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Leader roles, organization-based self-esteem, and employee outcomes

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Leader roles, organization-based self-esteem, and employee outcomes

OBSE and
employee
outcomes

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between different managerial roles and organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), and employee job satisfaction, organization commitment, and turnover and absence intentions.

Design/methodology/approach – Survey data were collected from 1,386 employees in a high technology industry. Employees described the roles their managers fulfilled, and then rated their own OBSE, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover and absence intent.

Findings – Different managerial roles had different relationships with OBSE, which mediated the relationships between some of the management roles and employee outcomes.

Research limitations/implications – This study used a cross-sectional design with single source data in a single industry. Future research should examine these relationships using longitudinal designs, multiple data sources, and a variety of industries.

Practical implications – Managers should be aware that their behaviors affect employee self-esteem, which in turn has strong relationships with a variety of important outcomes. Managers should be trained to manifest behaviors that increase employee self-esteem.

Originality/value – This is the first study to examine the effects of management roles on organization-based self-esteem, and ultimately employee satisfaction, commitment, and withdrawal intentions.

Keywords Leadership, Turnover, Job satisfaction, Organization commitment, Managerial behaviours, Organization-based self-esteem

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Since the late 1980s a rich body of knowledge has developed that provides insight into organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). While we have witnessed the emergence of a comprehensive understanding of its relationships with many personal and work outcomes (cf. Bowling *et al.*, 2010; Pierce and Gardner, 2004), there has been considerably less empirical exploration of its antecedents. This is especially true in



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terms of our ability to address the question – from a behavioral perspective, do the roles that managers and leaders fulfill for employees positively influence OBSE?[1]

From a variety of perspectives (Theory X/Theory Y: McGregor, 1960, Human Resource Model: Miles, 1964, 1975; transactional and transformational leadership, Burns, 1978) it seems logical to assume that the management behaviors associated with different roles will have different effects on OBSE (i.e. a personal sense of organizational worthiness: Lord *et al.*, 1999; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Lord *et al.* (1999) stated that “leaders can profoundly influence subordinates’ self-concepts, and thereby influence follower behaviors and other social processes” (p. 167), and OBSE is a significant factor in most employees’ self-concept. Management behaviors vary in the degree to which they signal trust by creating opportunities for the exercise of self-direction and self-control, create conditions for success, make individual employees feel valuable, and signal their personal and organizational worthiness. In addition, it is plausible to reason that OBSE may provide us with insight into “how” management behaviors affect subordinate and follower’s work-related motivation (e.g. intrinsic motivation), attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction), and behavior (e.g. performance, citizenship behavior). The main purpose of this study is to empirically examine the potential effects that employee-perceived management roles have on OBSE, and the mediating function of OBSE in the management role—employee outcome relationships.

We start by providing a brief overview of the global and OBSE constructs. This is followed by an examination of the theoretical antecedents and consequences of OBSE and the development of our research hypotheses. Central to this discussion is the theoretical linking of several leader behaviors with OBSE, leading up to an examination of the mediating role of OBSE in the relationship between manager behaviors and follower (subordinate) personal and work outcomes. Finally, we discuss our findings, highlight the applied implications of this work, and conclude with recommendations for future research on OBSE.

Theoretical framework

Self-concept and OBSE

Self-esteem is one part of the self-concept, a cognitive schema that organizes memories about the self and controls the processing of self-related information. Viewed as a reflexive cognitive structure, the self-concept has both an evaluative and a knowledge component. For example, Gecas (1982) defined self-concept as “the concept the individual has of him[her]self as a physical, social, and spiritual or moral being” (p. 3). In a similar manner, Rosenberg (1965) defined the self-concept as “the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings that have reference to him[her]self as an object” (p. 7). As such the self-concept encompasses all those parts of the “phenomenal field which the individual experiences as part or characteristic of him[her] self” (Snygg and Combs, 1949, p. 58).

As a component of the self-concept, self-esteem also reflects a perception of the self-encompassing both an evaluation of and a cognitive orientation toward the self. It is a relatively stable, trait-like condition that is theoretically and empirically distinct from other personality traits (e.g. Erdle, 2013). Those with high self-esteem have more positive views and better feelings about themselves than their low self-esteem counterparts, who see themselves in a more negative light (e.g. less competent) and who have a lower sense of “self-liking.”

People develop domain-specific facets of self-esteem in many of life’s roles (e.g. parent, golfer, employee), which many believe (e.g. James, 1890) are differentially

placed within one's hierarchy of self-values, and when aggregated form one's global self-esteem. OBSE (Pierce *et al.*, 1989) is one of those domain-specific facets of self-esteem, reflecting individuals' evaluations of their personal adequacy and self-worth within the work and organizational context. Derived from Coopersmith's (1967) conceptualization of global self-esteem, Pierce *et al.* (1989) defined OBSE as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (p. 625). As such, it manifests itself in such beliefs as "I COUNT around here; I am an IMPORTANT PART of this place; and I make a DIFFERENCE around here," where "here" refers to the employing organization (these are three items from the Pierce *et al.* (1989), measure of the OBSE construct). Early in an individual's organizational relationship, before a discernible pattern of organizational experiences have transpired, OBSE is malleable, shifting, and very much state-like. With the passage of time and an accumulation of organizational experiences OBSE increasingly evolves into an unquestioning and stable belief as to one's organizational worthiness.

Manager influences on OBSE

It is likely that manager behaviors affect employees' sense of self-worth. For example, Dansereau *et al.* (1998) position employee self-worth as a benchmark for assessing leadership effectiveness; successful individualized leadership enhances employee self-worth/self-esteem (also see Mumford *et al.*, 2000). Similarly, Lord *et al.* (1999) discuss the influences of leadership on short- and long-term employee self-concepts. What remains to be clarified is how and why different leadership behaviors affect employees' self-concepts.

In their original theorizing on OBSE, Pierce *et al.* (1989) suggested that there are three categories of organizational experiences that shape the self-perception of organizational worthiness, each of which is to some degree influenced by the role of managers and their associated behaviors. Much of the current scholarship focussed on the antecedents of OBSE center on these three types of personal experiences within the organizational context.

First, work environment structures (e.g. technology, job, and work unit design) can influence employees' OBSE. As Korman (1971) suggested, controlled social environments lead to lower levels of global self-esteem, while high involvement ones enhance global self-esteem. Increasing levels of work environment structure typically result in system-imposed regulatory behaviors (e.g. close monitoring of employees' behaviors). These highly structured work environments suggest to employees that their ideas are not valued, and that they are incapable of effective self-regulation (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). The absence of opportunities for successful self-regulation is likely to lead employees to believe that they are not trusted "around here" and question their ability to successfully engage in self-direction and self-control. As such, manager-imposed barriers to the development of a sense of competency, trustworthiness, and organizational importance lead to the emergence of low OBSE.

Conversely, social systems that allow for more autonomy and influence (i.e. opportunities for involvement, effective self-direction, and self-control) tend to promote perceptions of one's trustworthiness, competence, and capability and the development of higher levels of OBSE (Elloy, 2005; Elloy and Randolph, 1997). In sum, manager behaviors (e.g. shared leadership) that allow for employee input, decision-making, and the exercise of self-direction and self-control, are associated with higher OBSE, while those manager behaviors that are more controlling (directive) in nature are

associated with lower OBSE (McColl-Kennedy and Anderson, 2002; Vecchio, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2010).

A second source of OBSE is related to the messages received from significant others (e.g. leaders, managers, co-workers) within the workplace. When significant others tell employees that they can successfully perform their job duties, provide organizational support, and acknowledge employee accomplishments, employees' OBSE should be enhanced. Thus, manager behaviors that provide opportunities for followers to have an impact on the organization should enhance the views employees have of themselves, as opposed to being highly controlling and directive in nature (Borycki *et al.*, 1998; Gardner *et al.*, 2004; McAllister and Bigley, 2002; Vecchio, 2000). There is some empirical support for this proposition. De Cremer *et al.* (2005) examined "rewarding leadership styles" as a possible antecedent of OBSE. Rewarding leadership styles emphasize complimenting employees for their achievements, and motivating those employees to reward themselves for their successes. De Cremer *et al.* (2005) reported a positive relationship ($r=0.40$) between rewarding leadership styles and OBSE, implying that messages from significant others (like managers) have substantial effects on OBSE.

On the other hand, if managers are directive and controlling, this may have an adverse effect on the employee's OBSE since the message being sent would be that the employee is not competent or trustworthy (Vecchio, 2000). For example, Wang *et al.* (2010) found a statistically significant, negative relationship between perceived authoritarian management style and OBSE. Managers who behave as if employees have little to offer the organization beyond their labor have employees with low OBSE. Thus, managers within the organization can influence, both positively and negatively, the OBSE of their employees (Bowling *et al.*, 2010).

Finally, as highlighted in past research on global self-esteem (Brockner, 1988; Korman, 1970), employees' direct experiences of success (failure) and their attributions as to the locus of causality for those experiences also affect their level of self-esteem. Past successes coupled with self-attributions for that success lead to higher levels of self-esteem (Korman, 1971). Conversely, failures accompanied by self-attributions for those failures would lower self-esteem, and increase the uncertainty of performance on related tasks. Past success at work, under conditions of autonomy, spawns employee attributions of self-regulation and control, leading to higher levels of OBSE (Gardner and Pierce, 1998). Similar to methods proven to enhance self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), employees gain more confidence in their abilities by effectively utilizing the internal (e.g. skills) and external (e.g. equipment) resources needed to succeed at a given task. Thus, OBSE is enhanced by successfully executing work assignments and projects, over and above effects due to managerial behaviors. However, managers that ensure that employees have the resources that they need to succeed on their jobs, such as through coaching of employees, will also have employees with high levels of OBSE.

In summary, we hypothesize that managers' behaviors are a major influence upon each of the three major sources by which organizational members come to a sense of OBSE. Different leadership styles have different effects on employees' self-concepts (Lord *et al.*, 1999). We reason here that directive/controlling managerial behaviors fail to contribute to work opportunities that allow employees to engage in self-managing behaviors (i.e. autonomy). The structures that result from directive behaviors signal to employees that they are not capable of self-direction and self-control, nor can they be trusted in making work-related decisions. We hypothesize that directive management behaviors essentially suggest to the follower that they are less than competent;

otherwise there would not be the need for the manager to oversee and control the follower's behavior.

Further, Mischel (1973) notes that behavior is a function of both the person and the situation. He goes on to suggest that in strong situations, ensuing behavior is in large part a function of the situation and not that of the person. High levels of directive managerial behavior result in the creation of a strong situation for the employee. As the strength of the situation increases it becomes increasingly difficult for the employee to attribute performance success to the self, thereby limiting their access to a second source of positive OBSE. We therefore hypothesize:

H1. There is a negative relationship between directive manager behaviors and employees' OBSE.

Related to the above, it would also stand to reason that managers who share leadership with employees, develop team members through coaching, and focus on the future (implying that employees will be an integral part of the organization's future), also create conditions for the development of higher levels of OBSE. Previous research has supported the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee OBSE (Kark and Shamir, 2002; Kark *et al.*, 2003; McColl-Kennedy and Anderson, 2002; Rank *et al.*, 2009). Transformational leadership, by definition, includes a developmental aspect in which the leader helps "transform" employees to higher levels of success. One of the four components of transformational leadership, individualized consideration, is specific to understanding what each employee's goals are and to providing developmental opportunities in support of goal attainment. Chen *et al.* (2005) found that those employees who perceive that the organization was supporting them in their goals and desires had higher levels of OBSE and, as a result, higher levels of organizational commitment and performance. Elloy and Randolph (1997) and Elloy (2005, p. 259) found that "superleader" behaviors, which "help members to recognize their own capacity for decision making", had positive relationships with employees' level of OBSE. It seems that including employees in future plans and providing developmental opportunities for each employee, as an individual contributor, sends a message that the employee is valued by the organization. As a result, such employees would perceive that their self-worth is higher than those who perceive that they were not included in future planning and developmental opportunities. Given this, we offer our next hypotheses:

H2. There is a positive relationship between shared leadership behaviors and employees' OBSE.

H3. There is a positive relationship between developmental manager behaviors and employees' OBSE.

H4. There is a positive relationship between future-oriented manager behaviors and employees' OBSE.

Consequences of OBSE

Reviews of the OBSE literature (Bowling *et al.*, 2010; Pierce and Gardner, 2004) reveal that there are several personal and work-related outcomes that have been linked to this self-concept. Among these effects is a positive relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a negative relationship with turnover intentions. Those employees with higher levels of OBSE have been found to be more satisfied with their jobs. Some studies have shown that as much as 34 percent of the variance in job

satisfaction has been associated with OBSE (Pierce *et al.*, 1989). Some of this variance might be attributed to the feelings of personal achievement that results from having higher levels of OBSE (Bowden, 2002). It would seem logical that those employees who feel better about themselves and their worth to the organization (OBSE) would be more satisfied with the jobs that created those positive feelings. We offer our next hypothesis:

H5. There is a positive relationship between OBSE and job satisfaction.

In addition, based upon current scholarship, we would expect employees with higher levels of OBSE to be more committed to their organization. Perhaps this is related to the employee's identification with the organization with which they are a viable, contributing member (Bowden, 2002; Kark and Shamir, 2002; Kark *et al.*, 2003). If organizational members feel good about their value to an organization, and this creates stronger identification with that organization, it would seem to follow that they would be more affectively attached to the organization simply because they want to be affiliated with that source of pleasure. Thus, we hypothesize:

H6. There is a positive relationship between OBSE and affective organizational commitment.

Experiences that result in personal beliefs that "I count around here, I make a difference around here, and I am an important part of this place" are associated with positive affect (cf. Bowling *et al.*, 2010; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Given the hedonistic nature of the human condition, it is difficult to envision that these types of experiences would be associated with avoidance intentions and/or behaviors. Empirical evidence reveals a negative relationship between OBSE and both turnover and absenteeism intentions (Bowling *et al.*, 2010; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Employees who feel better about their overall worth to the organization want to stay with that organization. Perhaps the certainty of knowing that their value to an organization is high would override any motivations to join other organizations, where their importance is undetermined. Conversely, those who do not feel their worth is high within an organization might think about leaving that organization, and try to find an organization where they can feel more valued and worthwhile (Korman, 2001). Thus, those employees lower in OBSE would perhaps seek other employment opportunities and form higher turnover intentions. Though turnover behaviors are permanent in nature (it is rare for an organization to re-hire an employee who has quit), it would seem logical that low OBSE employees would also have stronger intentions to voluntarily be absent from work. We would expect employees lower in OBSE to form absence intentions more strongly than their high-OBSE counterparts, to protect what little self-esteem that they possess (Korman, 2001). Therefore, we offer our next two hypotheses:

H7. There is a negative relationship between OBSE and turnover intentions.

H8. There is a negative relationship between OBSE and absence intentions.

Manager influence on OBSE: consequences and process

It has been reasoned above that manager behaviors have effects on OBSE, and that OBSE is related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and withdrawal intentions. Similar observations, connecting manager behaviors with follower attitudes and behavior, have been repeatedly observed (cf. Dulebohn *et al.*, 2012). In this section, we argue that OBSE serves as a major linchpin between manager behaviors and

employee outcomes, thereby providing insight into one psychological process that explains “how” manager behavior impacts employee (follower) personal and work outcomes.

Building on the work of Shamir *et al.* (1993) we posit that manager behavior in general, and manager directive, and future and development-oriented behaviors in particular, impact follower attitudes, motivation, and behavior as a result of the effects of these behaviors on the follower’s OBSE. Energized by self-enhancement (Dipboye, 1977) and self-verification motives (Swann, 1984), employees are going to find directive managerial behaviors to be a constraint on the demonstration of one’s competence, worthiness, and growth, thereby leading to low OBSE. This in turn leads to a lowering of job satisfaction and affective commitment, and a strengthening of withdrawal intentions.

Manager behaviors that are future oriented and that promote development create conditions where one can experience self-enhancement through opportunities to reveal one’s organizational worthiness. Non-directive and future- and developmental-oriented manager behaviors express confidence in the follower. In addition, these behaviors communicate a perceived worth and efficacy in the follower, all of which positively affects the follower’s OBSE (Shamir *et al.*, 1993). Higher OBSE then promotes and sustains high commitment and membership attitudes.

In a somewhat similar vein, Shamir *et al.* (1993) hypothesize that transformational leadership is a set of leader behaviors that enhances follower self-esteem. In light of the observation that transformational leaders employ “individualized consideration” as a leadership tool, we believe the support, encouragement, and coaching provided to followers to be consistent with follower development of OBSE. In addition, two other behaviors engaged in by the transformational leader (i.e. intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation) appear to be counter to highly directive manager behavior. Thus, we reason that the positive effects stemming from non-directive manager behavior is, in part, a function of the positive effect that this behavior has upon the follower’s OBSE. Thus, we hypothesize:

- H9. OBSE mediates the negative relationships between directive manager behaviors and employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the positive relationships with turnover and absence intentions.
- H10. OBSE mediates the positive relationships between shared leadership behaviors and follower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the negative relationships with turnover and absence intentions.
- H11. OBSE mediates the positive relationships between developmental manager behaviors and follower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the negative relationships with turnover and absence intentions.
- H12. OBSE mediates the positive relationships between future-oriented manager behaviors and follower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the negative relationships with turnover and absence intentions.

Methods

Sample and procedures

Data were collected from a large multinational manufacturer of computer hardware and software. The main purpose for the data collection was to support a consultant’s

efforts to introduce self-managed teams to the work units (none of the authors were the consultant). In exchange for one of the author's participation, the consultant incorporated measures that have been previously validated in the extant organizational behavior research literature (see full description below). All of the participants held software development and support jobs (e.g. software specialist, system support consultant, software engineer). There were 1,386 participants; 82 percent were male, 64 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher, average age was 35 years, average company tenure was 5.27 years, and average job tenure was 2.62 years. One of the authors personally collected the survey data. Participants completed surveys in groups during work hours, and either handed or mailed the survey directly to the author/administrator.

Measures

OBSE: was assessed with the ten-item instrument developed and validated by Pierce *et al.* (1989).

Overall job satisfaction: was measured with the 20-item Minnesota Satisfaction Scale (Weiss *et al.*, 1967).

Organizational commitment: was measured with the 15-item Organization Commitment Scale (Mowday *et al.*, 1979).

Turnover and absence intentions: there are no widely accepted measures of these behavioral intentions, which led us to create items similar to those used in past research (e.g. Chen and Spector, 1992; Hom *et al.*, 1984). Employing a five-point Likert-type scale, we employed two items to index absence intent (e.g. "I expect to be absent from work at least once in the next two months") and two for turnover intent (e.g. "I expect to quit my job within the next three years") which were summed to form a measure of the two behavioral intention variables.

Perceived management/supervisor behaviors: were measured with a single categorical item developed specifically for this organization. It asked each participant to describe the single role that best described their "manager or supervisor". Options were: directs each member's work (Directs), manages group effort with focus on goals (Goal-oriented), shares leadership with members who are goal-focussed (Shares Leadership), coaches the team and manages team interface with other groups or managers (Coaches and Interfaces), and focusses on team future and team development (Future-oriented). The group goal-oriented manager role does not provide a test of our hypotheses, but results for it are reported below for exploratory purposes.

In an ideal situation a widely used and previously validated measure of leadership style (e.g. LMX; Scandura and Graen, 1984) would have been employed. In our study, this was not possible as the organization and consultant had specific objectives for this measure that were not consistent with existing leadership style scales. The operationalization of manager behaviors that we employed is not uncommon in leadership research, as it allowed participants to rate manager behaviors in a way that "typecast" their managers in terms that are familiar to them (e.g. Bass and Avolio, 1994; Sosik and Dionne, 1997 in McColl-Kennedy and Anderson, 2002).

Analyses

Over the last 25 years the majority of research on mediated relationships has used a statistical procedure outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Recently this method for detecting mediation effects has been found to have low statistical power, requiring two

statistically significant relationships to support mediation when only one is needed to provide support for an indirect relationship (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). In addition, when a Sobel test is employed to test the statistical significance of mediation (the product of the regression coefficients for the $X \rightarrow M$ (a) and $M \rightarrow Y$ (b) pathways) it assumes a normal distribution of the test statistic under the null hypothesis (where X is the predictor variable, M is the mediator, and Y is the dependent variable). This assumption has been seriously questioned, as the product of the two coefficients (ab) is usually skewed and non-symmetrical, and this results in an underpowered test of mediation (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). Instead, we use bootstrapping to create the sampling distribution for ab , and then derive 95 percent confidence intervals for the observed mediation coefficients. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric approach to mediation tests that does not make assumptions about the sampling distribution of the mediation test statistic (ab). If the resulting confidence intervals for the test statistics do not include zero, there is support for a statistically significant mediated relationship. In our case, we used multiple regression to calculate the ab mediation coefficient, and tested the coefficient with 10,000 bootstrapped samples from the raw data (see Hayes and Preacher, 2014; Preacher and Hayes, 2004, for full descriptions, the rationale for and the execution of this method). In addition, we analyzed the raw data using an SPSS macro written by Hayes and Preacher (Mediate, available at www.afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html#sobel) to accommodate the categorical nature of our predictor variable (participant's description of the manager's role in supervising employees).

Results

Table I presents the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the study variables. Because correlations between the single categorical managerial role variable and the other variables are non-interpretable, we created five binary (0, 1) variables to represent each of the five managerial roles, where 0 is not checked, and 1 is checked for the role that describes the participant's manager's behavior. These are reported only for descriptive purposes, to suggest the nature of the relationships between each of the management roles and the other variables measured in the study. Analyses reported below provide more precise, simultaneous tests of these role relationships.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. OBSE ^a	2.91	0.76	(0.91) ^c				
2. Org. commitment	3.16	0.42	0.27**	(0.63)			
3. Overall job satisfaction	3.65	0.56	0.43**	0.26**	(0.88)		
4. Quit intent	2.44	1.25	-0.47**	-0.29**	-0.68**	(0.73)	
5. Absence intent	2.02	1.08	-0.18**	0.01	-0.06*	0.08**	(0.71)
6. Direct members ^b	0.05	0.21	0.08**	0.08**	0.05*	-0.05	0.01
7. Manages group with goals ^b	0.14	0.35	-0.37**	-0.13**	-0.03	0.14**	0.12**
8. Shares leadership ^b	0.25	0.43	-0.01	-0.17**	-0.31**	0.27**	0.08**
9. Coaches and interfaces ^b	0.42	0.49	0.00	0.17**	0.01	-0.12**	-0.11**
10. Focuses on future ^b	0.14	0.35	0.32**	0.06*	0.36**	-0.27**	-0.06*

Notes: ^aOrganization-based self-esteem; ^bcoded 0 = no, 1 = yes, point biserial correlations are reported where appropriate; ^csample coefficient α appear on diagonal in parentheses, where appropriate. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table I. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of study variables

Consistent with much prior research (Pierce and Gardner, 2004), OBSE is significantly correlated ($p < 0.05$) with job satisfaction (0.43; *H5*), organization commitment (0.27; *H6*), and quit (-0.47 ; *H7*) and absence (-0.18 ; *H8*) intent. In addition, OBSE is significantly and positively correlated with “directs members” (0.08; *H9*) and “focuses on the future” (0.32; *H12*) managerial roles, but negatively with the “manages group with goals” (-0.37). There are no specific hypotheses about this latter relationship. The lack of a significant correlation with the shared leadership, and coaches and interfaces roles was unexpected. The positive relationship between the “directs” role and OBSE is opposite to what was hypothesized. We discuss possible reasons for these results in the discussion section.

Tables II-IV present the results from the tests of the mediation relationships. Note that the reported coefficients are non-standardized and therefore should not be interpreted like correlation coefficients. We used effects coding of the categorical predictor variable (managerial role). This contrasts the means for each managerial role against the pooled (grand) mean for all of the roles. Because this type of analysis arbitrarily uses one category as a reference group (directs members in our case), two sets of analyses are required to obtain all of the results reported in these tables (see Cohen *et al.*, 2003, p. 315). Table II summarizes the total direct relationships of the different managerial roles with the four outcome variables in the study. The Baron and Kenny (1986) test for mediation requires significant relationships between the predictor and outcome variables, but this is not now believed to be necessary for an indirect effect to occur (as opposed to mediation; see Preacher and Hayes, 2004). As a result, these results are reported here for informational purposes only.

Table III summarizes the results for the relationships between the predictor (managerial role) and mediator (OBSE), and is analogous to a one-way ANOVA

Table II.
Total direct relationships of perceived managerial roles with outcome variables

Managerial Role	Organization commitment	Overall job satisfaction	Quit intent	Absence intent
Directs members	0.15**	0.08	-0.24**	0.02
Manages group with goals	-0.14**	-0.10*	0.48**	0.27**
Shares leadership	-0.13**	-0.37**	0.65**	0.11
Coaches and interfaces	0.07**	-0.06*	-0.12*	-0.18**
Focusses on future	0.05*	0.44*	-0.77**	-0.22**
R^2	0.25	0.19	0.15	0.03
$F(4, 1381)$	22.94**	80.02**	58.78**	9.12**

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table III.
Direct relationships of perceived managerial roles with organization-based self-esteem

Managerial role	OBSE
Directs members	0.25**
Manages group with goals	-0.73**
Shares leadership	-0.05
Coaches and interfaces	-0.04
Focusses on future	0.56**

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

	Org. commitment		Overall job satisfaction		Quit intent		Absence intent		
	B	LLCI	B	LLCI	B	LLCI	B	LLCI	
Directs members	0.03	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.10*	-0.18	-0.12*	-0.06	-0.03*
Manages group with goals	-0.10	-0.13	-0.21	-0.25	-0.18*	0.51	0.43	0.16	0.26*
Shares leadership	-0.08	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	0.00	0.04	-0.01	0.01	-0.00
Coaches and interfaces	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.00
Focuses on future	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.08*	-0.40	-0.33*	-0.13	-0.06*

Notes: B, mediation coefficient (*ab*); LLCI, bootstrapped lower limit confidence interval (2.5 percent); ULCI, bootstrapped upper limit confidence interval (97.5 percent); 10,000 bootstrapped samples of raw data. *Significant mediation effect; confidence interval does not include 0

Table IV.
Tests of mediation
effect of OBSE
on managerial
role – outcome
relationships

(Cohen and Cohen, 1983). Three of the different categories of manager role perceptions have statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) relationships with OBSE: positive for “directs members” (0.25), and “focus on the future” (0.56), and negative for manages group with goals (−0.73). The positive relationship between the directive management role and OBSE is contrary to *H1*. The positive relationship between the future-oriented management role and OBSE supports *H4*. *H2* and *H3* are not supported as there are no significant relationships between shared leadership (*H2*) and developmental (*H3*) managerial behaviors, and OBSE. Though not hypothesized, there is a significant negative relationship between managing the group with goals, and OBSE. Table IV presents the results for the tests of mediation. A statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) mediation relationship is demonstrated by a 95 percent confidence interval around the obtained coefficient that does not include zero. There is evidence that OBSE mediates the relationship between “directs members”, “focuses on future”, and “manages group with goals” perceived managerial roles for all four of the employee outcome variables. The results indicate that OBSE mediates a positive relationship between “directs members” and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a negative relationship with turnover and absence intent. This is contrary to *H9*. The results also indicate that OBSE mediates a positive relationship between future-oriented managerial behaviors and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a negative relationship with turnover and absence intent. This finding supports *H12*. Stated differently, employees who perceive their managers as clarifying expectations, or as one who anticipates future changes in managing the group, also have higher OBSE, which in turn has its expected relationships with the dependent variables. Finally, while not hypothesized, OBSE mediates a negative relationship between group goal-oriented managerial behaviors and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a positive relationship with turnover and absence intent. Those managers who are perceived as leading their work groups with a focus on group goals have employees with lower levels of OBSE. OBSE does not mediate the shared leadership or the coaching and interfacing managerial roles on any of the outcome variables, providing no support for *H10* and *H11*.

Discussion

OBSE significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and negatively correlated with both quit and absence intentions, consistent with our hypotheses and much prior research (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Additionally, OBSE is positively and significantly related to the “directs members” and “focuses on the future” manager behaviors; the latter relation is as expected, but the former relationship was unanticipated. We expected that managers who focus on the future would have a positive impact on follower OBSE, similar to the effects of a transformational leader’s “individualized consideration” component (Shamir *et al.*, 1993). However, prior theorizing related to the self-regulatory processes of self-enhancement and verification (Dipboye, 1977; Swann, 1984) led us to propose that directive manager behaviors will have an adverse impact on follower OBSE, and as a consequence be dissatisfying. While our empirical observations run counter to this proposition, there may be mitigating circumstances related to the host organization’s transition to self-managed teams. It might be that this major change to employees’ routines created ambiguity for them. Managers who directed employees’ efforts during this transition may have alleviated this ambiguity, which in turn had positive effects on

OBSE (see Pierce *et al.*, 1989). This notion is similar to the propositions extended by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) in their situational (life cycle) leadership theory. Early in one's organizational tenure, directive behaviors exhibited by managers might be perceived as providing clarity for one's role in the organization, thereby contributing positively to OBSE. While our observation was unexpected, future research should explore the boundary conditions and dynamics associated with the directive behavior – OBSE relationship. Directive manager behaviors are not always perceived negatively by employees, and may result in employee successes that bolster OBSE.

OBSE was found to mediate the positive relationship between future-oriented manager behaviors and both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and mediates the negative relationship between future-oriented manager behaviors and both turnover and absence intent. Since future-oriented behaviors imply confidence in the follower, we proposed that these effects on OBSE would then be reflected in employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover and absence intent. Since, by definition, OBSE is related to the follower's self-perceived value and worth to the organization, it would seem that manager behaviors that reflect confidence in the follower's abilities would facilitate a beneficial subsequent impact on the four dependent variables (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, absence and turnover intent). The implication for managers is that they should convey to employees that the employee fits into the work group's long-term plans, as long as that is true. Related, managers should not assume that employees view the work environment in the same way as the manager does. Managers need to draw employees' attention to decisions and actions that affirm the employees' importance to the group (cf. Gardner and Pierce, 2013).

The results obtained in this study offer several contributions to both theory and practice. First, the results observed between OBSE and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and both turnover and absence intentions provide further support to the extant OBSE theoretical and empirical literature (Bowling *et al.*, 2010; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). In addition, we extend OBSE research into the area of leadership. The results obtained here strengthens leadership theory in general, and transformational (Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994) and situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969) theories in particular. It also supports the Lord *et al.* (1999) proposition that different leadership styles will have different effects on employees' self-concepts. By showing support for the relationship between OBSE and the individualized consideration aspect of transformational leadership, we provide further support for the positive impact that transformational leadership can have on desirable organizational variables. In addition, we provide possible research directions to explore situational (life-cycle) effects on follower OBSE by finding a possible exception to the expected relationship between directive leadership and employee OBSE, based on role ambiguity within the organization.

We found fairly substantial effects of the "manages group with goals" management role on OBSE, and that OBSE mediated the group goals management role on the employee outcome variables. We did not develop formal hypotheses about the effects of managing the work group with goals, but are surprised that the effect is large and negative. Perhaps the emphasis on group goals comes at the expense of the individual consideration that bolsters OBSE. If a manager does not simultaneously dedicate efforts to both individual and group success, one or the other might suffer (see Lord *et al.*, 1999). In the situation where group goals receive the majority of the manager's

attention, OBSE of individual employees might decline. This conjecture warrants further investigation, given that many managers are assessed in terms of the success of both employees and the work group.

Though the study has several contributions, there are also some limitations that should be noted. First, the management behavior measure has some inherent limitations (e.g. the inability to examine the instrument's internal consistency reliability). Given the objectives of the management of this organization, we were limited to utilizing a single ipsative item to measure perceived manager behaviors. While this measurement approach to leadership research has been previously employed (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Sosik and Dionne, 1997), it is accompanied by limitations. Any attempts to replicate this work might utilize an instrument that has stronger supportive construct validation evidence. The data we collected were cross-sectional in nature. As a consequence, the relationships we found cannot establish causality. In the cases of empirical support for some of our hypotheses, they merely reflect what would be found if the hypotheses were true, at a $p < 0.05$ level. This investigation is also restricted by the fact that all of our data were obtained from a single source (employees). Thus, these observations are susceptible to common method bias. Finally, our sample size was large, but all of our survey participants come from a single organization within a single industry, who were experiencing a major organizational change. These conditions restrict the generalizability of our research findings. This limitation furthers the call for this study to be replicated involving a more heterogeneous sampling of manager-follower relationships and organizations. Additionally, while we mention self-efficacy as a related concept, the current study did not examine the possible relationship between self-efficacy and OBSE. Future studies could explore these possible relationships more closely.

Conclusion

The study conducted here contributes to OBSE research through its examination of the potential impact that manager behaviors have on follower OBSE. OBSE is a critical variable within organizational research, and it is important that we continue to examine its antecedents and consequences. The positive impact that OBSE can have within the organizational context is enhanced by knowledge of the factors that contribute to OBSE. It is important that we continue to engage in replication, convergence, and extension research efforts, in order to explore the boundaries of the variables of interest, and to expand the network of related variables in order to continue to inform both theory and practice. Finally, the empirical observations reported here provide some insight into the question "How does leadership affect employee personal and work outcomes?" by suggesting that at least in part it may be through the effects that these behaviors have upon employees' OBSE.

Note

1. Note that we prefer to use the term "leader" to describe managers who also engage in effective leader behaviors. We use the term "manager" to describe those employees given the legitimate, reward, and coercive power to regulate the behaviors of subordinates for the benefit of the organization. However, in our study we asked participants to describe their managers and supervisors, and use the term manager in the context of our research design.

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