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**BAD APPLES, BAD BARRELS, AND BROKEN FOLLOWERS? AN EMPIRICAL
EXAMINATION OF CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON FOLLOWER
PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO AVERSIVE LEADERSHIP**

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by

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ABSTRACT

Research on destructive leadership has largely focused on characteristics of the leader thought to be responsible for harmful outcomes in organizations. Recent findings, however, demonstrate the need to examine important contextual factors underlying destructive leadership processes. As such, the present study examined the role of an organization's climate and financial performance on subordinate perceptions and reactions (e.g. whistle-blowing behavior) to aversive leadership, a form of destructive leadership based on coercive power. Additionally, the present effort sought to determine whether such perceptions and reactions hold for all leaders, or if they vary depending on the leader's gender. 177 undergraduate students from a large northeastern university completed an online survey after reading a series of fictional email exchanges between various members of a hypothetical organization. Twelve sets of emails, one for each study condition, depicted a fictional organizational situation involving an aversive leader and differed only in terms of the study's three independent variables, leader gender, organizational climate, and organizational performance. Results suggest that aversive leadership, and destructive leadership more broadly, is a complex process resulting from the confluence of leaders, followers, and the organizational environment. By taking a follower-centric approach that focuses on important characteristics of the organizational environment and leader, it is our hope that the present research offers a more holistic perspective on destructive leadership. Theoretical and practical implications as well as future research directions are also discussed.

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Bad Apples, Bad Barrels, and Broken Followers? An Empirical Examination of Contextual

Influences on Follower Perceptions and Reactions to Aversive Leaders

“People can be made to see paradise as hell, and also the other way around, to consider the most wretched sort of life as paradise.” ~Adolf Hitler

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil but because of those who look on and do nothing.” ~ Albert Einstein

The “Dark” Side of Leadership

With the exception of a few (Mumford, Gessner, Connelly, O’Connor, & Clifton, 1993; O’Connor, Mumford, Clifton, Gessner, & Connelly, 1995; Conger, 1998; Tepper, 2000; Hogan & Hogan, 2001), most leadership studies have focused on the positive relationships and outcomes of leader actions (Yukl, 1999; Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). In the “typical leadership study” (Hunter, Bedell-Avers, & Mumford, 2007), the leader is viewed as someone of unique, almost superhuman qualities. In fact, research on the “Romance of Leadership” suggests observers often erroneously assume that leaders possess a herculean ability to control the fates of their respective organizations (Meindl, et al., 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). As such, we have tended to place leaders on pedestals in our society, admiring and extolling them for their uncanny capacity to motivate followers and spur positive organizational change. This “heroic conceptualization” of leaders, however, fails to consider those cases in which leaders exert deleterious effects on subordinates and organizations (Hunter et al., 2007).

Underscoring this “dark” side of leadership, there is a general consensus among researchers that leaders sometimes make decisions that harm followers and long-term organizational performance (Mumford et al., 1993; Bedell-Avers, Hunter, & Mumford, in press). Indeed, research suggests leaders are not always interested in affecting change for

the good of the organization and its members, but rather are sometimes motivated by their own idiosyncratic interests (O'Connor et al., 1995). In explanation, House and Howell (1992) proposed the existence of a personalized charismatic leadership orientation, based on personal dominance, authoritarian behavior, self aggrandizement, exploitation of others, and self-interested motivations. Since House and Howell's (1992) seminal work, a number of researchers have begun to investigate various dysfunctional traits, nefarious behavior, and harmful outcomes associated with destructive leadership styles.

Although still in its infancy, research on destructive leadership includes a wide array of labels describing various forms of harmful leader behavior. Among others, Tepper (2000) defined "abusive supervision" as the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact, while Ashforth (1994) defined "petty tyranny" as the oppressive use of one's power over another. Recently, Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley and Harvey (2007) defined "leader bullying" as strategically selected tactics of influence by leaders designed to convey a particular image and place targets in a submissive, powerless position whereby they are more easily influenced and controlled in order to achieve personal and/or organizational objectives. Other destructive forms of leadership have fallen under such rubrics as "toxic leadership" (Frost, 2004; Lipman-Blumen, 2008; Goldman, 2006), "narcissistic leadership" (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), "bad leadership" (Kellerman, 2004), "hypnotic leadership" (Popper, 2001), "laissez-faire leadership" (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland & Hetland, 2007), "social undermining" (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon, 2002) and "incivility" (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000).

An examination of such behaviors reveals links to a wide range of negative subordinate affective and behavioral outcomes, including decreased self-esteem

(Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007; Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Ashforth 1994), self-efficacy (Duffy, Ganster, Pagon, 2002) and social competency (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007); increased anti-citizenship behaviors (Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994); increased tension, anger, resistance and avoidance, and lowered performance goals (Baron, 1988); decreased job and life satisfaction, normative and affective commitment, and increased work-family conflict, turnover intentions and psychological distress (Tepper, 2000); and decreased performance and work unit cohesiveness, as well as increased frustration, stress, reactance, helplessness and work alienation (Ashforth, 1994). Recently, Schaubroeck, Walumbwa, Ganster and Kepes (2007) tested a model of the interactive effects of job scope, leader hostility and leader negative affectivity on subordinates' physical and psychological strain, job attitudes and organizational commitment. Their results suggest that for subordinates reporting less enriched jobs, leader hostility and/or trait negative affectivity exact harmful effects on anxiety levels, somatic complaints, depression, dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. Taken together, these findings highlight some of the harmful consequences associated with various types of destructive leadership.

Furthermore, historically notorious examples such as Hitler's quest to exterminate the Jews and Stalin's Gulag labor camps, as well as recent cases of corporate corruption at firms such as Enron and Bear Stearns not only highlight the impact destructive leadership can have on organizations but society in general. As such, they reinforce the importance of studying those cases where leaders abuse their power and produce destructive outcomes (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). In a similar vein, national tragedies such as the meltdown at Chernobyl, the Challenger space shuttle disasters, and the U.S. government's mishandling of hurricane Katrina underscore the need to understand what happens when

leaders make disastrous errors (Hunter, Tate, & Dzieweczynski, in press; Bedell-Avers, Hunter, & Mumford, in press).

In sum, it is critical to recognize that leaders are not always infallible heroes who positively transform their followers and organizations. Rather, in reality, they sometimes behave badly and/or make critical errors that undermine the greater good. In light of these realizations, many researchers have begun to drift away from this “heroic conceptualization” of leaders and move towards a more comprehensive view of leadership, taking into account its “dark” side (Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Mumford, Espejo, Hunter, Bedell-Avers, Eubanks, & Connelly; Ashforth, Gioia, Robinson, & Trevino, 2008). However, questions still remain regarding the important role of contextual factors in shaping destructive leadership processes, and how such factors interact with characteristics of destructive leaders and their subordinates to produce harmful outcomes. As such, the present study examines the role of an organization’s climate and financial performance, as well as the leader’s gender in shaping destructive leadership processes. Before moving on, however, it is important to provide some theoretical background regarding the role of context in the destructive leadership process.

Destructive Leadership and Contextual Factors

With the recognition of “dark” side leadership as an important branch of research, an emergent body of work has surfaced on this new area of inquiry (Popper, 2001). Despite this encouraging trend, the literature remains saturated with studies focusing on the leader as the driving force behind negative outcomes. Many researchers have sought to explain destructive brands of leadership in terms of negative life themes (O’Connor et al., 1995; Ferris et al., 2007; Padilla et al., 2007) and dispositional traits such as narcissism (House & Howell, 1992; Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Hogan, Curphy, &

Hogan, 1994; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Khoo & Burch, 2007), Machiavellianism (House & Howell, 1992; Bedell, Hunter, Angie, & Vert, 2006), arrogance (Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), low self-esteem (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), borderline personality disorder (Goldman, 2006) and a strong need for power and dominance (House & Howell, 1992; Ashforth, 1994; O'Connor et al., 1995; Padilla et al., 2007). As such, previous research has largely failed to consider the context whereby leader behaviors occur and the influence of extraneous variables within that context (Yukl, 2006; Hunter et al., 2007).

Fortunately, promising new work by Padilla and colleagues (2007) offers a more integrative approach to destructive leadership, arguing that its emergence depends on three components, termed “the toxic triangle.” According to the authors, destructive leadership results not simply from dysfunctional leaders, but instead is the product of such leaders interacting with susceptible followers and conducive environments. Moreover, there is evidence that contextual factors play an important role in creating such environments. Gessner, O'Connor, Mumford, and Clifton (1995), for example, found that competitive pressure, a non-supportive family, a negative peer group, negative adult models, alienation, life stressors, and financial need, contribute to an individual's proclivity toward engaging in destructive acts.

Additionally, Mumford, Espejo, Hunter, Bedell-Avers, Eubanks, & Connelly (2007) conducted a historiometric analysis of eighty historically prominent leaders to investigate individual, group, organizational and environmental factors thought to predispose ideological leaders toward violent behavior. Their findings showed that institutional sanctioning of violence, group insularity, and environmental corruption all differentiated violent from non-violent leaders. Moreover, group insularity and corruption

were stronger predictors of violence than a leader's distortion of reality, suggesting that contextual factors play a lead role in the emergence of violent leaders and create the potential for expression of their violent tendencies.

Research also suggests that certain organizational conditions may act as a catalyst for bullying behavior. Among other factors, role conflict and interpersonal conflicts (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007), heavy workload, poor team atmosphere, and low job autonomy (Brotheridge & Lee, 2006), perceived power imbalance, low perceived perpetrator costs, high intraorganizational competition, reward systems for bullying behavior, and a highly politicized organizational climate, (Salin, 2003), and widespread organizational change such as downsizing and restructuring (McCarthy, 1996; Sheehan, 1996) are associated with bullying in the workplace. Recently, Ferris et al. (2007) argued that individuals' perceptions of organizational politics create an environment of uncertainty whereby leaders may seek to reestablish control by engaging in political influence tactics such as bullying. Additionally, they suggested that large organizations employing workers with relatively low levels of autonomy and independence tend to promote bullying.

Finally, in an analysis of petty tyranny, Ashforth (1994) noted that "powerless" managers who lack the means (i.e. skills, authority, credibility, autonomy, opportunities for participation, resources, etc.) necessary to cope with work demands and influence important events often lord what power they do have and create psychological distance between themselves and subordinates. Interestingly, the opposite scenario may also promote tyrannical behavior. That is, individuals given more power tend to be corrupted by their newfound authority, making them more likely to engage in close, tyrannical supervision. Ashforth (1994) also suggested that stressors may contribute to the emergence of petty tyranny. That is to say, subordinates who experience stress often look to their

superiors for strong, directive leadership, while managers may respond to stress with more directive and overtly forceful behavior.

Taken together, the current literature suggests a need to examine the many forms of destructive leadership, and leadership in general, from a multilevel perspective (Hunter et al., 2007). To focus exclusively on the leader as the driving force behind negative outcomes may be to miss the complete picture of what is actually going on. Instead, Padilla and colleagues (2007) have argued that destructive leadership ought to be viewed as the product of leaders, followers, and contextual factors interacting with one another. In fact, Robinson and Bennett (1995) noted that one form of destructive behavior in organizations, workplace deviance, depends on the context in which the behavior occurs. According to the authors, workplace deviance exists when a behavior violates significant organizational norms (e.g. climate) and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both. Given Robinson and Bennett's (1995) definition, it is clear that organizational climate and outcomes matter when defining bad behavior in the workplace. However, it remains largely unclear to what degree an organization's climate and economic health shape subordinates' perceptions of bad behavior on the part of leaders, and whether such factors affect the likelihood that employees' will report such behavior to organizational watchdogs or those in higher positions of authority.

As such, the present study seeks to determine whether an organization's climate and overall financial performance have the potential to influence follower perceptions of aversive leadership, a specific form of destructive leadership. Pearce and Sims (2002) defined aversive leadership as a brand of management which primarily relies on coercive power through the specific use of intimidation tactics and dispensing of reprimands. Additionally, consistent with Padilla and colleagues' (2007) "toxic triangle" theory of

destructive leadership, the current study seeks to elaborate on whether levels of perceived aversiveness change depending on characteristics of the leader, and specifically the leader's gender. Finally, the study seeks to understand whether all three factors (i.e. organizational climate, organizational performance, and leader gender) affect subordinates' willingness to "blow the whistle" on aversive leadership behavior.

In so doing, we hope the present effort contributes to our understanding of destructive leadership as a multifaceted and dynamic process, consisting of complex interactions between leaders, followers, and the work environment. We also hope to shed light on how such interactions can have important implications for organizations that both acknowledge and fail to recognize such factors.

Organizational Climate and Aversive Leadership

Perceptions of aversive leadership. As previously mentioned, Padilla and colleagues (2007) have argued for the need to understand destructive leadership in terms of a "toxic triangle," consisting of three core factors: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments. In response to this call for a more holistic approach, the current study seeks to expand on the role of contextual factors in the aversive leadership process. Specifically, there is a dearth of research examining the influence of organizational climate on such processes. That is, are leaders perceived more or less aversively depending on whether an organization's climate is tolerant or intolerant of aversive leadership? In other words, it may be that highly competitive, hierarchical organizations maintain "get the job done at all costs" value systems (Ferris et al., 2007) that send implicit messages to their employees that aversive leader behavior is permissible and/or necessary for achieving organizationally desirable ends.

In its broadest sense, organizational climate can be thought of as “distinct perceptions and beliefs about an organization’s physical and social environment” (Dickson, Resick, & Hanges, 2006, p. 351). At the individual-level of analysis, psychological climate refers to individuals’ perceptions and the meanings they ascribe to their environment (Dickson et al., 2006). As such, organizational climates provide members with cues regarding how to make sense of the broader organizational context (Schneider & Reichers, 1983; Schneider, 1975) – that is, the practices, procedures, and kinds of behaviors that are rewarded, supported and expected by the organization (Schneider, 1990). In so doing, organizational climates foster institutionalized normative systems that guide member behavior (Schneider, 1983). Reichers and Schneider (1990) suggested that such normative systems lead to shared perceptions amongst organizational members “of the way things are around here” (p. 22).

Research suggests that such normative influences can create widely accepted systems of dysfunctional behavior, shape employee perceptions of normality, and promote a variety of negative organizational and employee outcomes (Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006; Balthazard et al., 1987). In fact, several authors have suggested that organizational climates can serve as social control systems based on shared norms (de Rivera, Kurrien, & Olsen, 2007; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996). Much like those of religious extremists or cult groups, dysfunctional organizational climates reflect a shared normative order with the capacity to construct social realities, influence members’ focus of attention, shape interpretations of events, and guide attitudes and behavior.

In fact, Ferris et al. (2007) argued that leader bullying may be promulgated by organizations who adopt a “get the job done at all costs” system of normative behavior, which accepts bullying as a means to desired organizational outcomes. Furthermore,

several authors have suggested that workplace bullying may become an accepted pattern of behavior that is supported by management structures and policies (Einarsen, 2000; Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003). In such cases, victims may perceive these negative behaviors as an unpleasant but, nonetheless, normal part of the organization's climate that they must cope with through fear and resignation (Jennifer et al., 2003).

Moreover, in a study by Mumford et al. (1993), individuals were placed into leadership roles and asked questions reflecting decisions to harm others and the organization as a part of a regional sales manager assessment center. Results suggested that destructive individuals would not necessarily make decisions that harmed others unless such actions were accepted as normative by an authority figure. As such, perceptions of what is considered standard leader behavior may be influenced by an organization's climate. Thus, outwardly abusive leader behaviors may become normative to both leaders and subordinates who perceive such behavior as "a part of the job."

Ashforth (1994) also argued that tyrannical behavior in organizations might be legitimated by organizational norms that stress compliance through the abusive use of authority. For example, prison inmates and army soldiers are frequently deindividuated and depersonalized through the routine use of uniforms, derogatory labels, and other symbols of subordinate status, as well as subjected to debasement and obedience tests and close, authoritarian supervision. In so doing, such institutionalized behavior serves the functional purpose of stripping inmates and soldiers of their former identities and internalizes the importance of obedience and conformity. Thus, when viewed in a normative context, such behavior may be perceived as aversive by individuals, but nonetheless consistent with an organization's social climate.

To a lesser extent, aversive leadership may also exist in more everyday occupational settings. In mechanistic organizations, such as auto manufacturers and other mass production departments, for example, upper management places a high premium on efficiency (Ashforth, 1994). As such, compliance with centralized decisions and formal operating procedures is a top priority. Moreover, managers may be encouraged and reinforced for displaying behaviors that reflect a strict, authoritarian, and aversive leadership style. Complying with such leaders and abiding by strict rules and procedures may also be, to a certain extent, seen as necessary by workers who wish to remain safe on the job. For instance, the rebellious construction worker may get killed if he does not conform to the stringent guidelines of a superior when working on a skyscraper. Consequently, subordinates may feel ambivalent toward tyrannical superiors, viewing them simultaneously as aversive and necessary. In turn, workers may not raise concerns about such leaders for fear of reduced safety at work.

Additionally, several authors have suggested that the normative systems enacted by an organization's climate play a substantial role in the kind of leadership behavior that is accepted, enacted, and effective in organizations. For example, Chitayat and Venezia (1984) demonstrated that interorganizational differences in management styles in business and nonbusiness organizations were mainly attributable to differences in organizational climate, norms, and structure, rather than to differences in power and information. Finally, several studies have shown that individuals are more willing to accept antisocial behavior as normal within workgroups that espouse dysfunctional behavior (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998; Glomb & Liao, 2003).

Overall, these findings suggest that an organization's climate has the capacity to shape perceptions and behavior by influencing how people interpret various aspects of their

work environment. Consistent with the social information processing approach (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978), individuals look to and process the values, norms, behaviors and expectations they collect from a particular situation in order to guide their behavior. In so doing, the individual learns what behaviors are acceptable within a given organizational context (Van Fleet and Griffin, 2006). As such, it is hypothesized that aversive leader behaviors may too become normative social phenomena whereby subordinates perceive such behavior as accepted by their organization (i.e. consistent with its climate) and inherently less aversive within a tolerant organizational context.

Hypothesis 1: Aversive leaders will be perceived as less aversive in the context of tolerant organizational climates than in the context of intolerant organizational climates.

Whistle-blowing intentions. Additionally, there is reason to believe that organizational climates play a significant role in determining whether employees report aversive leaders. Drawing on the whistle-blowing literature, it is widely accepted that certain normative practices, such as organizational silence codes, permit climates where fraud, waste, and abuse have the opportunity to flourish (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2006). According to Cullen, Victor, and Bronson (1993), ethical climates reflect the ethical dimensions of an organization's culture, which shape members' perceptions of the ethical norms and identity of the organization. In fact, Rothwell and Baldwin (2007) recently found amongst a sample of 300 Georgia police officers that a friendship or team climate significantly predicted individuals' willingness to report misconduct on the job.

Previous research also suggests that perceptions of whether an organization encourages whistle-blowing and the degree to which the organization provides information on where to "blow the whistle" are important factors affecting individuals' willingness to report nefarious behavior in the workplace (Keenan, 2002). Perceptions of retaliation or

lack of company-wide protections for employees who report abuse may also preclude employees from reporting such behavior to organizational watchdogs (Keenan, 2002; Miceli, Rehg, Near, & Ryan, 1999). Employees may perceive greater risks in speaking out, especially if the organization adopts a culture in which operational issues overshadow ethical concerns in relation to practice (Clinard, 1983).

In sum, organizational climates have the potential to strongly influence how employees think about their organization, their jobs within the organization, and the behaviors they choose to engage in on a daily basis. As such, it can be argued that employees who work in organizations where aversive leaders are tolerated most likely do not believe that their organization supports the reporting of aversive leader behavior. Such employees may come to think of whistle-blowing behavior as nothing more than “tattle-tailing” and incongruent with organizational policies and objectives. Moreover, they may be frightened to report aversive leaders for fear of retaliation by the organization in the form of demotion or termination. Such employees may as a result opt to forgo “blowing the whistle” and instead choose to remain in silence. Thus, it theorized that organizational climates that are tolerant of aversive leaders may limit the organization’s ability to combat and expose wrongdoing. Specifically, it is hypothesized that individuals will be less likely to report aversive leaders in the context of tolerant organizational climates than in the context of intolerant ones.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals will be less likely to report aversive leader behavior in the context of tolerant organizational climates than in the context of intolerant organizational climates.

Organizational Performance and Aversive Leadership

Perceptions of aversive leadership. Further investigating the role of context, research also suggests the degree to which an organizational outcome is either positive or negative may influence how a particular leader is perceived (Meindl et al., 1985). For instance, Meindl and colleagues (1985; Meindl, 1995) argued that the concept of leadership is a firmly ingrained aspect of observers' socially constructed organizational realities. Stemming from complex thought systems, such realities help individuals understand and interpret organizational activities and outcomes (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl, 1995). As such, they emphasize leadership as a fundamental process and the driving force behind organizational events and activities in perceivers' minds (Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl, 1995). Consequently, leaders have been elevated to a highly romanticized, heroic status, amounting to a general trust in the leadership abilities of those in the uppermost positions of organizational authority. Such grandiose views of leadership, according to Meindl et al. (1985), engender a perceptual bias whereby observers believe leaders do or should have the ability to control and influence various facets of organizational life and the ultimate fate of their respective organizations.

As a result, observers and organizational members tend to attribute responsibility for both positive *and* negative organizational outcomes to leaders (Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl, 1995). That is, leaders are often praised for positive outcomes and blamed for negative ones (Meindl et al., 1985; Salancik & Meindl, 1984). This social phenomenon, known as the "Romance of Leadership," stems from a "biased preference to understand important but causally indeterminate and ambiguous organizational events and occurrences in terms of leadership," (Meindl et al., 1985, p. 80; Calder, 1977; Pfeffer, 1977) neglecting the countless number of known, unknown and indeterminate causal forces interacting with one another to produce and sustain such

organizational activity (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). This romanticized conception of leadership, thus, simplifies the inherent complexities underlying organizational life, translating them into straightforward and simple terms that are easy to understand, live with, and communicate to others (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987).

In support of this romanticized view of leadership, Meindl et al. (1985) conducted a series of experimental studies in which participants read vignettes about several hypothetical organizations and were asked to account for differences in their overall sales performance. Findings showed that the larger the performance outcome, whether it be positive or negative, the more likely observers were to infer that a leader was responsible for influencing such outcomes (Meindl et al., 1985). In a follow-up study, Meindl and Ehrlich (1987) found that laboratory participants provided better evaluations of performance outcomes attributed to leadership factors than to the same outcomes not attributed to leadership factors. In explanation, they argued that the value placed on a specific causal factor (i.e. leadership) is reflected in the value placed on the outcome (i.e. organizational performance) of that cause. Taken together, these findings suggest that during times of organizational prosperity, people tend to attribute positive performance outcomes to leaders, oftentimes praising them as heroes for their seemingly integral role in causing such outcomes. Conversely, during times of performance decline, people tend to use leaders as scapegoats, blaming them for negative organizational outcomes despite any clear evidence of their culpability.

Despite these insights, the current literature fails to address how the “Romance of Leadership” applies to the “dark” side of leadership, and specifically destructive forms of leadership. In one of the first known studies to integrate the two, Bligh and colleagues (2007) asked high school teachers (followers) to assess their principals’ (leaders) leadership behaviors and self-rate their levels of job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and resistance. Principals were also

asked to assess their followers' citizenship behaviors, complaining behaviors, and job performance. Results showed that perceptions of aversive leadership were positively related to follower resistance and negatively related to followers' job satisfaction. Additionally, follower-rated variables were significantly related to perceptions of aversive leadership over and above leader-rated variables. These results suggest that the association between aversive leadership and negative outcomes seem to be more socially constructed than real.

Building on the efforts of Bligh et al. (2007) to integrate the "Romance of Leadership" with the "dark" side of leadership, it appears that organizational performance outcomes play a significant role in determining the degree of aversiveness with which people perceive aversive leaders. More precisely, it is predicted that when organizational performance is *positive*, aversive leaders will be perceived as *less* aversive than equally aversive leaders in a control condition. Conversely, when organizational performance is *negative*, aversive leaders will be perceived as *more* aversive than equally aversive leaders in a control condition. If so, such a finding would suggest that aversive leaders may suffer different fates depending on the financial health of their respective organizations. That is, there may be unequal discrepancies in how aversive leaders are punished that are not based on the leader's actual behavior but are rather due to organizational forces that shape people's perceptions.

In either case, we hope the current study will further shed light on the "Romance of Leadership" concept as it applies to the relatively scant literature pertaining to destructive leadership, and specifically aversive leadership. Significant findings, in either case, would support the notion that organizational observers do tend to overinflate the role of leaders in influencing organizational performance outcomes, and that leadership is most oftentimes socially constructed.

Hypothesis 3: Aversive leaders who experience positive organizational performance will be perceived as less aversive than equally aversive leaders who experience negative or average performance.

Whistle-blowing intentions. It may also be argued that positive organizational performance outcomes serve as a buffer to whistleblowers for aversive leaders. That is, given research on the “Romance of Leadership” (Meindl et al., 1985), during times of organizational prosperity, aversive leaders may, in general, be praised for their seemingly causal role in creating positive outcomes for the organization. Organizational members, in turn, may perceive a general lack of support from the organization to report aversive leaders, seeing such leaders as capable of doing no wrong in the eyes of the organization. As a result, individuals may be less likely to report aversive leader behavior for fear of being perceived as a liar or disloyal to the organization.

Such may have been the case for a company like Enron where the underhanded practice of falsely inflating stock prices based on future sales projections, rather than current sales, by upper management gave the impression to employees and stockholders that the company was performing exceptionally well, and top management was to be praised. Those within the organization who potentially knew what was going on, however, may have perceived a lack of organizational support and potential career repercussions for reporting such corruption. Thus, they may have opted to turn a blind eye to unethical leader behavior. As a result, it is predicted that individuals will be less likely to report aversive leaders during times of organizational prosperity than in times of organizational poverty.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals will be less likely to report aversive leader behavior in the context of positive organizational outcomes than in the context of negative organizational outcomes.

Gender and Aversive Leadership

Perceptions of aversive leadership. Padilla et al. (2007) have also emphasized the role of leader characteristics in their “toxic triangle” model of destructive leadership. One leader characteristic that has received considerable attention in the constructive leadership literature but remains unstudied in terms of “dark” side leadership is gender. Drawing from research on women and leadership, it is widely accepted that female leaders are perceived differently from male leaders (Boldry, Wood, & Kashy, 2001; Ridgeway, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Burke, Stets, & Cerven, 2007). Traditionally, leadership has been viewed as a predominantly male privilege in corporate, political, military, and other societal sectors (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As such, although women occupy an increasing number of leadership roles in supervisory and middle management capacities, they remain rarities at the top of most large organizations (Heilman, Block, Simon, & Martell, 1989; Heilman, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2001; Ridgeway, 2001; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Eagly, 2003; Koch, 2005).

Using expectation states theory (EST), Ridgeway (2001; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004) argued that status beliefs (i.e. societal beliefs regarding how one social status group compares to another) are the source of rampant discrimination in many organizations. That is, when men and women work in task-oriented groups, they look for cues to judge themselves against others and guide their behavior. Because gender is easily visible and culturally significant, status beliefs that associate men with higher competence are accessed as a means of evaluating whose contributions are likely to be most useful to the group. Such beliefs are subsequently used to determine performance expectations for men and women and have self-fulfilling effects on each gender’s task-related behaviors. As a result, women behave less assertively and are perceived as less competent than males, while the

reverse is true for men. Ultimately, such social barriers prevent women from assuming positions of leadership in their immediate futures and long term careers.

Yet for women who resist these gender-evoked performance expectations and obtain leadership positions (usually with advanced degrees and qualifications), many experience a resistive “backlash” from peers (Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004). According to Ridgeway & Bourg (2004), when female leaders behave assertively, their agentic behavior “violates the essential hierarchical nature of the status belief, and the competence assumptions that legitimate it” (p.231). That is, individuals perceive a clash between the female leader’s behavior and the underlying status belief, which regards women as unfitting for high-status, masculine positions. Consequently, such seemingly conflicting and contradictory behavior is likely to elicit anger, criticism and other negative reactions toward the assertive female leader (Bernardez, 1983; Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004).

Such an effect is similarly predicted by Rudman and Fairchild’s (2004) integrative model of stereotype-based backlash. According to the model, behaviors that contradict societal stereotypes represent expectancy violations that incite negative reactions from social observers (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). In support of this “backlash” effect, a number of studies show that women who behave in stereotypically masculine ways do indeed experience a variety of negative reactions and resistance from peers in organizations (Reed, 1983; Butler & Geis, 1990; Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995; Heilman, 2001; Koch, 2005; Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004). Such reactions often take the form of social rejection and personally directed negativity that have damaging repercussions for career-relevant organizational rewards (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007).

For example, in two similar studies, Rudman (1998) found that women who self-promoted were seen as lacking social skills and were less likely to be recommended for hiring; while Rudman and Glick (2001) determined that female applicants who displayed masculine, agentic qualities were consistently viewed as violating prescriptions of feminine niceness and were subsequently looked over for middle management positions. Other research suggests professional women (whether it be low-status assistant trainees or high-status CEOs) are viewed as innately angry and out of control when expressing anger in the workplace (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Perhaps more interesting, in comparison to competent men, it seems competent women are perceived, among other things, as unattractive (Horner, 1972), cold (Porter & Geis, 1981), and undesirable as group members (Hagan & Kahn, 1975).

According to Heilman (2001), the disapproval aroused by violations of normative prescriptions prompts personal derogation toward women who deviate from how they are supposed to behave by proving themselves competent at traditionally masculine work. For instance, Heilman et al. (1989) investigated working people's perceptions of women who were labeled as managers or successful managers. From a sample of 268 male managers, participants were asked to describe a successful manager who was said to be male, female, or of unknown gender. Although successful female managers were described as highly competent and possessing the agentic traits necessary for success, they were also portrayed as bitter, quarrelsome, selfish, and interpersonally wanting.

Adding to these results, Heilman and colleagues (1995) conducted a similar study using a sample of 224 male managers and found successful women were perceived as significantly more interpersonally hostile than their male counterparts. Participants often depicted such women as devious, vulgar, quarrelsome, selfish, bitter and deceitful.

Interestingly, these results did not hold when the stimulus person was described simply as a female manager, without any indication of success. It appears that female managers are more likely to elicit negative reactions when they demonstrate competence at a traditionally male role. Furthermore, Heilman (2001) noted that female managers are apt to elicit even more severe reactions when their already “deviant” behaviors actually prove to be effective.

In addition to personal derogation, a number of studies suggest agentic women are decidedly less liked and perceived as less socially acceptable (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Carli, 1990; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2001; Heilman, 2001; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins (2001), for example, found that when a female’s success was still undetermined, she was perceived as less competent but more likeable than an identical male manager. However, when she was unequivocally perceived as a top performer and highly successful, she was judged as equally competent but considerably less likeable. This dislike toward successful women was subsequently found to hold in situations where the female manager demonstrated her competence at a male sex-typed job, thus violating her stereotypically prescribed behavior as a woman.

Moreover, Butler and Geis (1990) conducted an experimental study in which affective facial reactions toward male and female leaders who demonstrated intellectual assertiveness were found to differ significantly. Specifically, Butler and Geis (1990) discovered that women in authority roles received more displeased responses (i.e. furrowed brows, tightening of the mouth or nods of disagreement) for the same contributions to a mixed-sex, task-oriented group. Clearly, these results indicate that women are not supposed to succeed at jobs and tasks traditionally associated with men in our culture (Heilman, 2001). For those who do, however, negative reactions are highly likely to occur.

In an attempt to explain these findings, Heilman (2001) suggested that much of the problem lies in the fact that competent female leaders break with gender stereotypic prescriptions which dictate that women ought to be communal (i.e. nurturing, affectionate, sensitive, sympathetic, service-oriented etc.). Thus, unlike competent men who are, quite simply, seen as noncommunal, competent women are seen as countercommunal. Consequently, while female leaders are supposed to be seen as warm, unselfish, sweet and appealing, they are instead perceived as cold, selfish, bitter and quarrelsome, respectively.

Building on the work of Heilman (2001), Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory, an extension of social-role theory (Eagly, 1987), argues that negative reactions to female leaders stem from the societal belief that men and women occupy certain gender roles (i.e. consensual beliefs about the attributes of men and women) which are tied to gendered characteristics. According to the theory, consensual beliefs help individuals form expectations that are normative in the sense that they describe which personal qualities and behaviors are believed to be desirable for each sex (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Thus, gender roles include both descriptive norms (consensual expectations about what group members actually do) and injunctive norms (consensual expectations about what group members *ought* to do) (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Eagly & Karau, 2002). While descriptive norms can be thought of as stereotypes, injunctive norms add a prescriptive element not usually included within the stereotype construct (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Consequently, descriptive norms associate men with agentic qualities (i.e. assertive, confident, dominant, tough, achievement-oriented, etc.) and women with more communal characteristics (i.e. nurturing, affectionate, sensitive, sympathetic, service-oriented etc.) (Eagly, 1987; Heilman, 2001). Injunctive norms then prescribe which behaviors are gender-appropriate and thus dictate how men and women ought to behave (Eagly & Karau,

2002). Put in the context of leadership, role congruity theory asserts that prejudicial reactions toward female leaders result from perceived incongruities between societal stereotypes of women as communal and leaders as agentic. That is, by occupying a masculine social role, female leaders are perceived to be violating their feminine gender role, thus provoking personal derogation and dislike toward such women by social observers (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

Applying this existing research to the concept of aversive leadership, it is reasonable to assume that aversive leadership behaviors fly in the face of traditional female gender norms, which associate women with communal qualities. As such, there is reason to believe that aversive female leaders may experience a more powerful “backlash” effect than female leaders in general. That is, aversive female leaders may be punished doubly, once for being a leader and twice for behaving aversively. Thus, I hypothesize that aversive female leaders will be perceived as generally more aversive than male aversive leaders.

Hypothesis 5: Aversive female leaders will be perceived as more aversive than aversive male leaders.

Whistle-blowing intentions. Given the evidence for a “backlash” effect against female leaders, it is plausible to suggest that individuals may be more likely to report aversive female leaders than aversive male leaders. In other words, strong perceptions of incongruence between the traditional female gender role and the aversive behavior demonstrated by a female leader may provoke more hostile feelings toward such a leader, leading to a greater tendency to desire reporting aversive female leaders than aversive male leaders. Moreover, individuals may feel emboldened to report aversive female leaders due to the likelihood that their co-workers share similar hostile feelings. As a result, they may feel supported to “blow the whistle” against aversive female leaders. Greater support from colleagues may also give the general perception

that reporting aversive female leaders does not carry with it the same consequences that might be more ambiguous to interpret when speaking out against aversive male leader. Thus, I propose that individuals will be more likely to report aversive female leaders than aversive male leaders.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals will be more likely to report aversive female leaders than aversive male leaders.

Interactions. It is further hypothesized that an interaction will occur between organizational performance and leader gender. That is, as mentioned above, aversive leaders who experience positive organizational performance outcomes may be perceived as *less* aversive than those leaders who experience negative outcomes, due to the erroneous attributions suggested by the “Romance of Leadership” (Meindl et al., 1985). However, aversive female leaders who experience positive performance outcomes may, in fact, be perceived as *more* aversive than aversive female leaders who experience negative outcomes. As noted above, female leaders often elicit even more severe reactions when their already “deviant” behaviors (as a leader) are deemed effective by perceivers (Heilman, 2001).

Thus, it is plausible that aversive female leaders who experience negative outcomes are deemed responsible for such outcomes and consequently seen as fulfilling the incompetent stereotype associated with many working women (Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004). As such, they may be perceived as conforming more to their feminine gender role and reacted to with less negativity than an equally aversive, but seemingly effective female leader.

Hypothesis 7: There will be an interaction between organizational outcomes and leader gender such that aversive female leaders who experience positive organizational outcomes will be

perceived as more aversive than any aversive male leader who experiences positive or negative outcomes.

Method

Design and Participants

The present study employed a 2 (organizational climate: tolerant vs. intolerant) x 2 (leader gender: male vs. female) x 3 (organizational performance: negative, average, positive) between-subjects factorial design. 302 undergraduate students were recruited from a large northeastern university through the psychology department's subject pool. The study's sample consisted of 218 females and 84 males ranging from 18 to 24 years of age and representing a wide array of undergraduate academic majors. However, 125 participants who did not meet the study's manipulation check requirements (i.e. did not answer at least two of the three manipulation check questions correctly) were subsequently removed from the final analysis (See manipulation check section below). This process resulted in a final reduced dataset consisting of 177 participants, including 74 females and 26 males.

Participants logged on to an online survey platform (Qualtrics), which randomly assigned them to one of twelve study conditions. They were first instructed to complete an initial battery of covariate measures in order to control for any individual differences accounting for error variance in the dependent variables of interest. Next, participants read a series of fictional emails describing a fictional organization, its employees, and an aversive leader in charge of the company's sales department. It is important to note that prior to reading the emails, participants were presented with a description of the organization ("New Horizons, Inc.") and a list of employees working within the organization's sales, human resources, and accounting departments. This introduction was

meant to focus participants' attention and familiarize them with the organizational situation and cast of characters depicted in the emails. After reading the emails, participants were asked to respond to a series of quantitative measures and open-ended questions as if they were subordinates of the leader in question.

Email Development

Twelve different sets of emails, each representing one of the study's conditions, were created consisting of communications among subordinates of the leader and company-wide announcements from representatives in the human resources and accounting departments. The emails provided general information about the organization and more specific information about its policies and procedures, as well as fictional accounts of interactions between an aversive leader and several subordinates in the company's sales department. Specifically, the emails were constructed so that they differed only in terms of the study's three manipulated independent variables: organizational climate, organizational performance, and leader gender (which are described below). Accounts of the leader's behavior were based on those identified in the factor analysis and subsequent aversive leadership scale ($\alpha = .72$) developed by Pearce and Sims (2002). These authors found that the overarching construct of aversive leadership can be defined in terms of two specific behaviors - intimidation and reprimand of subordinates. Additionally, it should be noted that traditionally Caucasian sounding names were chosen for individuals depicted in the emails in order to control for any potentially confounding effects of ethnicity. Sample emails from one of the study's conditions depicting a female aversive leader, an intolerant organizational climate, and negative organizational performance are presented in figure 1.

Experimental Manipulations

Organizational climate. Organizational climate can be defined as the distinct perceptions and beliefs about an organization's physical and social environment reflected in the practices, procedures, and kinds of behaviors that are rewarded, supported, and expected in the organization (Schneider, 1990; Dickson, Resick, & Hanges, 2006). In order to potentially influence participants' climate perceptions, the organization was either described as placing a strong emphasis on deterring destructive employee behaviors through its standard practices and procedures or not. For example, one email from the company's HR representative described a company-wide notice of either mandatory or optional training on the company's HR complaint policies. While the intolerant climate condition placed a strong emphasis on using the company's HR process to report inappropriate workplace behavior, the tolerant climate condition described such training as generally unimportant and unsupported by the human resources department.

Organizational performance. Each set of emails also included organizational performance information that clearly indicated positive, average, or negative financial performance on the part of the organization. Similar to Meindl et al. (1985), performance outcomes were defined in terms of a large percentage increase of 25% (positive), a small percentage increase of 5% (average), or a percentage decrease of 25% (negative) in sales performance. This information was provided in a table in an email from the accounting department comparing the organization's financial performance to other competitors. An interpretation of the table was also provided in the email in order to reinforce the financial status of the organization.

Leader gender. Emails also differed in terms of whether the leader was described

as male or female. It is important to note that the emails for each condition only varied in terms of the leader's gender; all other descriptors, behavioral or otherwise, were held constant across the study's twelve conditions.

Dependent Variables

Aversive leadership. Aversive leadership was measured using six items adapted from Pearce and Sims's (2002) scale ($\alpha = .72$), which assesses the level of intimidation and reprimanding behaviors displayed by a leader. Scale responses were measured on a Likert scale, ranging from "1" (*Disagree*) to "5" (*Agree*). Sample items include: "The leader tries to influence subordinates through threat and intimidation"; "I would feel intimidated by the leader's behavior"; "The leader reprimands subordinates when their performance is not up to par"; and "The leader lets subordinates know about it when they perform poorly."

Whistle-blowing intentions. Whistle-blowing intentions were measured using a three-item scale ($\alpha = .71$) constructed specifically for the purposes of this research and based off of research on whistle-blowing behavior (e.g. Rothwell & Baldwin, 2006, 2007). Scale responses were measured on a Likert scale, ranging from "1" (*Disagree*) to "5" (*Agree*). The scale was developed to target participants' willingness to report the behavior of a specific leader in question. Sample items include: "If I were to witness the behavior displayed by this leader, I would report the incident to the organization's human resource department," "If I were to witness the behavior displayed by this leader, I would do nothing" (R), and "If I were to witness the behavior displayed by this leader, I would talk the incident over with the coworker involved."

Open-Ended Questions

In addition, a set of open-ended questions was also administered for exploratory purposes. Specifically, participants were asked about (1) their general perceptions of the

leader they read about; and (2) to provide recommendations to the New Horizons's board of executives on whether to reward or punish the leader. Three undergraduate research assistants read through written responses to each question and content coded each using a set of benchmark rating scales. Scales were constructed by reading through participant responses and identifying relevant constructs that could be coded as exploratory dependent variables. Based on previous research, two salient constructs – personalized leadership and contingent punishment behavior - emerged from participants' responses. Specifically, personalized leadership was derived from question one above, while contingent punishment behavior was obtained from question two.

Consistent with previous research (e.g. House and Howell, 1992; McClelland, 1975), personalized leadership was defined as a leadership style which (a) is based on personal dominance and authoritarian behavior, (b) serves the self-interest of the leader and is self-aggrandizing and (c) exploitive of others. Contingent punishment behavior was defined as the degree to which one administers punitive events such as reprimands and disapproval contingent upon poor performance (Scott, 1977; Podsakoff, Todor, & Skov, 1982; Podsakoff & Todor, 1985). Based on these definitions, participant responses were reviewed and sample responses reflecting high, average, and low levels of each variable were identified. These benchmark responses were then summarized and used to construct the scale anchors for each exploratory dependent variable. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the nature of these benchmark rating scales.

Prior to providing ratings on the two exploratory dependent variables described above, each of the three undergraduate research assistants underwent training in which they were familiarized with the survey questions and nature of the benchmark rating scales.

Following training, each was asked to apply these rating scales to a set of sample responses. Sample ratings were subsequently subjected to an inter-rater reliability analysis, which produced intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) of .79 and .96 for personalized leadership and contingent punishment, respectively – demonstrating a satisfactory level of consistency in ratings across the three raters. These ratings were then aggregated across the three raters to produce composite measures of both personalized leadership and contingent punishment behavior.

Covariate Measures

To control and limit error variance due to individual differences, several covariate measures were administered to participants. This set of controls included: moral identity, (Aquino & Reed, 2002), trait cynicism (Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003), need for leadership (de Vries, Roe & Tallieu, 2002), locus of control (Spector, 1988), and ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), as well as various demographic variables including age, gender, exposure to leadership research, and academic major. With the exception of basic demographic variables, which are fairly self-explanatory, each of the covariates is discussed in greater detail below.

Moral identity. Aquino and Reed’s (2002) internalization subscale was used to measure participant levels of moral identity ($\alpha = .70$). This scale taps the degree to which individuals place moral characteristics at the core of their identity and has been shown to predict ethical attitudes and behavior. Participants are asked to read through a series of adjectives (e.g., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, etc.) and visualize a person who possesses these characteristics. They are then asked to indicate their level of agreement with ten statements measured on a 1 (*Disagree*) – 5 (*Strongly Agree*) Likert scale. Sample items include: “It would make me feel good to be a person who has these

characteristics,” “Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am,” and “I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics” (R). Moral identity was included here as a covariate to control for variability in perceptions of aversive leadership not due to the independent variables, but rather to a strong sense of moral identity. This was based on the belief that participants possessing a strong internal sense of moral identity would be more likely to rate a leader as more aversive, introducing a potential confound if not controlled for.

Trait cynicism. Trait cynicism was measured using Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly’s (2003) five-item scale adapted from Wrightsman’s (1974) cynicism subscale ($\alpha = .79$). This scale assesses individuals’ sense of cynicism about human nature and general belief that individuals will only abstain from lying, cheating or stealing when it is either easy to do or unlikely they will get caught. Items are measured on a 1 (*Disagree*) – 5 (*Agree*) Likert scale, and include: “Most people are not really honest for desirable reasons, they are afraid of being caught,” “Most people would tell a lie if they could gain by it,” and “If most people could get into a movie without paying, and be sure they would not be seen, they would do it.” Trait cynicism was used here as a covariate in order to control for individuals who might rate aversive leaders, on average, more harshly because of their cynical worldview.

Need for leadership. A scale developed by de Vries, Roe, & Tallieu (1998) was used to assess need for leadership ($\alpha = .93$). This scale measures the degree to which an individual needs his or her leader to contribute to a series of specific work goals, indicating an overall need for leadership in one’s work life. The scale consists of five items measured on a 1 (*Disagree*) – 5 (*Agree*) Likert scale. Sample items include: “In an organization the

role of a manager is absolutely indispensable,” “A manager would have a marked influence on my performance,” and “I cannot see much added value of a manager on my work” (R). Need for leadership was included in order to control for individuals who might have rated aversive leaders, on average, as less aversive because of their natural dependence on leaders for direction and guidance in their work lives.

Locus of control. Locus of control was measured using Spector’s (1988) locus of control scale ($\alpha = .77$). This scale assesses individuals’ generalized control beliefs in work settings, and consists of sixteen items measured on a 1 (*Disagree*) – 5 (*Agree*) Likert scale. Sample items include: “A job is what you make of it,” “Promotions are given to employees who perform well on the job,” and “Getting a job you want is mostly a matter of luck” (R). It was believed that an individual’s locus of control might play a role in influencing whether one attributes positive or negative outcomes to the leader or to outside contextual factors. As a result, individuals who have an external locus of control might be less likely to attribute organizational outcomes to aversive leaders, which might subsequently influence the level of aversiveness with which they perceive such leaders.

Ambivalent sexism. Measuring perceptions of female leaders inherently lends itself to biased estimates if one does not control for individual proclivities toward viewing women in a sexist fashion. As such, we included Glick and Fiske’s (1996) 22-item ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI) ($\alpha = .83$), which includes 11 items measuring hostile sexism (HS) (i.e. sexist antipathy) and 11 items measuring benevolent sexism (BS), a more unconscious and subjectively positive (for sexist men) orientation toward women. Items were measured on a 1 (Disagree) – 5 (Agree) Likert scale. Sample items from the HS scale include: “Women are too easily offended,” and “Most women fail to appreciate fully all

that men do for them.” Sample items from the BS scale include: “Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess” and “Women should be cherished and protected by men.”

Demographic variables. In addition to the above individual differences, several demographic variables including participant gender, prior leadership experience, and exposure to leadership research were controlled for. A case summary analysis revealed that male participants represented, on average, 23% of participants per condition. As such, there was a substantial amount of skew in the number of female participants compared to male participants in each condition. Thus, participant gender was included as a covariate in the present study. Moreover, prior leadership experience and exposure to leadership research were included in order to partial out any error variance potentially introduced by individuals who may have had a background in leadership and/or leadership studies. It was believed that such individuals might possess a better understanding of the complex factors underlying leadership processes, and thus might be, on average, less likely to respond to the manipulations.

Statistical Analyses

To determine the effects of leader gender, organizational climate, and organizational performance, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) procedure was conducted. This procedure allowed for the control of error variance in the dependent variables attributable to any or all of the predetermined covariates. To test the study’s specific hypotheses, univariate ANCOVAs for each dependent variable were then examined in order to identify where specific mean differences existed. Covariates were retained in each of these final analyses if they were significant beyond the $p \leq .10$ level. Those covariates that did not meet this significance threshold were identified through the

process of backwards stepwise deletion and removed from the final analysis in order to maximize degrees of freedom, and therefore the effectiveness of the ANCOVA.

Manipulation Check

To ensure that participants interpreted the study's experimental manipulations in the intended ways, after completing the dependent measures participants were asked to indicate the gender of the leader, as well as the organizational climate and performance of the organization they read about in the emails. A cutoff of at least two questions answered correctly was set in order to remove participants who appeared to have incorrectly interpreted the study's manipulations. As such, this cutoff allowed for the removal of participants who may not have paid sufficient attention to the emails, allowing for the control of additional error variance perhaps attributable to a lack of participant conscientiousness. After applying this cutoff to the data, 125 participants were removed, resulting in a reduced dataset consisting of 177 participants (131 females and 46 males).

Results

Results are presented in four main sections consistent with the study's four dependent variables: (1) aversive leadership, (2) whistle-blowing, (3) personalized leadership, and (4) contingent punishment behavior. The first two sections present tests of the study's hypotheses pertaining to aversive leadership and whistle-blowing intentions, in addition to several exploratory findings. Sections three and four present strictly exploratory findings from the coded qualitative variables – personalized leadership and contingent punishment behavior. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of study variables are presented in Table 1.

Aversive Leadership

Table 2 presents the results obtained in the univariate analysis of covariance for

aversive leadership. Before conducting the final analysis, covariates not meeting the $p \leq .10$ level of significance were identified and removed through the process of backwards deletion. Trait cynicism ($F(1, 163) = 6.90, p \leq .10$) and need for leadership ($F(1, 163) = 6.10, p \leq .10$) each emerged as significant covariates and thus were retained in the final analysis of covariance for aversive leadership. Hypothesis 1 predicted that aversive leaders would be perceived as less aversive in the context of organizational climates that tolerate aversive leadership compared to climates intolerant of such behavior. Results of the analysis of covariance indicated no main effect for organizational climate, $F(1, 163) = .04, p > .05$. Further examination of the marginal means suggested no significant difference in perceptions of aversive leadership between the tolerant ($M = 4.34, SE = .07$) and intolerant ($M = 4.36, SE = .07$) climate groups. As such, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that aversive leaders who experience positive organizational performance outcomes would be perceived as less aversive than those who experience negative outcomes. Again, the analysis of covariance indicated no main effect for organizational performance, ($F(2, 163) = .29, p > .05$). Inspection of the marginal means suggested no significant differences in perceptions of aversive leadership between the negative ($M = 4.38, SE = .08$), average ($M = 4.37, SE = .08$), and positive ($M = 4.30, SE = .08$) organizational performance groups. Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that aversive female leaders would be perceived as more aversive than equally aversive male leaders. In examining the analysis of covariance results once again, no main effect was found for leader gender, $F(1, 163) = .07, p > .05$. Further examination of the marginal means indicated no significant difference in perceptions of aversive leadership for male leaders ($M = 4.34, SE = .07$) versus female leaders ($M = 4.36, SE = .06$). Thus, no support was found for hypothesis 5.

Beyond the study's predicted main effects, hypothesis 7 predicted that there would be a two-way interaction between a leader's gender and the organization's financial performance such that aversive female leaders who experience positive performance outcomes would be perceived as more aversive than any aversive male leader experiencing positive or negative outcomes. Again, the analysis of covariance revealed no significant interaction between the two independent variables, $F(2, 163) = .266, p > .05$. Thus, hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Whistle-Blowing Intentions

Table 3 presents the results obtained in the univariate analysis of covariance for whistle-blowing intentions. Locus of control ($F(1, 163) = 18.56, p \leq .10$) was the only significant covariate identified through backwards deletion and was retained in the final analysis of covariance for whistle-blowing intentions. Hypothesis 2 predicted that individuals would be more likely to report whistle-blowing intentions in the context of intolerant organizational climates than tolerant climates. Consistent with expectations, results of the analysis of covariance indicated a strong main effect for organizational climate, $F(1, 163) = 18.91, p < .05$. Further, the marginal means suggested that whistle-blowing intentions were significantly higher in the intolerant organizational climate group ($M = 3.97, SE = .08$) than in the tolerant climate group ($M = 3.46, SE = .08$), providing strong support for hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that individuals would be more likely to report aversive leaders in the context of negative organizational performance than in the context of average or positive organizational performance. Results of the analysis of covariance indicated no main effect for organizational climate, $F(2, 163) = .05, p > .05$. The marginal means further suggested no significant difference in whistle-blowing intentions between the negative (M

= 3.73, $SE = .10$), average ($M = 3.72$, $SE = .10$), and positive ($M = 3.69$, $SE = .10$) organizational performance groups. Thus, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that individuals would be more likely to report aversive female leaders than aversive male leaders. However, results of the analysis of covariance suggested no main effect for leader gender, $F(1, 163) = 1.13$, $p > .05$. Moreover, the marginal means indicated no significant difference in whistle-blowing intentions for male ($M = 3.65$, $SE = .09$) versus female leaders ($M = 3.78$, $SE = .08$). Thus, hypothesis 6 was not supported.

However, an interesting two-way interaction occurred between leader gender and organizational performance, $F(2, 163) = 3.70$, $p < .05$. Inspection of the cell means and resulting graph indicated that when organizational performance was positive, participants reported a similar willingness ($M_{diff} = .02$, $SE = .22$, $p > .05$) to report aversive male leaders ($M = 3.72$, $SE = .14$) and female leaders ($M = 3.66$, $SE = .16$). However, consistent with those findings described above, when financial performance was negative, participants were significantly more likely ($M_{diff} = .55$, $SE = .21$, $p < .05$) to report intentions to blow the whistle on female aversive leaders ($M = 4.02$, $SE = .12$) than male aversive leaders ($M = 3.44$, $SE = .16$) (See figure 4).

Additionally, a marginally significant three-way interaction emerged between leader gender, organizational climate, and organizational performance, $F(2, 163) = 2.57$, $p < .10$. Interestingly, in tolerant climates mean trends indicated an increasingly greater willingness to report female aversive leaders over male leaders as organizational performance decreased. While participants reported similar intentions ($M_{diff} = .05$, $SE = .31$, $p > .05$) to report aversive female ($M = 3.23$, $SE = .24$) and male leaders ($M = 3.37$, $SE = .20$) when performance was positive, they reported marginally significantly higher ($M_{diff} =$

.48, $SE = .28$, $p < .10$) whistle-blowing intentions for females ($M = 3.77$, $SE = .16$) compared to males ($M = 3.30$, $SE = .23$) when performance was negative.

However, in intolerant climates, while again participants reported similar intentions ($M_{diff} = .07$, $SE = .28$, $p > .05$) to report aversive female ($M = 4.00$, $SE = .20$) and male leaders ($M = 4.10$, $SE = .19$) when performance was positive, they reported a greater willingness ($M_{diff} = .65$, $SE = .30$, $p < .05$) to report aversive male leaders ($M = 4.28$, $SE = .22$) over female leaders ($M = 3.63$, $SE = .20$) when performance was average. Perhaps even more interesting, when performance was negative, participants again reported a greater willingness ($M_{diff} = .67$, $SE = .29$, $p < .05$) to blow the whistle on female leaders ($M = 4.26$, $SE = .18$) compared to their male counterparts ($M = 3.59$, $SE = .23$) (See figure 5).

Personalized Leadership

Table 4 presents results of the analysis of covariance for the first of the study's two exploratory dependent variables – personalized leadership. Participant gender ($F(1, 163) = 6.74$, $p \leq .10$), moral identity ($F(1, 163) = 7.28$, $p \leq .10$), and need for leadership ($F(1, 163) = 4.68$, $p \leq .10$) were all retained as significant covariates in the final analysis of covariance for personalized leadership. Univariate results indicated a marginally significant main effect for organizational climate, $F(1, 163) = 3.32$, $p < .10$. The marginal means, moreover, indicated participants perceived the leaders they read about as more personalized in nature within the context of intolerant ($M = 4.20$, $SE = .11$) compared to tolerant climates ($M = 3.92$, $SE = .11$).

Additionally, a two-way interaction between organizational climate and organizational performance, $F(2, 163) = 4.04$, $p < .05$. Examination of the cell means and resulting graph indicated that when organizational performance was negative, perceptions of personalized leadership were slightly higher ($M_{diff} = .24$, $SE = .25$, $p > .05$) in intolerant

climates ($M = 4.09$, $SE = .19$) versus tolerant climates ($M = 3.96$, $SE = .18$). However, when organizational performance was positive, the mean for the tolerant climate condition decreased significantly ($M = 3.53$, $SE = .20$), while the mean for the intolerant condition stayed the same ($M = 4.41$, $SE = .18$) ($M_{diff} = .83$, $SE = .27$, $p < .05$) (See figure 6).

Contingent Punishment

Results of the analysis of covariance for contingent punishment behavior are presented in Table 5. No significant covariates were retained at the predetermined $p \leq .10$ level of significance. Moreover, results of the analysis of covariance indicated no significant main effects or interactions.

Discussion

Probably the most interesting conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is that destructive leadership seems to be dynamic process resulting from complex interactions among multiple factors throughout the organizational environment. Consistent with Padilla and colleagues' (2007) toxic triangle theory, the current study is one of the first to lend empirical support to the idea that destructive forms of leadership, such as aversive leadership, result from a confluence of leaders, followers, and the organizational environment. In particular, the present findings suggest that follower perceptions and reactions to aversive leadership vary depending on the gender of a leader, as well as the broader climate and financial performance of the organization.

Although it was surprising not to find any significant results for follower perceptions of aversive leadership (given those found for personalized leadership), it was no surprise to find such a strong main effect for organizational climate on whistle-blowing intentions. Prior research suggests an organization's climate can significantly impact whether employees feel comfortable reporting negative work behavior to higher authorities.

In particular, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior postulates that intentions to perform a behavior are a function of three specific beliefs, including one's (1) attitude toward the behavior, which results from its perceived ramifications, (2) a subjective norm about the behavior, which results from normative beliefs, and (3) perceived behavioral control, which is determined by one's beliefs about available resources and opportunities to perform the behavior. Specifically, Ajzen (1991) defined a subject norm as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior (p.188). As such, it is based on one's perceptions of the normative beliefs governing the immediate social environment and reflects a person's thoughts about "the likelihood that important referent individuals or groups approve or disapprove of performing a given behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 195).

Thus, it follows that individuals would be less likely to report aversive leaders in the context of organizational climates that tolerate such behavior – viewing the decision to "blow the whistle" or not as a choice that could carry with it unfavorable social and career consequences from important referents, such as coworkers and immediate supervisors. Moreover, this finding suggests that while perceptions of destructive leaders seem to be relatively rigid in nature, behavioral intentions in response to destructive leadership, such as whistle-blowing, appear to be highly transitory depending on the organization's climate.

Furthermore, although no main effect was found for organizational performance, its effect was qualified by a two-way interaction with the leader's gender. That is, participants were more likely to report intentions to "blow the whistle" on aversive female leaders when the organization performed poorly. It may be that during times of financial decline, strong gender stereotypes and perceptions of role incongruity are triggered that allow employees to make sense of the firm's financial status. Accordingly, employees may react more negatively to destructive female leaders, blaming them for the firm's

performance and taking more active steps to make sure organizational watchdogs are aware of their behavior.

Consistent with this finding, the marginally significant three-way interaction between leader gender, organizational climate, and organizational performance further suggests that individuals may use deeply ingrained gender stereotypes to help explain negative performance outcomes in their immediate organizational environments. This was evidenced in the tolerant climate conditions where individuals reported an increasingly greater willingness to report female aversive leaders as performance declined. Interestingly, within the context of intolerant climates, mean levels of whistle-blowing intentions increased substantially from the tolerant climate conditions, suggesting again that individuals may feel emboldened to report negative leadership behavior when they know their actions will be supported by the organization.

Moreover, within the context of intolerant climates, it was interesting to find that while individuals reported greater whistle-blowing intentions for female leaders when performance was negative, they indicated a greater willingness to report male leaders when performance was average. Although this finding lends support to the idea that individuals tend to blame female aversive leaders more for negative performance outcomes, it also suggests that male leaders are not let off the hook in the context of intolerant climates. That is, at average levels of performance, strong gender stereotypes that allow individuals to make sense of negative financial performance may remain dormant in such contexts. Subsequently, this may allow social observers to strictly focus on the aversive behavior of the leader as the target of their whistle-blowing. In such cases, individuals may be more apt to “blowing the whistle” on male aversive leaders, given the absence of negative gender stereotypes that would otherwise negatively cloud their perceptions of female aversive

leaders.

Exploratory Findings

Additionally, while it was surprising not to find any significant results for contingent punishment behavior (given those found for whistle-blowing intentions), those results found for personalized leadership seemed to further shed light on the complex social processes underlying destructive forms of leadership. While there was no main effect found for the organization's climate on aversive leadership, it was interesting to find a marginally significant main effect for personalized leadership. This finding seems to lend support to the arguments made for hypothesis one that intolerant climates may have the effect of shaping individuals' perceptions of negative leader behavior. That is, within the context of organizational climates that are intolerant of negative leader behavior, aversive leaders were perceived as more personalized in nature than when they were observed in the context of a tolerant organizational climate.

Additionally, the two-way interaction found between organizational climate and performance on perceptions of personalized leadership suggests that the combination of poor performance and a climate intolerant of negative leader behavior increases negative perceptions of aversive leaders as authoritarian, selfish, self-aggrandizing, exploitive, and generally personalized in nature (House & Howell, 1992). In explanation, it may be that intolerant climates render social observers particularly sensitive to perceptual changes given other extraneous factors in the organizational environment. Consistent with the Romance of Leadership (Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987), when the organization performs poorly in such a context, individuals may make sense of the firm's financial status by blaming destructive leaders.

Moreover, it was interesting to find that when the organization's performance

improved, perceptions of personalized leadership dropped significantly in the tolerant climate condition, but increased in the intolerant scenario. In the latter case, positive outcomes did not seem to be enough to diminish the effects of a climate intolerant of aversive leadership. However, congruent with the Romance of Leadership (Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987), in the former case individuals may have attributed part of the organization's success to the leader, subsequently forgiving them slightly for their behavior.

All in all, these findings are noteworthy because they allude to a complex set of perceptual processes that organizational observers undergo when forming their perceptions of destructive leaders and the broader organizational environment. Further, they suggest that such perceptions seem to be a function of a combination of factors in the organizational environment rather than one in particular – congruent with Padilla and colleagues' (2007) toxic triangle theory of destructive leadership.

Limitations

In considering these conclusions, it is important to keep in mind that the present findings were based on a traditional experimental design consisting of college students reading vignettes about a fictional organization and its members. The use of “paper people” scenarios has been questioned by several researchers, who suggest the potential for differences in the way individuals respond to target stimuli in the laboratory versus real-world organizations (Landy, 2008; Lengnick-Hall, 1995; Murphy, Herr, Lockhart, & Maguire, 1986). Specifically, it has been argued that such methods fail to produce the “experimental realism” necessary to generate the same type of psychological impact on participants that would occur in an actual organization. As such, some caution should be

given to the generalizability of these findings to destructive leadership processes in real-world organizations.

However, it should be noted that if “paper people” methods do in fact only produce diluted effects compared to those seen in actual organizations, as suggested above, then it stands to reason that the present findings represent at least conservative estimates of the effects one might expect to find in actual organizations plagued by destructive leaders. That is, even when participants were asked to visualize themselves as subordinates in the organizational scenario they were presented with, the observation of significant findings and modest effects sizes lends support to the present study as a valuable first step in understanding the complex processes underlying destructive forms of leadership.

In a similar vein, while the present study focused on participants’ behavioral intentions in response to aversive leadership (i.e. whistle-blowing and contingent punishment), it is unclear whether such intentions would manifest themselves in the form of actual behavior if participants had been real employees of the target organization. A point of contention in various literatures revolves around the finding that oftentimes such self-reported intentions do not correlate highly with the behaviors they are expected to predict (Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987). As such, a considerable amount of effort has been made to explain this discrepancy through the identification of boundary conditions that either strengthen or weaken the intentions-behavior relationship (Andrews & Kandel, 1979; Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987; Raden, 1981). Thus, although it has been suggested that intentions are the best predictor of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein-Ajzen, 1975), readers should bear in mind the limitations of generalizing the present study’s findings to actual follower behavior in real-world organizations.

Additionally, screening of the data revealed a significant amount skew in each of the study's dependent variables. As Greer, Dunlap, Hunter, and Berman (2006) note, large amounts of skew tend to decrease the reliability of a given scale. This suggests results of the present study represent only conservative estimates of the effects one might obtain from normally distributed variables. Thus, caution should be taken in interpreting such findings.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the present study represents only an initial first step in exploring the many complex relationships embedded within Padilla and colleagues' (2007) toxic triangle of destructive leadership. That is, while the current study investigated the effects of only three specific factors on the destructive leadership process, namely the leader's gender and the organization's climate and performance, there are certainly other leader, follower, and environmental variables that must be empirically tested. For example, there is reason to believe that the broader cultural values of a society (Luthans, Peterson, & Ibrayeva, E., 1998) and the absence of organizational checks and balances on power (Gandossy & Sonnenfeldt, 2004; Padilla et al., 2007), among other factors, are likely to impact important aspects of the destructive leadership process. Thus, significant work remains on testing both the independent and interactive effects of these variables in order to move past the overemphasis on trait-based approaches to a more comprehensive, multifaceted understanding of destructive leadership.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Despite these limitations, the current study has several theoretical implications worth mentioning, the first of which is its multifaceted approach to the study of destructive leadership. Specifically, this is one of the first known studies to investigate how aspects of the organizational environment (i.e. climate and performance) affect follower perceptions and reactions to destructive forms of leadership, and specifically aversive leadership. While

research suggests that certain leader characteristics (e.g. charisma) can be used to color follower perceptions and harness support for destructive acts (Padilla et al., 2007; Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990), the overemphasis on destructive leader traits, to date, has precluded scholars from pursuing a more comprehensive understanding of destructive leadership as a complex social-psychological process. As such, the present study begins to explore the complex interactions likely to take place between aspects of leaders, followers, and the organizational environment that contribute to this process. In so doing, it represents one of the first steps toward examining important relationships nested within Padilla and colleagues' (2007) "toxic triangle" of destructive leadership.

Second, the current study integrates both research on the Romance of Leadership and gender and leadership with the "dark" side of leadership. In so doing, it is one of the first to examine how followers socially construct their perceptions and formulate their reactions to destructive leaders based on salient aspects of the organizational environment, such as the firm's fiscal performance and a leader's gender. In sum, this study is unique in that it attempts to paint part of the complex portrait that is destructive leadership using all three ingredients of the "toxic triangle" described by Padilla et al. (2007). In this way, it provides support for an integrative, multilevel, and empirically-based model of destructive leadership in the future.

The current study also has several important practical implications. First, it highlights the need for organizations to assess their corporate climates, and namely the policies and procedures, corporate beliefs and values, and other organizational features that comprise them. These macro-level aspects of an organization may send certain implicit messages that destructive forms of leadership are tolerated, potentially causing individuals to turn a blind eye to such behavior for fear of retaliation from higher authorities. When

magnified across an entire organization, this problem may result in the organization's failure to remove destructive leaders before too late. This may be the case especially for unskilled workers in low-wage, labor-intensive jobs who possess little job mobility and economic security.

Second, this study has important ramifications for the ways in which bad behaving leaders are dealt with in organizations. That is, whistle-blowing behavior and subsequent disciplinary actions taken against such leaders may be augmented by certain organizational conditions, such as poor financial performance. Moreover, there is the potential that a leader's gender may interact with these environmental variables such that female destructive leaders are systematically discriminated against more than their male counterparts. As such, organizations should be more conscious of these effects so that they maintain consistency in their actions toward "deviant" leaders who harm others and/or the organization as a whole. Failure to maintain consistent standards for dealing with all kinds of bad behaving leaders may signal to employees that the organization is not only unfair or inequitable in its policies and practices regarding punishment but in other organizational matters as well.

Summary

In response to the call for research that takes a more comprehensive perspective on destructive leadership, the present study utilized a follower-centric approach in order to investigate the role of context in shaping individuals' perceptions and reactions to destructive leadership, and specifically aversive leadership. Based on results of the current effort, we agree with Padilla and colleagues (2007) that an overly narrow focus on destructive leadership as an inherently trait-based phenomenon will continue to hinder our

understanding of destructive leadership as a highly complex process resulting from the confluence of leader, follower, and environmental characteristics.

The present findings, in fact, suggest that follower perceptions and reactions to aversive leadership cannot, in general, be explained by simple main effects, but rather are a function of complex interactions among the gender of a leader and their followers, as well as the broader climate and financial performance of the organization. Hopefully, the present study not only spurs future research on Padilla et al.'s (2007) toxic triangle theory, but also an impetus for researchers to move past the overly simplistic trait-based perspectives of destructive leadership that have dominated the theoretical landscape to date.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participant Gender	1.74	0.44	1								
Moral Identity	4.12	0.48	.32**	1							
Trait Cynicism	3.41	0.75	-.08	-.08	1						
Locus of Control	3.95	0.39	.10	.10	-.16*	1					
Need for Leadership	3.95	0.54	.00	.14	-.01	.08	1				
Whistleblowing Intentions	3.75	0.85	.00	.04	.06	.31**	.01	1			
Aversive Leadership	4.36	0.62	.14	-.00	-.19*	.13	.20**	.15*	1		
Contingent Punishment	3.64	0.88	.06	-.03	.10	-.04	.10	.16*	.02	1	
Personalized Leadership	4.07	1.01	.11	-.11	-.04	.02	.12	.15*	.14	.33**	1

Note. * = $p < .05$ level (2-tailed); ** = $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

Table 2

Summary of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Aversive Leadership

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
<u>Covariates</u>				
Trait Cynicism	6.90	1	.01	.04
Need for Leadership	6.11	1	.01	.04
<u>Main Effects</u>				
Leader Gender	.07	1	.79	.00
Organizational Climate	.04	1	.83	.00
Organizational Performance	.29	2	.75	.00
<u>Two-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate	.14	1	.71	.00
Leader Gender * Organizational Performance	.27	2	.77	.00
Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.88	2	.41	.01
<u>Three-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.28	2	.75	.00

Note: *F* = F-ratio, *df* = degrees of freedom, *p* = significance level, η^2 = partial eta squared effect size

Table 3

Summary of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Whistle-Blowing Intentions

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
<u>Covariates</u>				
Locus of Control	18.56	1	.00	.10
<u>Main Effects</u>				
Leader Gender	1.13	1	.29	.01
Organizational Climate	18.91	1	.00	.10
Organizational Performance	.05	2	.95	.00
<u>Two-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate	1.44	1	.23	.01
Leader Gender * Organizational Performance	3.69	2	.03	.04
Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.50	2	.61	.01
<u>Three-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	2.57	2	.08	.03

Note: *F* = F-ratio, *df* = degrees of freedom, *p* = significance level, η^2 = partial eta squared effect size

Table 4

Summary of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Personalized Leadership

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
<u>Covariates</u>				
Participant Gender	6.74	1	.01	.04
Moral Identity	7.28	1	.01	.04
Need for Leadership	4.68	1	.03	.03
<u>Main Effects</u>				
Leader Gender	.51	1	.47	.00
Organizational Climate	3.32	1	.07	.02
Organizational Performance	.71	2	.49	.01
<u>Two-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate	2.05	1	.15	.01
Leader Gender * Organizational Performance	.48	2	.62	.01
Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	4.04	2	.02	.05
<u>Three-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.40	2	.67	.00

Note: *F* = F-ratio, *df* = degrees of freedom, *p* = significance level, η^2 = partial eta squared effect size

Table 5

Summary of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Contingent Punishment

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
<u>Main Effects</u>				
Leader Gender	.54	1	.46	.00
Organizational Climate	2.04	1	.16	.01
Organizational Performance	1.54	2	.22	.02
<u>Two-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate	1.02	1	.31	.01
Leader Gender * Organizational Performance	1.70	2	.19	.02
Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.37	2	.69	.00
<u>Three-Way Interactions</u>				
Leader Gender * Organizational Climate * Organizational Performance	.13	2	.87	.00

Note: *F* = F-ratio, *df* = degrees of freedom, *p* = significance level, η^2 = partial eta squared effect size

Appendix B

Figure 1. Sample Emails from Study Vignettes

Rachel Donahue

To: SalesDep_LstSrv
Subject: Welcome to New Horizons sales dept.

Good morning,

Welcome to New Horizons. My name is Rachel Donahue, and I'll be your HR representative. As you may already know, New Horizons is a high volume manufacturing company, established in 1935 and consisting of several large branches throughout the United States and abroad.

In recent years, the company has experienced fluctuating performance levels. However, we look to get back on track and increase our profit margin in the future with the addition of some new and highly talented junior sales representatives, such as yourself.

Your immediate supervisor will be Linda Jackson, who took over as chairman of the sales department this year. You, along with several other sales representatives, were chosen to work directly under Linda.

Welcome aboard. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Rachel

Rachel Donahue
Human Resources Representative
692-234-4321
New Horizons, Inc.

Kara Stephens

To: You (Scott.Phillips@NewHorizons.org)
Subject: Recent interaction with Linda

Hey Scott,

Don't know if you know Phil Mathis, one of the other new sales reps. But I dropped by the copy room yesterday and overheard Linda threatening Phil, saying, "Mathis, I'm sick of your B.S! If your numbers aren't up next quarter, I'll make sure EVERYONE in this building knows how useless a sales rep you are!!!"

Just an FYI, I'll tell you more about it Monday.

Have a nice weekend,

Kara

Kara Stephens
Junior Sales Representative
692-861-2871
New Horizons, Inc.

Scott Phillips

To: You (Kara.Stephens@NewHorizons.org)
Subject: RE: Recent Interaction with Linda

Morning Kara,

Hope you had a nice weekend – we went to the beach for a few hours and got the chance to do a little swimming.

Anyways, I got your email and had a similar story to share. I don't know if you overheard, but Linda really laid into one of the senior sales representatives, Andy Harris, for his performance last month. I heard her say, "Why do you even come to work, Harris? Your numbers are awful! You know you make my job a real pain in the ass, Harris! It's amazing we keep such a loser like you around!!"

I'll give you a few more details in our rep meeting at 2:00.

See you then,

Scott

Scott Phillips
Junior Sales Representative
692-520-1034
New Horizons, Inc.

Rachel Donahue

To: SalesDep_LstSrv
Subject: HR complaints

Good afternoon,

For those of you who are new to the company, there will be a mandatory training session regarding HR complaint policies and procedures next Tuesday at 1:30 in the conference room. At New Horizons, we believe such policies and procedures are critical to maintaining an honest and open work environment where employees feel comfortable speaking up if they are ever a witness to or victim of inappropriate workplace behavior.

For those of you who have been with the company for some time now, I want to thank you for taking these policies and procedures so seriously. In the past year we have had several incidents of inappropriate behavior that were dealt with effectively because of your willingness to utilize the HR complaint process. This has made New Horizons a better place to work for everyone.

Best,

Rachel

Rachel Donahue
Human Resources Representative
692-234-4321
New Horizons, Inc.

Andy Harris

To: You (Scott.Phillips@NewHorizons.org)
Subject: RE: Linda Jackson HR complaint?

Hey Scott,

You bet I did. In fact, there have been quite a few individuals who have filed complaints against Linda. Folks from HR even said that senior executives have ordered a full-scale investigation into Linda's behavior.

I've been here a while now, but it's pretty clear after working here for only a short time that New Horizons doesn't tolerate that kind of stuff. I mean whether you're a senior executive or a maintenance person, you're obligated to speak up when you see or experience something you don't think is right.

I have to say, that's what makes New Horizons such an awesome place to work! Talk to you later.

Andy

Andy Harris
Senior Sales Representative
692-683-3845
New Horizons, Inc.

Scott Phillips

To: You (Andy.Harris@NewHorizons.org)
Subject: Linda Jackson HR complaint?

Hi Andy,

I overheard you getting chewed out by Linda the other day. Did you file a complaint?

Scott

Scott Phillips
Junior Sales Representative
692-520-1034
New Horizons, Inc.

Pam Sampson

To: SalesDep_LstSrv
Subject: Quarterly Sales Performance Report

Good Morning,

The following represents quarterly sales performance numbers and annual overall net gain/loss information for New Horizon and comparative figures for competing companies:

Company	1 st Quarter Jan - Mar	2 nd Quarter Apr - Jun	3 rd Quarter Jul - Sept	4 th Quarter Oct - Dec	Annual Net Gain/Loss
New Horizons, Inc.	- 2%	- 4%	- 9%	- 10%	- 25%
Sharper View, Inc.	+3%	+5%	- 8%	+ 5%	+ 5%
Smith Brothers, Inc.	- 4%	+3%	+5%	+ 5%	+ 9%
Weston & Fox, Inc.	+1%	- 2%	+10%	- 6%	+ 3%

As you can see, quarterly sales have declined substantially with a net loss of -25% in gross sales relative to last year's sales volume. This performance decline represents one of the largest sales losses in the last decade for New Horizons, despite our competitors experiencing annual sales gains in the same market.

For more specific performance figures, please see your direct supervisor.

Pam Sampson
Accounting Department
692-221-4765
New Horizons, Inc.

Figure 2. Scale and Benchmarks for Personalized Leadership

Personalized Leadership: a leadership style which (a) is based on personal dominance and authoritarian behavior, (b) serves the self-interest of the leader and is self-aggrandizing and (c) exploitive of others.

1. Low rating

- Suggests and/or explicitly states that the leader's behavior is appropriate and/or effective for obtaining high subordinate and organizational performance.
- Either implies or explicitly states that the leader is just doing his/her job and/or looking out for the best interest of his/her subordinates and/or organization.

Ex: The leader took care of the problems that were presented. She was not overly harsh, but did her best to take care of the issues in the workplace. She was not a pushover.

2. Low to average rating

3. Average rating

- Suggests and/or explicitly states that the leader is tough, strong, and/or effective, but nonetheless signals that his/her methods and treatment of employees is inappropriate.

Ex: The leader reprimands like she should, but does so in an inappropriate and forceful manner. She should change the way she addresses employees under her.

4. Average to high rating

5. High rating

- Suggests and/or explicitly states that the leader's behavior is inappropriate, exploitive of others, highly ineffective, and/or decidedly damaging to his/her subordinates and/or organization.
- Either implies or explicitly states that the leader abuses the power of his/her position at the expense of his/her subordinates and the organization.

Ex: He is a controlling man who works with fear, screaming at employees when they don't work up to his standards. Power-hungry and generally not a nice person.

Figure 3. Scale and Benchmarks for Contingent Punishment Behavior

Contingent Punishment Behavior: the degree to which one administers punitive events such as reprimands and disapproval contingent upon poor performance.

1. Low rating

- Makes a clear decision to not punish the leader and/or may even advocate rewarding the leader.
- Shows a lack of hesitation, uncertainty, or wavering in their decision to not punish the leader.
- Uses language that suggests sympathy and/or lack of blame towards the leader.

Ex: I would say to reward the leader. Simply, she is my boss and if I'm not working up to par, I would want her to say that I'm not. Sometimes people need a wake up call in order to get the job done and get good numbers in. If my boss is helping me make the company better than she's doing her job and therefore should be rewarded.

2. Low to average rating

3. Average rating

- Suggests an intervention or corrective action to fix the leader's behavior without using harsh, highly punitive, and decidedly disciplinary language.
- Does not explicitly state that the leader ought to be punished.
- Focuses more on improving the leader's behavior rather than seeking retribution for the leader's past behavior.

Ex: I would recommend talking to the leader about his actions and recommend better ways of dealing with the situation, then make sure to monitor it in the future to make sure that his behavior is improving.

4. Average to high rating

5. High rating

- Makes clear decision to punish rather than reward the leader.
- Shows a lack of hesitation, uncertainty, or wavering in their decision to punish.
- Uses harsh, highly punitive, and/or decidedly disciplinary language.

Ex: I would ask her to be reprimanded as harshly as possible, even go as far as to fine her. Perhaps move her to different department and even lose her position.

Figure 4. Two-Way Interaction of Leader Gender and Organizational Performance for Whistle-Blowing Intentions

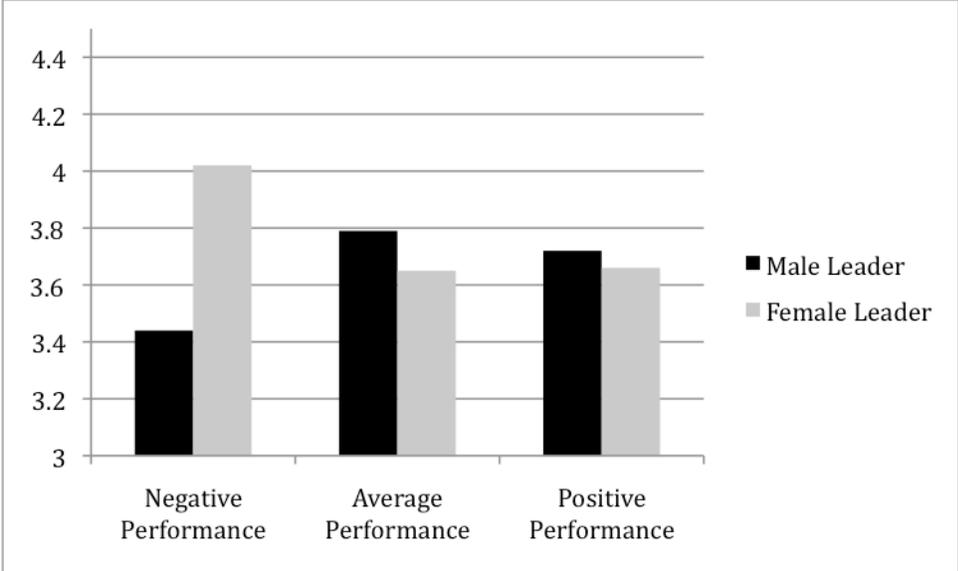


Figure 5. Three-Way Interaction of Leader Gender, Organizational Climate and Organizational Performance for Whistle-Blowing Intentions

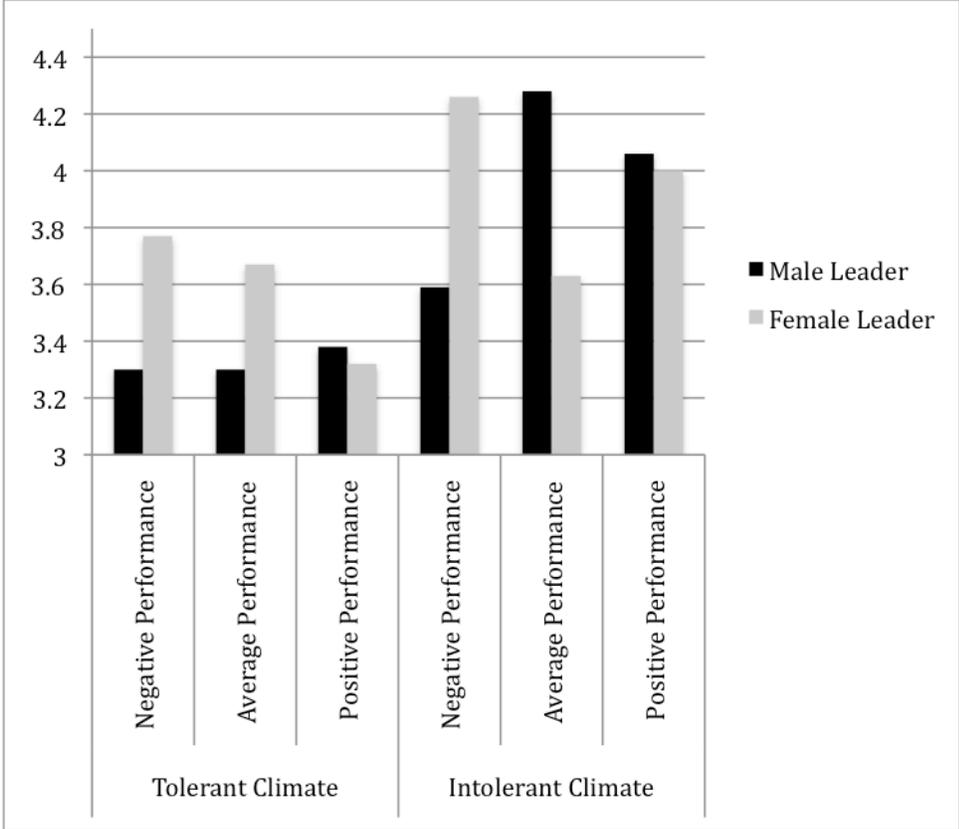


Figure 6. Two-Way Interaction of Organizational Climate and Organizational Performance for Personalized Leadership

