stated personal resource theoretical rationale. That is, providing rewards to employees increases their available resources. With greater

resources, individuals are more able to cope with stress and are less likely to experience subsequent strain.

Research on social engagement has shown that the types of resources that are used to cope with stress varies across different levels of social class. Specifically, individuals that are have less education and less personal control tend to rely more heavily on social engagement (Kraus, Cote, & Keltner, 2010). Further, research has suggested that those of lower social class may rely more heavily on their leaders as a resource (Wilensky & Ladinsky, 1967; Naoi, Scoenbach, Schooler, & Slomczynski, 1990). It was hypothesized that the relationships between the leadership styles and the work-related strain outcomes would be stronger for those of lower social class because they utilize the relationship with their leaders as a resource more so than their higher-class counterparts.

Results from the moderation analyses did not support these hypotheses. There was no evidence to suggest that those of lower social class rely more heavily on their leaders as a resource for coping with stress and reducing strain. While there is research that suggests those of lower social class rely more heavily on social relations as resources, it may be that these effects are dependent on the type of social relation. That is, the relationship between a leader and follower is qualitatively different from those with one's family and friends. The ascribed social dynamic and relational expectations of the work context are likely more constrained than the other social relations one has the freedom to foster and utilize as a resource.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

There were limitations to the current study that are worth noting. First, the data were cross-sectional in nature. This is a notable limitation because of the inherent longitudinal nature of stress models. Experienced stress and subsequent strain is modeled as a process. One experiences stressors that lead to stress. Extended levels of experienced stress, coupled with having to use

personal resource, leads to subsequent strain. Results from the current study suggest that different levels of social class lead to varying levels of experienced stress and that high levels of stress lead to work related strain outcomes. Ideally, data for each stage of the stress and strain process would have been collected sequentially. While the current study provided support for many of the hypothesized relations between predictors (i.e., social class and leadership style) and outcomes (stress and work-related strain), there are limitations surrounding inferences that can be drawn about causation between elements of the stress and strain process.

A second potential limitation to the current study pertains to sample size and power. The power analysis yielded a minimum sample size of 348. The initial sample consisted of 409 participants but was reduced to 359 following data screening procedures. While this sample size meets the minimum necessary from the power analysis, some research has suggested that power is susceptible to deflation in moderated multiple regression analyses (e.g., Aguinis, 1995). While it is suggested that increasing sample size can remedy this issue, the effect sizes that would necessitate doing so would have little practical implication. Thus, the current sample size was deemed sufficient.

An additional limitation to this study was in the administration of the five inappropriate responding items. While the items were dispersed throughout the survey, they were not randomly assigned within each scale. Instead, each participant received the inappropriate responding items in the same order (i.e., at the end of each respective scale). This failure to randomize the inappropriate responding items reduces the confidence in their ability to identify those with inappropriate responding patterns. It is possible that, once identifying the item locations at the beginning of the full survey, participants could have consciously attended to later inappropriate

responding items. Thus, the items may have failed to identify many of those who provided inappropriate responses elsewhere in the survey.

While results of the current study did not suggest that leaders are more heavily utilized as a resource for those of lower social class, it may be that other types of social relations more heavily relied on by those of lower social class to reduce work-related strain. Future research should investigate the extent to which certain co-worker relations are utilized as resources for workers. It may be that those of lower social class rely more so on co-workers that they have strong social bonds with, or that they are highly engaged with, to serve as a resource for coping with stress and reducing work-related strain.

**APPENDIX A****Brief Study Description**

We are seeking workers who are CURRENTLY EMPLOYED for pay (at least 20hrs per week) and age 35 years or older to complete an academic survey that should take about 15-minutes. If eligible, you will view information about the study and provide answers to a survey. Select the link below to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for the survey. If you do not meet the criteria about DO NOT take this survey.

Select the link below to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for taking our survey.

**Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey.** When you are finished, you will return to this page to paste the code into the box.

**APPENDIX B****Detailed Instruction Sheet****Research Information Sheet**

Leadership: A Resource in the Workplace

Principal Investigator (PI):  
Wyatt E. Stahl  
Department of Psychology  
248 631 6539

**Purpose:**

You are being asked to be in a research study of how leadership can serve as a resource for dealing with stress. This study is being conducted by Wayne State University.

**Study Procedures:**

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to take part in an anonymous online survey that takes about 15 minutes. The online survey will ask questions about social class, your immediate supervisor, and other aspects of your work. If there are questions you are uncomfortable answering you may skip these and continue.

**Benefits**

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

**Risks**

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

**Costs**

There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

**Compensation**

Upon approval of your participation in this study, you will earn \$1.00 through the MTurk website.

**Confidentiality**

You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. There will be no list that links your identity with this code.

**Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Wyatt Stahl at the following phone number: 248 631 6539. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

**Participation:**

By completing the questionnaire you are agreeing to participate in this study.

Additionally, participation in this research is for residents of the United States that are 35 years or older, and are working at least 20 hours per week; if you are not a resident of the United States, if you are under the age of 35, and/or working less than 20 hours per week, please do not complete this survey.



## APPENDIX C

### **Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004) and two inappropriate responding items (items 21 and 47):**

This survey will help you describe the leadership style of your direct supervisor. Starting with the first question, judge how frequently each statement fits that person. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, use the "unsure" button. Use the rating scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always	Unsure

1. Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts.
2. Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.
3. Fails to intervene until problems become serious.
4. Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards.
5. Avoids getting involved when important issues arise.
6. Talks about their most important values and beliefs.
7. Is absent when needed.
8. Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems.
9. Talks optimistically about the future.
10. Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her.
11. Discusses in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets.
12. Waits for things to go wrong before taking action.
13. Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.
14. Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.
15. Spends time teaching and coaching.
16. Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved.
17. Shows that he/she is a firm believer in "If it isn't broke, don't fix it."
18. Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group.
19. Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group.
20. Demonstrates that problems must become chronic before taking action.
21. For this question please select the answer "unsure."
22. Acts in ways that builds my respect.
23. Concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures.
24. Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.
25. Keeps track of all mistakes.
26. Displays a sense of power and confidence.
27. Articulates a compelling vision of the future.
28. Directs my attention towards failure to meet standards.
29. Avoids making decisions.
30. Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.
31. Gets me to look at problems from many different angles.
32. Helps me to develop my strengths.
33. Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.

34. Delays responding to urgent questions.
35. Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission.
36. Expresses satisfaction when I meet expectations.
37. Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.
38. Is effective in meeting my job-related needs.
39. Uses methods of leadership that are satisfying.
40. Gets me to do more than I expected to do.
41. Is effective in representing me to a higher authority.
42. Works with me in a satisfactory way.
43. Heightens my desire to succeed.
44. Is effective meeting organizational requirements.
45. Increases my willingness to try harder.
46. Leads a group that is effective.
47. For this question please select the answer “unsure.”

**APPENDIX D**

**Annual Income**

Please indicate your annual income from your primary source of employment:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(if other than U.S. dollars please indicate the currency here, otherwise, leave blank: \_\_\_\_\_)

**APPENDIX E****Education Level (adapted from Christie & Barling, 2009)**

Please indicate the highest level of education you have **completed**:

1	2	3	4	5
Some high school	High school graduate/GED	Associate degree/certificate of two years of college	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree

**APPENDIX F**

**Occupational Prestige (adapted from the General Social Survey, 2012)**

Please indicate your occupational title (please type the entire title as opposed to an acronym or other short hand terminology):

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G****Subjective Social Class Status (modified from Adler & Stewart, 2007)**

Think of the ladder as representing where people stand in the United States.

At the **top** of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, most education and the most respected jobs. At the **bottom** are the people who are the worst off – who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on the ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.

Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

Please indicate the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in this United States, by selecting the letter associated with it.



Scoring: 1(A)-10(J)

**APPENDIX H****Anxiety (Beck Anxiety Inventory; Beck et al., 1988)**

Please read the statements below. How often did you feel that way **during the past week**? The best answer is usually the one that comes to your mind first:

1	2	3	4
Never	Hardly ever	Some of the time	Most of the time

1. I had fear of the worst happening.
2. I was nervous.
3. I felt my hands trembling.
4. I had a fear of dying.
5. I felt faint.

**APPENDIX I****Stress (Job Stress Scale; Karasek, 1979) and one inappropriate responding item (item 7)**

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Does not apply

1. My job is physically demanding.
2. I am under constant time pressure due to a heavy workload.
3. I have very little freedom to decide how I do my work.
4. Considering the things I have to do at work, I have to work very fast.
5. I often feel bothered or upset in my work.
6. The demands of my job interfere with my personal life.
7. For this question please select the answer “does not apply.”



**APPENDIX J****Well-being (psychological; Ryff, 1995) and one inappropriate responding item (item 8)**

Please read the statements below and decide the extent to which each statement describes you:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

1. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.
2. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.
3. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.
4. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.
5. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.
6. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.
7. I have a sense of direction and purpose in my life.
8. For this question please select the answer "slightly disagree."

## APPENDIX K

**Affective Commitment Scale (Subscale of the OCQ; Allen & Meyer, 1990) and one inappropriate responding item (item 9); four items were reverse scored (items 4, 5, 6, and 8).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.
5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization.
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization.
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.
9. For this question please select the answer "neither agree nor disagree."

**APPENDIX L**

**Job Satisfaction Index (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951); two items were reverse scored (items 3 and 5).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your current position:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job
2. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work
3. Each day of work seems like it will never end
4. I find real enjoyment in my work
5. I consider my job rather unpleasant

**APPENDIX M****Intent to Leave (adapted from Walsh, Ashford, & Hill, 1985)**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree

1. As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave this organization.
2. I am actively looking for a job at another organization.
3. I am seriously thinking of quitting my job.

**APPENDIX N****Demographics**

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ year-old

What is your ethnicity/race?

- Hispanic/Latino
- White
- Asian
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

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**ABSTRACT****LEADERSHIP: A RESOURCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

by

**WYATT E. STAHL****December 2017****Advisor:** Dr. Sebastiano Fisicaro**Major:** Psychology**Degree:** Master of Arts

Leadership is an organizational component that has seen considerable interest in the I/O psychology literature. The current study aimed to expand on this literature by investigating the extent to which the relation between leadership style and strain outcomes varies based on employee social class. Participants were asked to complete a survey assessing leadership style of their supervisor, indicators of stress, indicators of work-related strain, and components of social class. Results suggested that individuals of lower social class experience higher levels of stress and strain. Additionally, individuals with leaders who are more transformational experience lower levels of stress and work-related strain. Further, individuals with leaders who are more transactional or laissez-faire tend to experience higher levels of stress and work-related strain. However, results did not suggest that social class moderates the relations between leadership style and stress or work-related strain outcomes.

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

I am currently a fourth-year doctoral student at Wayne State University in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology program. I earned my Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Grand Valley State University in 2014, where I graduated as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar. My research interests are rooted in employment assessment. Beyond research, I have gained extensive applied work experience throughout my graduate training. With regard to applied experience, I have worked as an internal and external employment consultant for various organizations. My applied experiences have fostered the development of my skills in test construction and validation, team management, and reducing assessment biases in the face of high legal scrutiny.