

Ethics Matter: Moderating Leaders' Power Use and Followers' Citizenship Behaviors

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Abstract Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics have the potential to impact the way they react to the influence of these leaders. The present study of 365 U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets examined how followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics moderated the relationships found between the leaders' use of power, as conceptualized by French and Raven (Studies in social power, 1959), and the followers' contextual performance. Our results indicated that leaders' use of expert, referent, and reward power was associated with higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) among their followers when the followers perceived these leaders to be more ethical. Moreover, when followers perceived their leaders to be less ethical, these followers reported lower levels of OCBs when their leaders' utilized referent power. Practical implications, limitations, and future research are also discussed.

Keywords Coercive power · Ethical leadership · Ethics · Expert power · Follower · Leader's power use · Legitimate power · Military · Organizational citizenship behavior · Perception · Performance · Power bases · Referent power · Reward power · Social influence

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Power has a bad reputation—but power is a fundamental element of the leadership process (Hollander 1985). Lord

Acton's oft-quoted notion that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” captures a seemingly common concern associated with those who wield great power. The nineteenth-century politician's belief that power carries a negative, and even corrupt, connotation is echoed in the modern day by many scholars and practitioners alike. In his aptly titled bestseller, *The No Asshole Rule*, Stanford University Professor Robert Sutton (2007) underscored the negative corollaries of power:

A huge body of research—hundreds of studies—shows that when people are put in positions of power, they start talking more, taking what they want for themselves, ignoring what other people say or want, ignoring how less-powerful people react to their behaviors, acting more rudely, and generally treating any situation or person as a means for satisfying their own needs. (p. 70)

Although some researchers have argued that a person who uses power and authority in this manner cannot truly be considered a “leader” (e.g., Howell and Avolio 1992; Kellerman 2004; Yukl 1999; Yukl and Van Fleet 1992), several theories have been developed to better recognize and understand the influence of these powerful individuals in the leadership process. Ashforth (1994) characterized “petty tyrants” who use their power in oppressive, vindictive, and seemingly unpredictable ways. Relatedly, others have identified behaviors or conditions associated with abusive supervision (Tepper 2000), manipulative Machiavellianism (Wilson et al. 1996), destructive leadership (Einarsen et al. 2007; Thoroughgood et al. 2012), and the contributing incubators that enable “negative leadership” found in the toxic triangle of leadership (Padilla et al. 2007). This research trend, and perhaps the negative perception of power, is invigorated by the

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prominent exemplars found in many businesses and organizations today. Business magnates, CEOs, military generals, and even presidents have famously used their power and influence in ways that have led many of their subordinates to brand them as “jerks”...or worse!

Farmer and Aguinis (2005) noted that an immense gap in the power literature exists in our understanding of how followers’ perceptions surrounding power lead to particular subordinate outcomes. Moreover, researchers have also noted that the power literature largely fails to account for interaction effects which may explain important outcomes (e.g., Podsakoff and Schriesheim 1985). From this standpoint, leadership researchers have called for a more robust investigation of how followers’ perceptions of their leaders affect the outcomes associated with the leaders’ power and behavior (e.g., Avolio 2007; Barbuto 2000; Padilla 2012). This study sought to address these shortcomings by examining how followers’ perceptions of their leaders relate to their contextual performance relative to the leaders’ power use.

In spite of its reputation, power itself is a neutral force. Although Rahim (1989) defined power as “the ability of one party to change or control the behavior, attitudes, opinions, objectives, needs, and values of another party” (p. 545), this limited conceptualization of power follows a basic, leader-centric definition of leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2012, p. 5). While it is clear that effective leaders must be able to utilize power to motivate subordinates, gain support from peers, and influence their superiors to provide resources (Falbe and Yukl 1992), the myriad of classic “positive” leadership theories and more recent “negative” theories have demonstrated that “leaders” have different approaches to their use of power, and that these methods and their associated outcomes are affected by a broader mix of factors in the leadership process. This leads us to an important question: Why are some leaders labeled as “jerks” by some followers, while these same individuals are praised by many other followers as some of the most influential people of their generation, idolized for their successes, and even revered as role models and bestselling authors of autobiographies and leadership “how-to” books?

These juxtaposed perspectives represent a significant duality in the dynamics of leadership and encourage us to consider more than simple, reductionist-based, black and white interactions and examine the confounding “shades of gray” that affect the power–performance relationship. However, contemporary leadership research has taken a primarily leader-centric approach with an aim of identifying effective leader behaviors (Bligh 2010; Hunter et al. 2007; Vroom and Jago 2007). While this has built an important foundation for our understanding of the field, it

assumes that all followers recognize and respond to the same types of influence and underrates the importance of followers’ individual perceptions and perspectives in the leadership dynamic. Consequently, researchers have begun to conceptualize the leadership process as an interaction between the leader, the followers, and the situation, rather than being purely leader driven (Yukl 2005). Padilla (2012) suggested that researchers extend their focus to also account for the effects of followers’ perceptions and other contextual elements that shape the leadership process. Like leadership, power use is more than a leader’s behavior; its application and effects rely on a broader interaction of elements which also include the followers and the situation. For example, Barbuto (2000) outlined a framework for understanding the underlying mechanisms that trigger a follower’s willingness to be influenced by leaders. He proposed that the probability that these triggers will lead to a follower’s compliance is determined by the leader’s perceived bases of power, the follower’s sources of motivation, and the follower’s level of resistance to the influence. Drawing from these foundational perspectives, the positive or negative effects of a leader’s power may be shaped largely by the predilections and acuties surrounding its use. Specifically, how followers perceive the leader using the power, and the power itself, may change the way followers respond to the leader’s influence.

Followers’ perceptions of their leader and their leader’s motives are key elements of the leadership dynamic. As in the case of power use, different leaders may rely on the same personal attributes or techniques with divergent personal motives. For example, Howell and Avolio (1992) described the influential power of charisma and the importance of recognizing its potential “dark side.” Drawing from the results of an interview study as well as popular management literature, they noted that *personalized* charismatic leaders, who are unethical and motivated by self-centered power objectives, can be destructive to an organization and its followers when compared to *socialized* charismatic leaders who use their influence for the common good. In a later study, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) distinguished between two types of transformational leaders: *authentic transformational leaders*, who are ethical, genuine, and use power toward noble ends, legitimate means, and fair consequences, and *pseudo-transformational leaders*, who are self-interested, lack morality, and who seek and use power at the expense of others. While these approaches may seem to rely on similar types of power and abilities on the surface, followers’ perceptions of their leader’s motives may affect the resultant behaviors of these followers. Recent findings by Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) provide some evidence that followers are able to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic displays of

ethical leadership and that these perceptions of inauthenticity were associated with reduced work engagement, lower personal initiative, and increased counter-work behaviors. Given that followers assess the motives behind leaders' behavior, beyond the surface characteristics of their influence techniques, followers' perceptions of authentic ethical leadership may affect the way these followers respond to leaders' power use in terms of contextual performance behavior.

The current study sought to contribute to the literature and our understanding of leadership by (1) investigating the importance of ethics by identifying how followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics moderated the relationships found between the leaders' use of power and the followers' contextual performance behaviors; (2) addressing previously identified gaps in the power literature by examining followers' perceptions and their relationships to behavioral outcomes; and (3) exploring a broader conceptualization of leadership as a process, beyond the leader's behavior. In the following section, we provide a theoretical review of the current study's key constructs (i.e., bases of leader's power, followers' organizational citizenship behaviors, and followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics) and expand on the current study's theoretical foundation. Next, we describe the methodology utilized in the current study and present the results. Finally, we discuss the theoretical contributions and practical implications of our findings.

Theoretical Review and Hypotheses Development

Bases of Leaders' Power

Leadership scholars and practitioners have been fascinated with the idea of power and the resonating impact of its use. As a result, several taxonomies of power have emerged (e.g., Kipnis et al. 1980; Mudler 1971; Patchen 1974; Peabody 1961; Shukla 1982; Yukl and Falbe 1991). However, French and Raven's (1959) original classification of power types remains the most popular and widely utilized model (Cobb 1980; Rahim et al. 2000; Rahim and Magner 1996).

French and Raven (1959) categorized five bases of power which agents (e.g., leaders) use to influence the behavior of targets (e.g., followers): legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent power. *Legitimate power* is the formal authority derived from the leader's position or followers' belief that the leader has a right to influence them and that they are obligated to accept this influence. *Reward power* is based on the leader's ability to remunerate followers for obedience. *Coercive power* comes from the follower's expectation that he or she will be

punished for failing to obey or achieve the leader's goals. *Expert power* is derived from the task-relevant knowledge or abilities the leader possesses. *Referent power* stems from the admiration and attraction followers have toward the leader.

Bass (1960) and Etzioni (1975) classified legitimate, reward, and coercive powers as *position powers* which are organizationally based and originate from a leader's formal role, without regard for the personal attributes of the individual filling that position. They further distinguished referent and expert powers as *personal powers* drawn from the way followers perceive a particular leader's attributes, irrespective of the position that leader may hold. Rahim's (1988) exploratory factor analysis of data from 476 managers and employees, and Yukl and Falbe's (1991) subsequent examination of three large companies provided further empirical support for these categorical distinctions.

While power, at least in part, does derive from the positions and behaviors of individuals, it extends well beyond the ability of an individual to influence others. Hinkin and Schriesheim (1989) recognized this limitation of French and Raven's (1959) original typology and re-conceptualized French and Raven's power forms from the perceiver's (e.g., the follower's) perspective. This view acknowledges that power is at least partly derived from the target's perceptions as well (see also Barbuto 2000). For example, certain behaviors may be "coercive" to one target (i.e., the influencer has coercive ability from that target's perspective), but not "coercive" to another target.

Much of what we know about the effects of leaders' power use has focused on the direct relationships of these power classifications on subordinate outcomes. Social power studies have indicated that person-based powers (i.e., expert and referent powers) are generally related positively to several principal indicators of subordinates' effectiveness, such as task performance (e.g., Slocum 1970; Student 1968), citizenship behavior (e.g., Jain et al. 2010), productivity (e.g., Fiorelli 1988), job satisfaction (e.g., Bachman 1968; Rahim 1989), satisfaction with supervision (e.g., Bachman et al. 1966; Busch 1980), commitment (e.g., Yukl and Falbe 1991), compliance (e.g., Bachman et al. 1968), reduced turnover, and diminished absenteeism (e.g., Sheridan and Vredenburgh 1978). Conversely, position-based powers (i.e., reward, coercive, and legitimate powers) are generally related negatively to these same outcomes. However, in spite of these overarching trends, legitimate and coercive powers have sometimes been shown to be unrelated to follower outcomes and reward power has been associated with both positive and negative outcomes (Carson et al. 1993; Jain et al. 2010; Podsakoff and Schriesheim 1985). In their review and critique of power research based on French and Raven's (1959) model, Podsakoff and Schriesheim (1985) warned that

most studies did not attempt to develop or test theory to explain exactly how or why social power impacted follower outcomes. Instead, these studies focused primarily on correlating the five bases of power with various dependent variables, and offered little empirical, or even conceptual, consideration of moderating factors which alter the nature of the power–outcome relationship. To date, there has been a scant response to Podsakoff and Schriesheim's (1985) call for more empirical research of these types of relationships. Our review of the power literature yielded few investigations of moderating variables that affected the outcomes associated with French and Raven's (1959) power taxonomy. One exception was Elangovan and Xie's (1999) work which suggested that subordinates' self-esteem and perceived locus of control may impact the relationships found between their leader's power use and the subordinates' levels of stress and motivation. However, little attention has been paid to the factors that moderate the critical link between leaders' power use and followers' contextual performance behaviors.

Followers' Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Borman and Montowidlo's (1993) model of performance categorized two types of performance behaviors: task performance (the core technical requirements of a job) and contextual performance (support activities and conscientious initiative). Among these contextual performance behaviors, *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB) is one of the most researched (Dyne et al. 1995). Organ (1988) defined OCB as "contributions individuals make to their employing organization in ways not captured by their job description" (p. ix). OCBs differ from task activities in that they support the social and psychological environment in which task performance occurs (Borman and Motowidlo 1993). OCBs are considered discretionary, "extra-role" behaviors that are conceptually and (to some extent) empirically distinct from task performance, which is recognized and defined more clearly as part of the individual's duties (Bateman and Organ 1983; Hoffman et al. 2007). Compared to task performance, OCBs are less affected by the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individual and are related more closely to work attitudes and perceptions (Bateman and Organ 1983; Hoffman et al. 2007; Organ and Ryan 1995). In addition, followers' willingness to engage in OCBs has also been linked to other determinant variables beyond leaders' actual behavior, such as perceptions of leaders' charisma (Awamleh and Gardner 1999). Given these characteristics, OCBs may be a more appropriate focus for exploring the interaction effect of followers' perceptions of leaders' ethics on leaders' power use and followers' performance across a range of positions and ability levels.

Followers' Perceptions of their Leaders' Ethics

Followers' perceptions of their leaders' honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness have been associated with their leaders' perceived effectiveness (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Kouzes and Posner 1993). Treviño et al. (2003) built on this premise and characterized ethical leaders as honest and trustworthy individuals who are perceived as principled, fair, and caring people who conducted themselves in an ethical manner in both their personal and professional lives. From this, Brown et al. (2005) came to define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making" (p. 120).

Perceptions of Ethics and the Personal Power—OCB Relationship

Leaders who engage in ethical behavior strengthen interpersonal relationships (Walumbwa et al. 2011), which may reinforce the mechanisms that encourage followers to recognize and accept leaders' personal influence. Treviño et al. (2006) reasoned that, "because ethical leaders are caring and fair, relationships with ethical leaders are built upon social exchange and norms of reciprocity" (p. 967). These social-exchange-based relationships may increase the likelihood that followers will respond to leaders' power use with supportive OCBs. Konovsky and Pugh's (1994) social exchange model provides support to suggest that trust, fairness, and considerate decision making (key elements associated with ethical leaders) contribute to OCBs. Furthermore, Brown and Treviño (2006) noted that followers are likely to admire ethical leaders, identify with their vision and values, and wish to be like them. This admiration and identification may make these followers more receptive to their leaders' referent power use. Followers who have positive views of their leaders' vision and values may see them as more competent and thoughtful, which may support the leaders' use of expert power. Conversely, followers who perceive their leader as less ethical, or ethically neutral, may be less receptive to their leader's use of these person-based powers, hindering the normally positive effects of these power types on OCBs. Therefore, followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics are hypothesized to moderate the relationships found between their leaders' expert and referent power use and the followers' OCBs.

Hypothesis 1 Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics will moderate the effects of these leaders' expert power use on the followers' OCBs.

Hypothesis 2 Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics will moderate the effects of these leaders' referent power use on the followers' OCBs.

Perceptions of Ethics and the Position Power—OCB Relationship

Ethical leaders utilize their power and influence with the best interests of followers in mind and avoid unduly harming others by respecting the rights of all parties (Gini 1998; Kanungo 2001). Since the core motivation of ethical leaders is based on altruistic intentions (Kanungo and Mendonca 1996), followers may perceive ethical leaders' power use as well intentioned and ultimately beneficial for the followers, the organization, and other stakeholders. As a result, followers may be more likely to accept the use of a broader range of power types from leaders they perceive to be ethical. Therefore, the traditionally negative effects of position-based power use on OCBs may also be affected by followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethical intentions. When unethical leaders use reward power, it may be interpreted as manipulative, their use of coercive power may be seen as malicious, and their reliance on legitimate power may be received as impersonal or inconsiderate. Alternatively, followers who see their leaders as ethical may trust that these types of power use are well intentioned and necessary to achieve the followers' best interests, resulting in followers' willingness to engage in OCBs to support their leader and the organization. Therefore, followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics are hypothesized to moderate the relationships found between their leaders' reward, coercive, and legitimate power use and the followers' OCBs.

Hypothesis 3 Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics will moderate the effects of these leaders' reward power use on the followers' OCBs.

Hypothesis 4 Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics will moderate the effects of these leaders' coercive power use on the followers' OCBs.

Hypothesis 5 Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics will moderate the effects of these leaders' legitimate power use on the followers' OCBs.

Theoretical Model

Followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics are hypothesized to moderate the effects of these leaders' power use on followers' OCBs across the range of power types. These proposed relationships are depicted in Fig. 1.

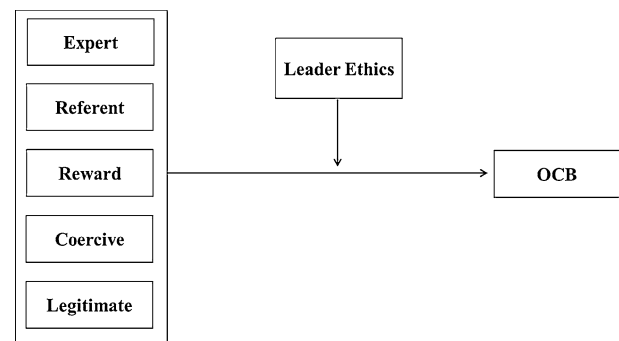


Fig. 1 Leader's perceived ethics moderating the effects of power use on followers' OCB

Method

Sample

The current study's sample consisted of 365 cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy (referred to hereafter as the Academy). Of these cadets, 72 % were male, and 28 % were female. The ethnic composition of the sample was 71 % Caucasian, 9.5 % Hispanic, 6.6 % Asian/Pacific Islander, 6 % African-American/Black, 0.9 % Native American, and 6 % other. The mean age for the sample was 20.15 years. In addition, 55 % of participants were freshmen, 1 % were sophomores, 43 % were juniors, and 1 % were seniors. Since the subject pool was composed of students in freshmen- and junior-level courses, this distribution was to be expected. The Academy is a four-year college and a principal provider of officers for the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition to their academic responsibilities, cadets serve in job positions which provide a structure for military training and administrative duties similar to a traditional top-down, military hierarchy.

Procedure

All participants gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study, and any details that might disclose the identity of the individuals under study were omitted. Participation requests were emailed from the research subject pool coordinator to 998 cadets enrolled in the two core psychology courses required for all academic majors at the Academy. In exchange for their participation in the online survey, cadets received extra credit in their respective courses. We received a total of 405 survey responses and excluded 32 participants due to incomplete or missing data. In addition, the majority of participants required at least 30 min to complete the survey; due to the length of the assessment and the median completion time, we excluded eight responses completed in less than 10 min to

avoid potentially erroneous or careless data. These adjustments garnered the final sample of 365 participants and represented a final response rate of 36.6 %.

To address the proposed Hypotheses, analyses were performed to determine whether the strength of the relationships found between each base of power and followers' OCB engagement were moderated by the followers' perceptions of their leaders' level of ethics. A conventional moderated regression based on hierarchical regression analysis was used (Stone and Hollenbeck 1984). This evaluation builds on a bivariate regression of the independent and dependent variables (i.e., power base and OCB), and then adds the moderating variable (i.e., leader's ethics) and the interaction term (the product of the independent variable and moderator, i.e., power base $\times$ leader's ethics) to the regression model (centered scores were utilized to guard against multicollinearity). The criterion for establishing the variable as a moderator is the achievement of a significant interaction effect.

Measures

Power

The five bases of power were measured with an adapted form of the Rahim Leader Power Inventory (Rahim 1988). The original instrument measured subordinates' perceptions regarding how much of each power base their superior possessed. These 29 items were adapted to the Academy environment and slightly altered to assess followers' perceptions of their leader's power use. Prior to the study, all adapted items were evaluated by subject matter experts and Academy graduates not associated with the study for clarity and understanding to maintain nomological expectations (see Hinkin and Schriesheim 1989). Using these items, participants reported the power that their immediate cadet leader in their organizational hierarchy utilized on a Likert-type scale, ranging from "1" (*Very Rarely*) to "5" (*Very Often*). Expert power's (six items) $\alpha = 0.80$ (sample item: "My leader uses his/her considerable experience to help subordinates do work"). Referent power's (six items) $\alpha = 0.82$ (sample item: "My leader uses his/her pleasing personality to influence subordinates"). Reward power's (six items) $\alpha = 0.89$ (sample item: "My leader recommends a subordinate for merit recognition if the subordinate's performance is especially good"). Coercive power's (five items) $\alpha = 0.86$ (sample item: "My leader takes disciplinary action against subordinates for insubordination"). Legitimate power's (six items) $\alpha = 0.70$ (sample item: "My leader uses his/her authority to change the procedures of subordinates' work").

Ethical Leadership

The ethical leadership construct was measured using ten items taken from Brown et al. (2005). Participants rated their immediate cadet leader's likely behavior on a Likert-type scale, ranging from "1" (*Highly Unlikely*) to "7" (*Highly Likely*). Ethical leadership's (ten items) $\alpha = 0.92$ (sample item: "Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained").

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

The OCB dimension was measured using 16 items taken from Lee and Allen (2002) that were adapted to the Academy environment. Participants reported their behavior over the past semester under their immediate cadet leader on a Likert-type scale, ranging from "1" (*Never*) to "7" (*Always*). OCB's (16 items) $\alpha = 0.90$ (sample item: "I go out of the way to make newer members feel welcome in the Squadron").

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and bivariate correlations among all variables. Followers' perceptions of expert power use were related highly to their perceptions of both referent ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$) and reward ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) power use. Followers' perceptions of reward power use were also related highly to their perceptions of referent power use ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). The high degree of intercorrelations among followers' perceptions of expert, referent, and reward power use may indicate that any outcomes associated with these three power bases are potentially replications of the same phenomenon.

Results indicated that followers' perceptions of their leaders' use of expert ($r = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$), referent ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$), and reward ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) power were related positively to followers' OCB. However, coercive ($r = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$) and legitimate ($r = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$) power use were not significantly related to followers' OCB.

Leaders' use of each of the five bases of power were related significantly to followers' perceptions of ethical leadership. Expert ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), referent ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), reward ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$), and, to a much smaller extent, coercive ($r = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$) power were related positively to followers' perceptions of ethical leadership. Conversely, legitimate power was related negatively to followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics ($r = -0.17$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations for all variables

	2. Referent power	3.78	0.78	<u>0.70**</u>	<u>0.82</u>				
	3. Reward power	3.55	0.72	0.66**	0.62**	<u>0.89</u>			
	4. Coercive power	2.90	0.61	0.28**	0.06	0.26**	<u>0.86</u>		
	5. Legitimate power	3.07	0.64	−0.07	−0.18**	−0.09	0.30**	<u>0.70</u>	
	6. Ethical leadership	5.60	0.93	0.68**	0.67**	0.60**	0.16**	−0.17**	<u>0.92</u>
	7. OCB	4.91	0.80	0.17**	0.12*	0.15**	0.06	0.06	0.20**
									<u>0.90</u>

N = 365. Cronbach's Alphas appear underlined on the diagonal for multiple item measures

* *p* < 0.05. ** *p* < 0.01

N = 365. Cronbach's Alphas appear underlined on the diagonal for multiple item measures

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2 Hierarchical regressions for direct and interaction effects on OCB

Power used	OCB			
	Model 1 R^2	Model 2 (power + ethics) R^2	Model 3 (power × ethics) R^2	β^a
Expert power	0.03**	0.04**	0.07***	0.16***
Referent power	0.01*	0.03**	0.05*	0.10*
Reward power	0.02*	0.04**	0.08***	0.17***
Coercive power	0.00	0.04**	0.04	0.04
Legitimate power	0.00	0.05***	0.06 ⁺	−0.07 ⁺

N = 365

⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

^a Standardized coefficients for interaction term; for example, the standardized β weight for expert power is the standardized regression weight for the expert power × ethics interaction term

To determine if followers' perceptions of leaders' ethics, power use, or OCBs varied as a function of participants' academic class, simple *t* test analyses were also performed. Results revealed no significant differences between lower-division cadets (i.e., freshmen- and sophomore-level cadets) and upper-division cadets (i.e., junior- and senior-level cadets). An additional consideration is that individuals in both groups had worked with their respective leaders for at least 4 months which may have been long enough to nullify significant differences in exposure to leadership dynamics or other influential factors.

The results of the hierarchical regression analyses conducted to test the moderating effects of followers' perceptions of ethical leadership between the five power bases and followers' OCB are presented in Table 2. The first step in the test for moderation is shown by the R^2 relationships presented for the bivariate regression analyses of each power base on followers' OCB. The results for the second step, the regression effects of the separate, independent predictors (i.e., each power base and followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics) on the dependent variable (i.e., OCB) are shown. Results of the third step in the moderation test, the regression of the interaction term on the dependent variable, are shown next, followed by the standardized coefficients between the interaction term and the dependent variable.

Results indicated that followers' perceptions of their leaders' levels of ethics moderated the effects of these leaders' expert ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$), referent ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$), and reward ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$) power use on the followers' OCB. Figure 2 illustrates the moderating effects of leaders' perceived ethics on the leaders' expert power use and followers' OCB. Simple slope analysis (Aiken and West 1991) indicated that when followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics were +1 SD above the mean, the simple slope of expert power use on followers' OCB = 0.293, $t(363) = 2.851$, $p < 0.01$. When followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics were −1 SD below the mean, the simple slope of expert power use on followers' OCB = −0.074, $t(363) = -0.799$, $p > 0.05$. Followers who perceived their leaders to be more ethical reported higher levels of OCB when their leaders utilized more expert power; however, lower perceptions of leader's ethics did not appear to moderate the relationship between these leaders' expert power use and followers' OCB at a statistically significant level.

Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effects of leaders' perceived levels of ethics on these leaders' referent power use and followers' OCB. Simple slope analysis indicated that when followers' perceptions of their leader's

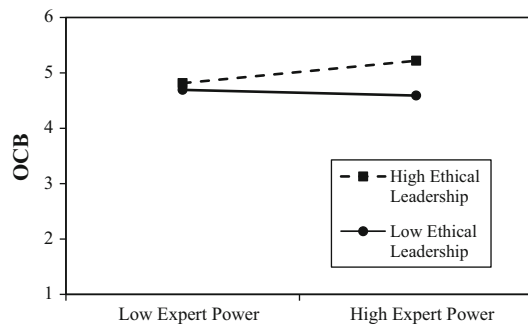


Fig. 2 Followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics moderating expert power use and OCB

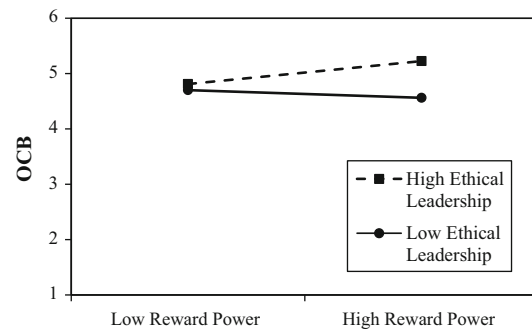


Fig. 4 Followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics moderating reward power use and OCB

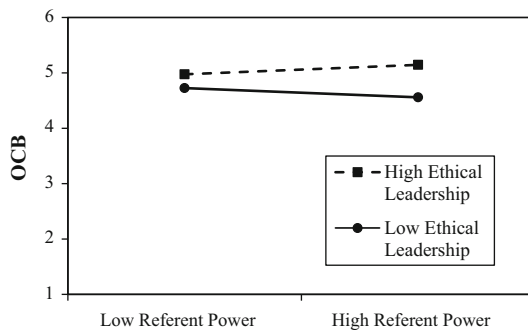


Fig. 3 Followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics moderating referent power use and OCB

ethics were +1 SD above the mean, the simple slope of referent power use on the followers' OCB = 0.216, $t(363) = 1.717$, $p < 0.10$. When followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics were -1 SD below the mean, the simple slope of referent power use on followers' OCB = -0.214, $t(363) = -2.017$, $p < 0.05$. Followers who perceived their leaders to be more ethical reported higher levels of OCB, when their leaders utilized more referent power, at a level approaching statistical significance. In addition, followers who perceived their leaders to be less ethical reported lower levels of OCB when their leaders utilized more referent power.

Figure 4 illustrates the moderating effects of leaders' perceived levels of ethics on these leaders' reward power use and followers' OCB. Simple slope analysis indicated that when followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics were +1 SD above the mean, the simple slope of reward power use on followers' OCB = 0.287, $t(363) = 3.103$, $p < 0.01$. When followers' perceptions of their leader's ethics were -1 SD below the mean, the simple slope of reward power use on followers' OCB = -0.096, $t(363) = -1.207$, $p > 0.05$. Followers who perceived their leaders to be more ethical reported higher levels of OCB when their leaders utilized more reward

power; however, lower perceptions of leader's ethics did not appear to affect the relationship between the leaders' reward power use and followers' OCB at a statistically significant level.

The significant moderating effects of leaders' ethics on the relationships found between the leaders' expert, referent, and reward power use and the followers' OCB provided support for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. However, followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics did not significantly moderate the relationships between their leaders' use of coercive or legitimate power and the followers' OCB ($\beta = 0.04$, $p > 0.05$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$; and $\beta = -0.07$, $p > 0.05$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$ respectively); therefore, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were not supported.

Discussion

The analyses described in the previous section met the goals of the current study and contributed to the leadership and power literature. First, results support the notion that followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics matter. When followers perceived their leader to be ethical, these followers reported higher levels of OCBs when their leader utilized expert, referent, or reward power. Moreover, when followers perceived their leader to be less ethical, these followers reported lower levels of OCBs when their leader employed referent power. These relationships may support Walumbwa et al.'s (2011) assertion that leaders who engage in ethical behavior strengthen interpersonal relationships, which may also reinforce their ability to utilize personal powers (i.e., expert and referent power) to influence followers. Alternatively, followers may be less likely to respect or relate to leaders who are perceived to be less ethical; this may explain their diminished alacrity to engage in supportive, extra-role citizenship behaviors when their leaders utilized referent power. Extending Konovsky and Pugh's (1994) conceptualization of OCBs as a product of trusting and considerate social-exchanges,

followers who perceive their leaders as ethical may also trust that rewards will be administered in a well-intentioned and just manner (as opposed to being a form of unscrupulous manipulation), and this perception may account for higher levels of citizenship behaviors among these followers.

Second, this study addressed previously identified gaps in the power literature (e.g., Farmer and Aguinis 2005) by providing empirical insight into how followers' perceptions of their leaders, and their power use, relate to the followers' behavioral outcomes. These results provide a better understanding of the boundary conditions which influence the effects of leaders' power use. Specifically, these findings help to explain some of the inconsistent performance outcomes associated with the use of power noted in reviews of previous power research (e.g., Carson et al. 1993; Podsakoff and Schriesheim 1985). This is particularly notable for the effects of reward power, since this form of power has yielded both positive and negative outcomes in previous research. In the case of OCBs, this volatile relationship may be better explained by accounting for followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics.

Third, this study contributes to our expanded understanding of the leadership dynamic. The approach of the current study accounted for contributing factors in the leadership process beyond a leader-centric perspective and answered researchers' call for increased attention to the broader relationships found in the Leader-Follower-Situational perspective of leadership (e.g., Avolio 2007; Barbuto 2000; Uhl-Bien et al. 2007). Findings indicated that followers' perceptions of their leaders and their leaders' perceived power to influence these followers all relate to the followers' behavioral outcomes. This supports the notion that leadership, and power use, are not purely top-down behaviors that view followers as passive recipients in a non-descript vacuum. Instead, this study provides evidence of a more complex interplay of factors that shape the outcomes associated with the leadership dynamic.

Practical Implications

The current study highlights the critical importance of ethical leadership in the eyes of followers. Organizations may benefit from the knowledge that followers are more likely to engage in behaviors that support the organization and its members in ways that surpass the followers' specific job duties when their leaders are perceived to be ethical and these leaders rely on relevant knowledge, personal admiration, or the use of rewards to influence others. Unethical leaders may compromise followers' willingness to perform above and beyond their job descriptions since followers' perceptions of unethical leaders were related to lower levels of citizenship behaviors when these leaders

employed power that relies on followers' identification with and admiration of the leader.

This knowledge may also inform and enrich the development of new leaders, and enhance the effectiveness of organizations overall. For example, new leaders are immediately authorized to use certain types of position-based powers inherent to the role they play within their organizational hierarchy, but they may need to develop their person-based power individually and through personal interactions over time. By recognizing the importance of ethics early on, leaders will better understand followers' perceptions in the leadership process and may improve the acceptance and effectiveness of their power use. Personal powers are traditionally related more positively to a range of outcomes, but may not always be immediately available or fully employable by novice leaders or those in new leadership dynamics. Some personal power elements might take time to develop, and new relationships must be forged (e.g., novice leaders may not have task-relevant expertise; followers may not relate to or admire leaders with whom they are not familiar). In the meantime, organizations can still benefit from the knowledge that followers recognize ethical leaders and are more likely to respond to an ethical leader's position-based power use (specifically rewards). As nascent personal powers are honed or recognized, leaders may also benefit from the knowledge that followers are more likely to respond to ethical leaders' person-based forms of power in the form of greater contextual performance. Followers' willingness to accept the influence of ethical leaders, as well as the related prevalence of the followers' OCBs, may support and sustain the new leader and the development of the leadership process. This will ultimately lead to more positive organizational outcomes overall.

Limitations

As with any research, the current study was subject to certain limitations that must be considered. First, given the cross-sectional research design of this study, the results presented are correlational in nature. Because of this, inferences of causality among the variables must be interpreted with caution.

Second, the design of this study relied on self-report survey measures which may be susceptible to common method bias. Common method bias refers to the condition in which variance observed is a result of the method of the data collection rather than what the measurement is intended to assess (Podsakoff et al. 2003). A noted limitation of the self-report survey design is that data are not only collected using the same method, but all measures of both predictors and criteria are administered at the same time, in the same context, and are obtained from a single

source. Although this study utilized a self-report survey design, it followed Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) recommendations for controlling potential method bias; the design followed good measurement practice by implementing procedural remedies related to questionnaire and item design, e.g., eliminating item ambiguity and counterbalancing question order. Also related to Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) considerations for guarding against common method variance, this study employed a more complex analytic design that examined the interaction effects of these variables, which is less likely to be inflated by common method bias (Evans 1985; Lin et al. 2009; McClelland and Judd 1993). While serious problems with common method variance are less likely in this case, post hoc analyses assessed the extent to which the results of this study could have been contaminated by common method or source bias, given the study's data collection methodology.

In an attempt to further account for potential method variance, Harman's single-factor test (e.g., Schriesheim 1979) was used to examine the extent to which a common or single method factor existed that would account for the variance in these findings. Following this widely used method, we first performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) by entering all seven of the scales assessed (i.e., expert, referent, reward, coercive, and legitimate powers; leader's ethics; and followers' OCBs). Results indicated that more than one factor emerged and the general factor explained only 20.48 % of the total variance. Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of these seven scales showed that the goodness-of-fit indices of the hypothesized model (i.e., seven separate factors) exhibited a much better fit to the data [$\chi^2 = 12184.65$, $df = 2278$, $p < 0.01$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.95, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.94, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03] than did the one factor model ($\chi^2 = 2098.23$, $df = 1178$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.76, TLI = 0.75, RMSEA = 0.08). These analyses provided further support to suggest that common method or source variance was likely not a serious problem in this study.

In addition, the self-report approach was deemed to be an appropriate data collection methodology, given that the current study's focus was on followers' perceptions and extra-role performance. Chan (2009) noted that using reports from others for self-referral respondent perception constructs is problematic for at least three reasons: (1) the individual's perceptions may not translate into observable behaviors; (2) even if these perceptions were translated into observable behaviors, others may not have the opportunity to observe these relevant behaviors; and (3) valid measurement by other reports requires the reporter to accurately infer the individual's specific value on that perception from the observation of the individual's behavior. Based on the current study's data collection

approach, followers' self-reports were believed to be more aligned with their true perceptions of their leader and each follower's OCBs, elements which others may not be able to glean or observe fully.

According to the dilemmatic approach described by McGrath et al. (1982), the sample survey method offered additional benefits to the current study's design. This research method is designed to be a relatively unobtrusive approach and is more universally applicable to a range of behavioral systems. This was particularly useful in obtaining data from our field-study sample without detrimentally affecting the organization's operations. The use of sample surveys also provides a method to guard participant's privacy and maintain anonymity allowing them to more freely comment on their leader's behavior (Podsakoff et al. 2003; Rahim 1988). Because of the anonymity preserved in this study, respondents were less likely to engage in faking or be swayed by motives of social desirability (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

Finally, the current study utilized a population of military cadets based in a western organizational culture to assess leadership dynamic factors and contextual performance. These factors may limit the generalizability of these findings to other types of organizations (e.g., civilian companies) and cultural contexts.

Future Research

In a review of the relevant literature, the most prevalent research strategy utilized in empirical articles dealing with the general topic of power and influence in leadership was the self-report, sample survey (Carson et al. 1993; Hunter et al. 2007). Admittedly, the regular reliance on studying power and influence in leadership through survey studies may make it particularly susceptible to method bias. We recommend that future studies incorporate multiperspective evaluations of the independent and dependent variables. In addition, longitudinal research designs should be incorporated to determine the direction of causality and other temporal effects on the leadership dynamic.

Second, future studies could examine whether the relationships identified in this study can be applied to other industries and in a cross-cultural context. Because this study relied on a military cadet sample, it is important to evaluate whether these results will replicate and can be generalized to other organizations or to other types of employees. In either case, further research should be conducted to determine whether these results are idiosyncratic to this sample or generalizable to other types of organizations and employees. In addition, because this study focused on subjects in a western-based culture in the United States, more research is needed to test the generalizability of these findings to other cultural contexts such

as the Middle East, China, Southern Asia, Africa, as well as Middle and South America (Erez 2011).

Lastly, future research should explore other contextual factors inherent to distinctive situations which may affect the leadership dynamic. For example, military personnel, firefighters, police officers, and other types of first responders and crisis leaders would benefit from studies which evaluate followers' leadership dynamic preferences and behavioral reactions to leaders' influence methods in volatile situations that carry life and death stakes and an imminent threat of danger. Stouffer et al. (1949) found that when the mortality salience (i.e., individuals' focus on the fear of imminent death) among inexperienced soldiers was high, they became desperate for almost any type of leader that would keep them alive. More recently, Cohen et al. (2004) found that individuals who were experiencing high mortality salience demonstrated a preference for charismatic, task-oriented, and relationship-oriented leaders. In spite of its tremendous importance, this area has received little attention from leadership researchers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to the field of leadership theory and practice by empirically identifying how followers' perceptions of their leaders' ethics relate to their willingness to engage in extra-role performance behaviors relative to the power these leaders exert. These individual ethical perceptions may account for some of the dramatically different opinions individuals hold about the leaders they work for and, ultimately, the associated outcomes of the leadership dynamic. Practitioners may leverage this understanding to promote the importance of ethics and more successfully influence followers to perform above and beyond their job descriptions. Future studies should build on these findings and inform our understanding of individual follower differences and the boundary conditions which impact the effects of ethical leadership and power use beyond a leader-centric focus.

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