

**Self-Leadership's Impact on Work Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors:  
A Moderated Mediated Model**

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## ABSTRACT

### **Self-Leadership's Impact on Work Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: A Moderated Mediated Model**

**Kevin G. Knotts**

This dissertation will test a model of self-leadership that involves direct relationships with work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), mediating mechanisms of emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment, and a moderating variable of perceived organizational support. The proposed model that will be examined can be seen in Figure 1. Work engagement has received prominent attention within the organizational behavior and human resources field, yet there has been scant detail paid to how self-leadership strategies may influence an employee's level of work engagement. In addition, OCBs have also received prominent attention within these fields, yet there is again a gap remaining regarding how self-leadership may influence an employee participating in OCBs. Using data from a sample of transportation workers, results suggest that self-leadership does positively impact levels of OCBs in employees. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion serves as a key mediating variable between self-leadership and both work engagement and OCBs. However, organizational commitment does not appear to have the same impact as emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable. Moderating hypotheses regarding how perceived organizational support would moderate the relationship between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion were found to be supported. However, moderating hypotheses suggesting that perceived organizational support would moderate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment, work engagement, and OCBs were not supported. In all, these results suggest that self-leadership does in fact influence OCBs and work engagement. These findings encourage future research that seeks to better understand the complex relationships that are at work involving self-leadership.

To Brooke, Mom, and Dad

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There has been a great interest in what can keep individuals continually motivated at their jobs. Beyond this, research has sought to understand not only why individuals stay motivated, but what can keep these individuals actively engaged in the job. While there has been research focusing on different tactics to motivate individuals, a more recent perspective on individuals' ability to motivate themselves has come from self-leadership. Self-leadership is conceptualized as "a comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks, as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done, but is not naturally motivating" (Manz, 1986: pp. 589). Thus, self-leadership will be viewed and defined in this dissertation as an "encompassing self-influence process that individuals can use to motivate themselves in both motivating and unmotivating situations." This definition has been built out of many commonly used definitions (i.e., Manz, 1986; Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011). This view of self-motivation developed out of work on social cognitive theory and self-regulation (Stewart et al., 2011) with a specific focus on the intricacies of self-influence that go beyond these other forms and sources of motivation. Self-leadership has been studied in conjunction with a multitude of different variables such as performance (i.e., Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998), job satisfaction (i.e., Roberts and Foti, 1998), and work engagement (i.e., Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2016). Despite the somewhat abundance of empirical research on self-leadership that has led to two literature reviews (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011) and a working meta-analysis (i.e., Knotts et al., WIP), there are still unanswered questions that remain within the self-leadership literature. While self-leadership has been studied in conjunction with variables such as individual performance, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and creativity, there are still some avenues



of research that have not yet been explored. In particular, there are still areas of interest that self-leadership may influence. These will be discussed in greater detail later in the dissertation.

While a great deal of research has studied direct relationships between self-leadership and outcomes, there has not been near as much attention paid to mediating and moderating variables. There have been calls within the field to study more in-depth models of self-leadership that go beyond direct relationships (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011). These calls seek to answer questions about how self-leadership influences individual outcomes and what conditions may strengthen or weaken the relationships. A large amount of the empirical research has only looked at direct relationships. By studying the relationships in isolation from one another, researchers cannot fully understand how self-leadership can influence different outcomes. This is the next step in building the literature within the self-leadership field. This dissertation will attempt to better understand self-leadership's role within a more complex mediated and moderated model, as opposed to just studying direct relationships. This will help to answer calls from the field to incorporate self-leadership into more developed theoretical models.

By examining mediators of self-leadership relationships, this dissertation will help to explore the mechanisms through which self-leadership can influence individual outcomes. By understanding how self-leadership influences the outcomes, a better understanding of the self-leadership processes can be created. A similar vein of thought exists for studying moderators of self-leadership relationships. In particular, by understanding in which situations self-leadership relationships can be modified, researchers can again better understand the way self-leadership can influence outcomes. Additionally, by studying moderating mechanisms, researchers may be able to better suggest in what situations self-leadership may or may not be appropriate. The potential mediating and moderating variables will be discussed later in the dissertation. However,

it is crucial to understand the importance of examining more complete models of self-leadership that include these mechanisms through which self-leadership is likely to influence certain outcomes. This dissertation can help to explain why self-leadership is critical for organizational practices.

### **Brief Self-Leadership Overview**

Self-leadership is often viewed within the context of self-regulation and self-motivation theories (i.e. Neck & Houghton, 2006), however, there are several differences that allowed the construct of self-leadership to gain momentum within the organizational behavior field. The major differential aspect of self-leadership from other forms of self-regulation and motivation theories has been in the application of the construct. Self-leadership can be designated as being more prescriptive for individuals, as opposed to other views that tend to be descriptive (e.g., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011). In addition, recent research has sought to provide discriminant validity between self-leadership and other classical motivation constructs. In particular, Furtner, Rauthmann, & Sachse (2015) found that self-leadership was distinct from need for achievement, self-regulation, and self-efficacy; thus, providing support for the distinct differences between self-leadership and more traditional motivational constructs. Within the literature review, multiple empirical and conceptual articles that discuss the distinctiveness of self-leadership will be reviewed to better clarify what has occurred within this research field.

In particular, self-leadership lends itself to provide specific strategies that individuals can use to motivate themselves in a wide variety of different situations, both motivating and unmotivating. These self-leadership strategies have been built out of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) as they provide mechanisms through which individuals can see how their actions are influenced by the environment, as well as how they influence said environment. The

three main strategies that are present within the self-leadership realm seek to address different areas of concern for individuals. These three self-leadership strategies that have developed over time are behavior focused strategies, cognitive strategies, and natural reward strategies. (e.g., Manz, 1986; Neck & Houghton, 2006). Behavior focused strategies seek to manage behaviors of individuals when the behavior is necessary to complete mandatory, but unfulfilling tasks (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Ho & Nesbit, 2009; Neck, Manz, & Houghton, 2017). There is a wide range of strategies that focus on behaviors, including such methods as self-reward, self-cueing, and self-observation (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Marques-Quinteiro & Cural, 2009; Neck et al., 2017). While behavior focused strategies focus on actual behaviors that are relative to completion of a task, cognitive strategies focus on forming positive thoughts and beliefs in a habitual pattern. This includes replacing dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs, positive self-talk, and mental imagery. These strategies allow individuals to think in positive manners that are more naturally motivating and constructive, such as creating a belief that a task can be accomplished (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2017). Finally, natural reward strategies are based on the fact that individuals can be naturally motivated by the inherently enjoyable aspects of a job. Thus, even when tasks are unpleasant, individuals can engage in such activities as building enjoyable features into a task or by not focusing on the naturally unpleasant features (Stewart et al., 2011; Neck et al., 2017). These three distinct, but related, strategies seek to provide individuals with methods through which they can positively influence their behaviors, thoughts, and actions in a productive manner.

To summarize, self-leadership provides several key benefits to individuals. First, self-leadership is a more encompassing self-influence process than others such as self-regulation. Therefore, self-leadership can motivate an individual in more ways than other self-influence

processes. Second, self-leadership is more prescriptive than other similar processes. Self-leadership actually provides sets of strategies that individuals can engage in, as opposed to just describing what individuals should do. These strategies are able to influence actions through 3 different mechanisms: behavior focused strategies, constructive thought patterns, and natural reward strategies. Self-leadership will be discussed in much greater detail in the literature review chapter. However, a brief introduction of self-leadership at this point in the dissertation was critical for explanatory purposes.

### **Specific Research Questions**

This dissertation seeks to examine gaps that exist within the self-leadership research by examining understudied and unstudied relationships between variables of interest. Within the research realm, it is potentially foolish to assume that there is only a direct relationship, and no mediating mechanisms through which the effects of self-leadership on outcome variables are transmitted. In particular, previous research on self-leadership (i.e., Gomes et al., 2015; Breevaart et al., 2016) has often studied direct relationships, not more complex models. There have been calls for more complex models to be examined in multiple review articles (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011). This dissertation intends to study direct, mediating, and moderating relationships that self-leadership can influence. The direct relationships that will be studied will be ones that have limited research conducted. In particular, these should be areas that self-leadership can exert influence on and have both research and practical implications. The mediating and moderating variables will also be areas that can benefit from research in conjunction with self-leadership. Thus, this dissertation will set forward multiple research questions that can be the driving force behind the hypotheses.

The exploration of the self-leadership brings multiple research questions to mind. There has been a fair amount of research on self-leadership and prevalent outcomes, such as performance (i.e., Prussia et al., 1998) and job satisfaction (i.e., Roberts & Foti, 1994). Despite the frequent research on these areas, important voids within the literature still exists. Relatively speaking, self-leadership is a new construct within organizational behavior. This creates situations where there are potentially relevant relationships that have not been studied, yet could have crucial findings for self-leadership. Perhaps the more important question that remains is what other relationships self-leadership has that need examined. Understanding how self-leadership influences other outcomes that are important in research and practice will help researchers understanding more about this self-influence process. This will allow the knowledge base about self-leadership will grow, allowing new avenues and developments to more easily be studied. Thus, this leads to the first research question that dissertation will seek to answer:

*Research Question 1: What variables of interest have not been studied in conjunction with self-leadership and why are they important to study?*

The second research question that this dissertation will seek to answer is in regards to the nature of a potential relationship between self-leadership and other variables. Again, as stated above, there is limited research on mediating mechanisms of self-leadership relationships (i.e., Andressen et al., 2012). As research has called for (i.e., Stewart et al., 2011), a more complete picture of self-leadership needs to be examined. One way that can be accomplished is through understanding the mechanisms through which self-leadership influences other variables. Thus, not only will this dissertation examine critical, unstudied/understudied relationships, but also will examine through which mechanisms the influence of self-leadership may be transmitted. . A more thorough and in-depth understanding of both *how* and self-leadership processes are

transmitted through can help both researchers and practitioners understand how to incorporate self-leadership in a positive manner. The examination of these mediating mechanisms will help to create better understanding within the self-leadership field as to how exactly self-leadership is working. This will extend research on self-leadership past direct relationships and create better understanding of the processes at play. Thus, the second research question is as follows:

*Research Question 2: Through what mediating mechanisms is self-leadership's impact transmitted onto outcome variables?*

While there has been some research of self-leadership research that has mediated relationships between self-leadership and a variety of outcomes, the amount of research that has examined boundary conditions of those relationships is meager in comparison. Johns (2006), among others, places critical importance on context and how it can influence a relationship, noting that “its influence is often unrecognized and underappreciated” (p.389). Thus, while research knows that context is critically important for understanding relationships, it often is pushed to the side. This dissertation seeks to address this concern within the self-leadership research realm.

As mentioned above with the mediating mechanisms between self-leadership and outcome variables, there are potential moderators that could lead to interesting strengthening or weakening roles on the relationship. By better understanding which variables could positively or negatively influence a particular relationships, researchers will have a better idea of what situations self-leadership may have differing levels of influence in. This could be critical for practitioners and researchers because understanding which situations that may need to stress self-leadership is of critical importance. For example, research on moderators of self-leadership relationships may help explain when engagement in self-leadership will have varying levels of

positive benefits for an organization. Thus, this leads to the third research question that this dissertation will seek to answer:

*Research Question 3: What moderating variables could be of interest to study in conjunction with self-leadership?*

This set of three research questions will provide guidance for this dissertation moving forward. There are key practical implications that can result from this dissertation on self-leadership. They will be briefly introduced here and a more in-depth view will be discussed after data analysis. First, many constructs are psychological in nature. Due to the fact that organizations cannot necessarily control psychological natures, research needs to seek out ways in which managers can influence these psychological constructs. One such way could be through self-leadership practices. By implementing self-leadership practices within an organization, managers may be able to better influence psychological constructs. Second, by influencing psychological outcomes, in turn objective outcomes may be influenced. For instance, as individuals experience more positive psychological outcomes, it could lead to better performance. Thus, understanding how self-leadership influences those psychological outcomes could have important implications for organizations because of the influence on objective outcomes. Organizations might be able to create training mechanisms that could lead to increased levels of self-leadership. In turn, this could lead to positive outcomes within the organization, including with variables of interest that will be included in this dissertation. Each of these practical implications will be discussed in greater detail once data is collected and analyzed.

A literature review will be conducted on self-leadership to determine which important variables may need to be examined in conjunction with self-leadership. This literature review

will help to identify potentially valuable dependent, mediating, and moderating variables. Once potential variables for inclusion in the dissertation have been identified, more specific hypotheses will be developed in relation to self-leadership. The literature review will allow for more grounded hypotheses to be developed that examine through what mechanisms self-leadership impacts outcomes of interest; in addition, more developed hypotheses will be able to be developed that predict how a particular understudied moderating variable may impact self-leadership relationships..

### **Organization of Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of six (6) chapters. This introductory chapter lays the foundation for the remainder of the dissertation. Chapter I has discussed a brief overview of self-leadership and has discussed specific research questions relating to self-leadership. Chapter II reviews the relevant literature on self-leadership that has been published throughout the last 30 years (seeing as how the self-leadership construct is 30 years old as of 2016); additionally Chapter II provides brief literature reviews on other variables of interest that were identified within the self-leadership literature review. Chapter II will review seminal literature, theoretical perspectives used to develop self-leadership, conceptual work, distinctions from similar constructs, and empirical study results.

Chapter III will use the results of the literature review in Chapter II to further develop the hypotheses for the dissertation. Chapter III will develop specific hypotheses to test relationships between self-leadership and dependent, mediating, and moderating variables.

Chapter IV will provide an overview of the methodology that will be used in the dissertation. This chapter will provide research design, data sources, variables, scales to be used,



and empirical analysis for testing. Chapter V will provide the results of the data analysis that is conducted on the hypotheses presented in Chapter III and methodology of Chapter IV.

Chapter VI will provide a discussion section on the results of the analysis, research and practical implications, contributions, and limitations of the discussion. There will also be an overarching conclusion that summarizes the key takeaways from the conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this dissertation will proceed as follows. First, a thorough and in-depth literature review will be conducted on self-leadership. Since self-leadership is the main focus of this dissertation, especially in how it influences the other variables within the model, a more in-depth literature review will be needed on this topic. This will allow for holes, gaps, voids, and unanswered questions within the self-leadership literature to be After these reviews, key areas of interest that need to be examined within the self-leadership field will be discussed. Following the review on self-leadership, higher-level, brief reviews on identified variables of interest will be done. These sections will function in a manner to introduce each of the constructs that will be discussed within the proposed model (See Figure 1.). During these sections, the constructs will be introduced, brief history will be discussed, and key antecedents and consequences will be discussed. Following the construct discussions, the theories that will be used will be discussed. This will provide a brief explanation of the importance of each theoretical view used in hypothesis development. The chapter will conclude with brief explanations of the importance of studying each of the identified variables of interest in conjunction with self-leadership.

### Self-Leadership

Self-leadership was developed in the mid-1980s to help explain why individuals may become and remain motivated to engage in particular actions or behaviors (Manz, 1986). With the heavy emphasis that is placed on individuals to regulate their own actions and behaviors within a variety of different situations, potential benefits can be drawn from individuals having the ability to influence their own behaviors through a variety of different strategies. Self-leadership sprang out of related fields of self-management, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation, all of which

will be discussed in greater detail later in this manuscript. Having been developed 30 years ago, a great deal of research has been conducted on self-leadership, with enough work being compiled to conduct two literature reviews (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011) on the topic, as well as enough empirical evidence to finally conduct a meta-analysis on the topic (i.e., Knotts, Houghton, Chen, & Manz, in progress). The varying studies on this topic have helped to provide a great deal of information on how self-leadership works within individuals, as well as the positive outcomes that result for individuals who engage in self-leadership. Before delving into the empirical literature, an examination of the foundations of self-leadership, ranging from theoretical, definitional, and discriminant differences among similar constructs, needs to be provided to offer clarifications on self-leadership.

### **Seminal Conceptual Definitions**

Self-leadership was originally conceptualized as a “comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating” (Manz, 1986: pp. 589). Self-leadership has a wide range of self-influence than other similar constructs. In particular, self-leadership contains certain elements that are crucial for a broader self-influence process. Self-leadership has been defined in multiple ways, but all of the definitions tend to capture the same elements: self-influence, motivate one’s self, and both motivating/unmotivating situations. A list of key definitions of self-leadership can be seen in Table 1. Manz (1986) believed there were three elements that were critical to differentiate and add additional information to understanding self-influence processes. These elements include wider ranges of standards of self-influence, a fuller incorporation of intrinsic work motivation, and suggestions of strategies for employee self-control (Manz, 1986). Each of these elements add to the

distinctiveness of the self-leadership construct. For example, self-leadership covers more areas of self-influence and incorporates intrinsic work motivation more than other constructs. These two elements help drive the self-influence processes by dictating how individuals may motivate themselves. Finally, self-leadership also has suggestions of strategies for individuals. This extends beyond traditional self-influence research that is descriptive in nature, but does not actually prescribe ways to influence one's self. This particular view of self-influence creates a niche within the self-influence literature by providing these different mechanisms that had not previously been explicitly stated for how individuals manage to control their own behaviors and actions. In particular, self-leadership explicitly provides strategies that individuals can use to positively motivate themselves in less than desirable situations that could lead to demotivating circumstances. Additionally, self-leadership can be used to lead individuals' to greater levels of performance by motivating themselves to complete relevant works and tasks.

By providing individuals with actual strategies on how to motivate their behaviors, self-leadership fills a previously unrealized need within the organizational behavior and the self-regulation fields. The descriptive nature of most self-regulation theories and constructs are not prescriptive for individuals actually seeking to change their behaviors and motivate themselves in a variety of different situations. As individuals seek to actually change their behaviors, and not just learn what happens when they change their behaviors, self-leadership provides critical guidance for how this motivation can occur. Self-leadership typically examines how individuals can motivate themselves via the use of three different types of strategies: behavior focused-strategies, constructive thought patterns, and natural reward strategies. Each of these strategies are developed to help motivate individuals in different manners that may be necessary at any given time due to the different situations that can arise.

## Theoretical Foundations

**Cybernetic (control) theory.** Cybernetic (or control) theory is one of the foundational theories on which self-leadership was based in the seminal article (Manz, 1986). It is argued that self-control exists and is needed in addition to organizational control systems. Cybernetic theory suggests a manner in which individuals do compare their own behavior to standards that are established or reference values. In particular, Carver and Scheier (1981) discuss self-regulation based on feedback loops from control theory. The basis of the cybernetic control model is the negative feedback loop. In particular, there is a reference value that is used for comparisons. There is an output function (typically a behavior), an impact on the environment from the output function, an input function (which is a perception of what has occurred), and a comparator to the reference value (Carver & Scheier, 1982). This is a continuous loop that influences an individual's behaviors to change in accordance to what is expected. This is made possible from self-regulatory systems in which individuals are seeking to change and control their own behavior based upon the feedback that is being received, either negative or positive. Thus, employee self-control can be used to help regulate and manage an individual's actions and behaviors. In particular, individuals can self-regulate and self-control their actions after establishing what the standard that they are trying to match is. Typically, this standard is presented from the organizational level as what is and is not acceptable within an organization.

**Social cognitive theory.** A second key theoretical foundation for self-leadership is social cognitive theory. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that individuals learn from their environment how to act within a given setting by observation of others. Early research on self-learning theory was developed into social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), a common theoretical perspective for self-leadership research. Individuals learn the norms, protocols,

actions, and expectations that are desired within the environment in which they operate. The name of this theory helps to explain the key concept within the theory: learning. The actions and expectations that are present in an environment have been established over a period of time. These are shaped by individuals within the environment, often individuals holding some degree of power. By observing and learning from those individuals, a person can potentially modify their own behaviors and actions to better match what is desired within the environment.

The overarching idea within social cognitive theory is that there is a self-regulatory system in place (i.e., Neck et al., 2017). Thus, individuals regulate their own behaviors based off of the triadic reciprocal model of behavior (i.e., Bandura, 1986; 1991): i.e. behavior is explained by factors in world, personal factors, and behavior itself. Thus, individuals who engage in self-leadership, they are able to identify how these factors in the triadic reciprocal model relate to one another (Bandura, 1986; 1991).

Within the self-leadership literature, a great deal of research has been conducted which has used social learning theory as the perspective from which theoretical arguments have been made. A quick look through past reviews on self-leadership (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011) provides evidence of the firm foundation that social learning/cognitive theory can provide in explaining self-leadership relationships to other variables. In particular, individuals who engage in self-leadership are more adept at observing the actions and behaviors that are expected in a given situation and by vicariously learning through the actions of others. The knowledge and information that is gained from these observations can shape and motivate individuals to change behaviors to meet the standards or expectations that are in place within a situation – even if that means staying motivated in a naturally unmotivating situation or naturally motivating situation.

**Self-management.** Self-management is a similar construct to self-leadership and lays the foundation for one of the conceptual stepping stone that self-leadership builds upon. Self-management is a “process through which people apply a set of behavioral strategies in an effort to manage their behaviors in terms of reducing discrepancies from established standards” (Neck et al., 2017). In this sense, self-management and self-leadership parallel each other as they both attempt to manage behaviors of an individual through certain strategies. The sticking point that exists for why individuals who are engaging in self-management, yet may not be engaging in self-leadership is one of great importance.

Self-management suggests how discrepancies in behaviors should be reduced (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Neck et al., 2017). This falls short of what is accomplished by self-leadership, which is not only focused on *how*, but also in *what* and *why* the self-influence seeks to accomplish. Thus, self-management can provide a basis for self-leadership by addressing the *how* questions and focusing on behaviors. However, self-leadership builds upon this conceptual background by also focusing on *what* needs to be done, *why* something needs to be done, and by expanding the types of strategies beyond just behavior focused to include constructive thought and natural reward strategies.

Furthermore, self-management also provides a foundation for self-leadership by examining and showing concern for a set of behavioral strategies that show a rational view of what people should be doing (Manz, 1986). This provides a foundation for self-leadership because self-leadership is also concerned with what individuals should be doing. As mentioned above, this is only a foundation, however, as self-leadership goes beyond just being concerned with what people should do. Self-leadership also is concerned with not only what people should be doing, but the internal drive and motivations for those people. Thus, self-leadership extends

from self-management by discussing how the intrinsically appealing aspects of work are important in determining why an individual does engage in a particular behavior (Manz, 1986). Self-leadership allows a more comprehensive examination of self-influence processes than self-management, which is essential for understanding self-regulatory behaviors.

**Self-determination theory.** Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) provides crucial foundations upon which part of the self-leadership construct is built. In particular, one of the key sub dimensions of self-leadership is the focus on natural rewards. This part of self-leadership suggests that individuals should focus on the inherently pleasant aspects of a task that they enjoy doing, while excluding a focus upon the unpleasant and naturally unrewarding aspects of the same task. Specifically, this suggests individuals should focus on what they enjoy!

Self-determination theory suggests that individuals have a need to have feelings of competence: these can be accomplished by primary mechanisms such as intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, individuals want to feel competent and that they have control over some aspect of their life. This lays a foundation for individuals who use natural reward strategies to accomplish goals by focusing on enjoying the natural aspects. As individuals are motivating by internal processes, instead of extrinsic motivations, it gives a greater sense of accomplishment and control to the individual. This can help to create feelings of competence for an individual.

### **Self-Leadership Strategies**

Self-leadership strategies seek to meet certain criteria that were laid forth by the initial conceptualization of self-leadership in the seminal article that introduced this form of self-influence (i.e., Manz, 1986). Self-leadership consists of the following three strategies: behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies.



**Behavior focused strategies.** Behavior focused strategies seek to focus attention on behaviors that minimize the discrepancies that exist between undesirable behaviors and desirable behaviors. This is a process that consists of identifying the discrepancy and modifying the behaviors (Neck & Houghton, 2006). There are a variety of different actions that can fall within the behavior focused realm of self-strategies including self-goal setting, self-observation, self-cueing, self-reward, and self-punishment (i.e., Stewart et al., 2011; Neck, et al., 2017). These strategies seek to address different areas of behaviors that may result in negative outcomes for individuals.

For example, self-observation can involve an individual determining what situations are create different behaviors as used by individuals. In particular, self-observation can involve when, why, and what those conditions are (Neck et al, 2017). Another behavior focused strategy is self-goal setting, which involves having goals that guide the actions of an individual (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Additionally, self-reward involves rewarding one's self with something enjoyable upon the accomplishment of a particular objective (Neck et al., 2017). Each of these strategies can be used to modify an individual's behaviors in a positive manner.

**Natural reward strategies.** Natural reward strategies focus on enjoying the inherently pleasant aspects of the task and downplaying the negative aspects of tasks. By focusing on the inherently pleasant aspects of a task, individuals can think about why they enjoy doing what they are doing. This naturally rewarding aspect can lead to individuals remaining actively motivated to complete the job due to the fact that they "like what they are doing". In a similar vein of thought, if individuals are to downplay the negative aspects of tasks, it can lead them to view their jobs more positively. In turn, these individuals may be more likely to stay motivated due to the lesser focus on the negative. On the other side of the coin, individuals who focus on negative

aspects of jobs may only focus on those negatives – which can take focus away from completion of a task. This can lead to an entire host of different results, including lower performance, lower job satisfaction, and lower sense of accomplishment. The demotivating effect of unpleasant parts of a job can cause individuals to solely hone in on what they don't enjoy, thus losing focus on the parts of the job that are naturally and inherently pleasant.

**Constructive thought strategies.** Constructive thought patterns seek to change the manner in which individuals think about the tasks at hand. Instead of focusing on negative and dysfunctional thoughts, constructive thought patterns suggest that individuals should focus on positive thoughts relating to task and other areas of interest (Manz, 1986; Neck & Houghton, 2006). Constructive thought strategies consists of several mechanisms that individuals can use to motivate themselves, including positive self-talk, visualizing successful performance, and challenging dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions. By shifting the focus away from the dysfunctional manner in which individuals can think about task completion, those same individuals can refocus negative thoughts into positive beliefs about their ability to complete the same task.

Positive self-talk involves speaking to one's self in a manner that promotes success. A common example, as provided by Neck and colleagues (2017) is that of the *Little Engine That Could*. This is an example of positive self-talk by suggesting to one's self that something can be accomplished. Visualizing successful performance is a form of mental practice that individuals can engage in (Neck et al., 2017). This can create a positive thought process for an individual as they can imagine themselves successfully completing an objective, increasing their belief in their self to actually complete the task when it comes time to perform. . Evaluating beliefs and assumptions typically comes from challenging negative thoughts that a person holds. By

replacing dysfunctional thoughts with more rational beliefs, an individual is more likely to think about tasks in a positive manner (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

### **Similar Construct Distinctions**

While self-leadership researchers have worked to establish the construct as distinct from other similar constructs, there have been questions regarding the discriminant validity of self-leadership relative to other related constructs. In particular, questions have arisen concerning the necessity for self-leadership. These questions have resulted from arguments that self-leadership may be redundant with similar motivational constructs (i.e., Andressen, Konradt, & Neck, 2012; Markham & Markham, 1995). This has created questions within the self-leadership literature that has driven areas within reviews on the topic (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006). For example, Neck and Houghton (2006) have argued that “future self-leadership research should also empirically investigate the way of which self-leadership processes operate within the larger theoretical contexts of self-regulation, social cognitive, intrinsic motivation, and self-control theories” (pp. 287). This call for research has begun to be answered to provide evidence that self-leadership is truly a distinct construct and will be discussed within the following sections.

Self-leadership can be argued to be different from other similar constructs, such as personality, self-management, and self-regulation. There are two key arguments that need to be discussed before moving into the empirical literature that has attempted to distinguish between self-leadership and other similar constructs. These two arguments revolve around self-leadership having a greater scope of self-influence and a prescriptive vs descriptive argument.

First, as mentioned above, self-leadership provides a greater scope of influence when compared to other self-influence constructs. In particular, self-leadership places a sizeable focus on elements such as wider ranges of self-influence standards, more incorporation of intrinsic

work motivation, and suggestion of strategies for employee self-control (Manz, 1986). Literature on self-leadership often focuses on a single manner in which individuals influence themselves, such as through self-management. However, self-leadership provides a fuller picture of what can occur through these three distinct elements. These elements enable self-leadership to potentially explain how individuals motivate themselves beyond that of self-leadership and self-management. This can be argued as self-leadership explaining “what is to be done (e.g., standards and objectives) and why (e.g., strategic analysis) as well as how it is to be done . . . [it] incorporates intrinsic motivation and has an increased focus on cognitive processes” (Manz, 1991, p. 17; Stewart et al. 2011, p. 188). Thus, self-leadership has a higher level of influence by impacting multiple areas, such as what, why, and how something needs to be done. This is different than other self-influence processes that typically focus one of the three reasons, but not all three.

Second, there is often an argument over whether a theory/construct is normative or descriptive in nature. Normative theories often emphasize how something should be done, while descriptive theories often explain basic levels of operation, but do not provide specific advice on what should be done (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Thus, normative theories are often more prescriptive in nature, as they can suggest what should actually be done. Self-leadership has an interesting placement within the normative vs. descriptive argument. Most self-influence processes are descriptive in nature (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These self-influence processes describe what individuals should do to manage their own behaviors, however, they often stop short of prescribe actual methods to be used in this process. By stopping short of prescribing methods that can be used, self-influence research has a void that self-leadership filled. Self-leadership falls on the normative and prescriptive side of the argument. In particular, self-

leadership not only provides guidance for what individuals should do, but also provides strategies that can be used to follow this guidance. Thus, self-leadership is distinct from other similar self-influence constructs by going beyond and prescribing strategies to engage in. This idea is supported by Neck and Houghton (2006) who argue that self-leadership is “a normative concept that provides certain behavioral and cognitive prescriptions while operating within and through the theoretical contexts provided by self-regulation, social cognitive, self-control, and intrinsic motivation theories. We will further suggest that self-leadership represents a unique constellation of strategies that are founded upon, related to, and yet distinct from those various theories as well as from various personality traits” (p. 275). Thus, research that has reviewed the literature supports the idea that self-leadership is distinct from these similar constructs.

To summarize, self-leadership differs from other self-influence constructs in two critical ways. First, self-leadership provides a greater scope within the self-influence argument. Second, self-leadership is more prescriptive/normative in nature than other self-influence constructs. These differences have led to empirical research that seeks to provide empirical distinctiveness of self-leadership from other similar constructs. Those empirical articles will be discussed in the next section.

**Self-regulation.** One early piece that attempted to distinguish between self-leadership and self-regulation was from Furtner and Hiller (2013). This article examined the relationship between self-leadership, self-regulation, and emotional regulation by looking at a common regulatory core. The article argued that emotion regulation and self-regulation are strongly tied to one another. The strong linkage between self-leadership and self-regulation can also strongly tie between self-leadership and emotion regulation (e.g., Furtner & Hiller, 2013). The article showed that there was a positive relationship, but also different in the “core” from one another

(Furtner & Hiller, 2013). This article showed that while individuals who are engaging in self-leadership practices may exhibit similarities to self-regulation, the manner in which they practice these self-influence processes is different.

Recently, Furtner, Rauthmann, and Sachse (2015) examined self-leadership in conjunction with similar concepts including self-regulation. The authors measured self-leadership and self-regulation with established survey instruments. Furtner and colleagues (2015) found empirical distinctions between self-leadership and self-regulation. The authors established this discriminant validity by testing a bifactor model vs. a unidimensional model. Since the bifactor model fit the data better, it added support for discriminant validity. Additional support was found by examining the inter-correlations between self-leadership and the other variables. The correlations were found to be low to moderate in strength, which adds further support of discriminant validity (Furtner et al., 2015). Furthermore, this study found that self-leadership had incremental validity in predicting job performance above that of self-regulation (Furtner et al., 2015). Thus, this key recent study helps to provide empirical evidence for the distinction between self-leadership and self-regulation.

Finally, Bailey, Barber, and Justice (2016) examined self-leadership with other self-regulatory traits, attempting to establish construct and incremental validity. The authors found that while various self-regulatory traits were related to aspects of self-leadership, there was discriminant validity between the constructs (Bailey et al., 2016). The authors found low to moderate correlations between self-leadership and the various self-regulatory traits that were examined. This adds further support establishing discriminant validity for self-leadership. Furthermore, self-leadership proved to have incremental validity beyond self-regulatory traits in predicting job performance, adding support to Furtner and colleagues (2015) work on this topic.

Thus, Bailey and colleagues (2016) established both construct and incremental validity for self-leadership beyond self-regulatory traits. These three studies show a relationship, yet discriminant validity between self-leadership and self-regulation. By showing that self-leadership is separate from self-regulation, a major step was made in establishing self-leadership's discriminant validity. While conceptual arguments can be made, the ability to have empirical support for claiming discriminant validity is crucial. These studies have taken steps towards accomplishing this task.

**Personality.** Arguments have been made for the lack of distinct and the conceptual overlap between self-leadership and various personality traits. In particular, arguments can be made that self-leadership is extremely similar to conscientiousness, or that certain levels of personality traits may cause differing levels of self-leadership engagement. Thus, scholars have sought to examine how self-leadership would differ from these various personality traits that exist. Early conceptual research (Williams, 1997) sought to put forward arguments relating to how self-leadership and personality traits would relate to one another. Williams (1997) proposed a series of hypotheses that suggested that self-leadership would have different relationships with each of the Big 5 personality traits. The proposed relationships included positive linkages between self-leadership and extraversion, openness to experiences, and conscientiousness. However, the proposed relationships also suggested that self-leadership would be negatively related to neuroticism, while having no relationship whatsoever with agreeableness (Williams, 1997). This article is critical in distinguishing self-leadership and personality traits because it sets a baseline argument for why these constructs are distinct from one another. By making the arguments of how self-leadership would relate to different personality traits, Williams (1997) helped to set a stream of research in motion on this topic. This stream of research can be

beneficial to self-leadership research in two ways: by establishing what personality traits can be more predictive of self-leadership and by establishing discriminant validity between self-leadership and personality traits. This article laid a foundation for future research on self-leadership and personality traits to move forward from by providing initial hypotheses on the relationships that would exist between self-leadership and personality traits.

An early empirical article in this field (Houghton, Bonham, Neck, & Singh, 2004) compared the factor structures of self-leadership and extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, 3 of the Big 5 personality traits. These authors build off of Williams (1997) work on how personality traits would relate to self-leadership. Houghton and colleagues (2004) used confirmatory factor analysis to examine the relationships between self-leadership and personality traits. Support was found for discriminant validity using confirmatory factor analysis to show that the higher order factors of self-leadership and personality dimensions were different from one another (Houghton et al., 2004). These authors helped to establish empirical evidence and support for the distinction between self-leadership and personality, which was an early step in establishing discriminant validity of self-leadership.

Following this initial work, Furtner and Rauthmann (2010) took the next step in examining relationships between self-leadership and personality traits by examining all of the relationships between self-leadership and the Big 5 personality traits. While earlier research examined self-leadership and personality traits conceptually (Williams, 1997) or select personality traits (Houghton et al., 2004), there had not yet been research that examined self-leadership with the set of Big 5 personality traits. Furtner and Rauthmann (2010) found low to moderate correlations between self-leadership and the personality traits, suggesting discriminant validity. Also, these authors found that self-leadership was positively related to the entire set of



Big 5 personality traits (Furtner & Rauthmann, 2010) and that self-leadership was different facet than the other personality traits. Therefore, individuals who are higher on self-leadership could be seen as more extraverted, open to experience, conscientious, agreeable, and emotionally stable. This key finding moved research forward beyond the proposed arguments (Williams, 1997) and partial empirical testing of the relationship (i.e., Houghton et al., 2004).

Additionally, positive personality traits are not the only ones that have been examined in conjunction with self-leadership. Furtner, Rauthmann, and Sachse (2011) examined how self-leadership relates to and overlaps with the Dark Triad of personality traits. Furtner and colleagues (2011) sought to examine how narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy related to self-leadership. The authors examined the relationship between these constructs using correlational analyses. One key finding from this study was the positive association between narcissism and self-leadership. This suggests that individuals who are high on self-leadership scales may also be narcissistic, potentially leading to discrepancies between beliefs and actions. The other findings from this study were not unexpected as self-leadership was found to not be positively associated with Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Additionally, an exploratory factor analyses was conducted on self-leadership and the Dark Triad. The authors found that SL was a separate factor from the dark triad, again establishing discriminant validity for self-leadership. This study provides an interesting lens by stepping away from traditional research that examines self-leadership in a positive light. Instead, Furtner and colleagues (2011) examined how self-leadership relates to these negative personality traits. The authors still found interesting associations between self-leadership and the personality traits, as well as built support for establishing discriminant validity of self-leadership.

Finally, recent research (i.e., Bailey et al., 2016) examined how the construct validity and incremental validity of self-leadership against conscientiousness and extraversion. This article sought to build on the earlier work on self-leadership and personality traits. Bailey and colleagues (2016) found that self-leadership was related to, but distinguishable from the personality traits. As with prior research (Furtner & Rauthmann, 2010), extraversion and conscientiousness were found to be reliable predictors of self-leadership, not the same construct as self-leadership. Furthermore, self-leadership provide incremental validity in predicting job performance beyond personality traits. This study from Bailey and colleagues (2016) is a recent example of the research that has sought to separate self-leadership from other similar personality traits. The research that examines self-leadership in conjunction with personality traits is critical for the organizational behavior field moving forward. By understanding which personality traits may be better predictors of self-leadership, researchers can understand what can cause an individual to engage in self-leadership. Additionally, understanding how self-leadership differs from personality traits, such as conscientiousness, can help establish discriminant validity from these personality traits. The group of authors who have studied these constructs in relation to one another have taken an important step in understanding self-leadership.

**Volition.** Volition was a concept that was developed to explain the gap between choices and actions (i.e. Heiss, Engbert, Gropel, Ziegler, & Brand, 2010). Conceptually, potential overlap could exist between self-leadership and volition as both seek to propose self-influence strategies. The result of these strategies suggests that individuals can motivate themselves to perform at a higher level. The argument exists that that self-leadership could be redundant when compared to volition (Markham & Markham, 1995). Volition appears slightly different than self-leadership, particularly in having differing sub dimensions (i.e., Heiss et al., 2010).

While there is potentially substantial overlap between these constructs, there has been empirical work that seeks to determine to what extent researchers in these fields need to be worried about measuring the same thing in their studies (Heiss et al., 2010). Heiss and colleagues (2010) sought to examine self-leadership and volition to determine whether they are the same construct. The authors examined the discriminant validity between self-leadership and volition in two steps. First, the authors used half of the data sample with an exploratory factor analysis. Second, the authors used the other half of the data to calculate a confirmatory factor analysis on self-leadership and volition. The results of both the EFA and CFA suggest that self-leadership and volition are distinguishable constructs (Heiss et al., 2010). Furthermore, there was only a moderate positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .33$ ), far below levels that would lead to concern that the two constructs were measuring the same domain (Heiss et al., 2010). Thus, Heiss and colleagues' (2010) research provides empirical evidence of the differences between self-leadership and volition. This helps to distinguish self-leadership from a construct that researchers thought may have been redundant (Markham & Markham, 1995). As with empirical research on similar constructs, this study helped to establish support for discriminant validity of self-leadership.

**Self-efficacy.** One of the most similar constructs to self-leadership that has been examined numerous times is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a fundamental cornerstone of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), a key theory that self-leadership was developed out of. While there are similarities between these constructs, there are conceptual and empirical distinctions that have been made between the two. First, self-leadership focuses on strategies that can lead individuals to influence their own behavior, actions, thoughts, and beliefs. This is similar, but not the same as self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to complete a specific

tasks. Thus, self-leadership is a predecessor to self-efficacy in many theoretical manners, specifically by engaging in self-leadership strategies leading individuals to have stronger beliefs in their own abilities.

A conceptual argument that can also be made for the distinction between self-leadership and self-efficacy lies in the nature of the suggestive causal relationship between the two constructs. It is theoretically plausible to suggest that as an individual engages in strategies to influence their own behaviors, even in negative situations, that those strategies would lead the individuals to have stronger beliefs in themselves. On the other hand, it is less plausible that for the causal argument that would suggest that self-efficacy would lead to self-leadership. If an individual has a belief that they can accomplish a specific tasks, it does not necessarily create a causal argument that would result in higher levels of self-influence in a host of negative situations. Thus, the idea is that the generalized nature of self-leadership could lead to the specific belief of self-efficacy, but the specific nature of self-efficacy may not lead to a generalized self-influence process such as self-leadership.

As with self-regulation, Furtner and colleagues (2015) took a step in attempting to create empirical clarification between self-leadership and self-efficacy. Within that study, the authors examined the relationship between self-leadership and self-efficacy by examining the correlations, as well as using a bifactor model to test empirical distinctions. The correlations were found to be moderate, suggesting discriminant validity. Further, the bifactor model fit the data better than the unidimensional model, adding additional support to the differences between self-leadership and self-efficacy. Additionally, as with self-regulation, self-leadership was found to provide incremental validity over self-efficacy in predicting job performance (Furtner et al., 2015). While this is just a small step, it is a step in the direction of creating empirical testing that

makes the distinctions between these two similar and related constructs. Arguably, researchers have moved past the idea that self-leadership and self-efficacy are the same construct, as exhibited by the number of studies that examine the relationship between the two variables, with self-leadership as either an outcome of self-leadership (i.e., Ho & Nesbit, 2009) or as a mediating variable between self-leadership and another outcome of interest (i.e., Prussia et al., 1998; Konradt et al., 2009). These studies find a positive relationships between the two constructs, but do not consider them to be redundant. Thus, conceptual arguments and empirical arguments have been made to distinguish between the two constructs.

The findings from research that has sought to distinguish self-leadership from other similar constructs is crucial for understanding self-leadership. Research has shown differences between self-leadership and self-regulation, personality traits, volition, and self-efficacy. These differences were conceptual and empirical in nature. The work that has helped established discriminant validity between self-leadership and these other motivational constructs helps to build the foundation of self-leadership research. By developing evidence that shows self-leadership as its own construct, research has provided the foundation and distinctiveness to study self-leadership within the organizational behavior field.

### **Methods of Literature Review Search**

An examination of the literature involving self-leadership is critical for helping to understand the gaps that this dissertation seeks to fill. The literature search began by examining the two qualitative literature reviews (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011) to establish the empirical and theoretical literature that had been conducted and reviewed in these two articles. Furthermore, the list of self-leadership articles was enhanced by examining the list of empirical articles included in a working self-leadership meta-analysis (i.e., Knotts et al., working

paper). Next, an examination of web based services (i.e. Google Scholar and Business Source Premier) was conducted using the key term “*self-leadership*”, as well as “*self and leadership*”(not connected by a hyphen) was conducted to supplement the existing list that was established from the two qualitative literature reviews and the working meta-analysis. Finally, the list of articles to be included in this literature review was supplemented by examining the citations within *Self-Leadership: The Definitive Guide to Personal Excellence* (Neck et al., 2017). With this being the most recent self-leadership text, as well as being published in 2017, this textbook provided a list of articles to compare to the formulated list of self-leadership articles. This enable a comprehensive list of self-leadership articles that have been written and published.

After compiling the list of the articles on self-leadership, each article was coded on a variety of different criteria, including type of article (theoretical or empirical) whether the articles examined the factor structure of self-leadership or comparisons to other similar constructs within the article. Furthermore, the empirical articles were also searched for information regarding authors, year, outcome, mediators, and moderators covered within the study. Additionally, the theoretical and conceptual articles were also searched for information on the same information to allow for an investigation into what articles had made theoretical arguments for various relationships that self-leadership may have with other variables of interest. The articles that are examined in the literature review are presented in Table 2.

### **Self-Leadership Conceptual**

Early work on self-leadership was mostly conceptual in nature before a valid measurement instrument was developed. The lack of a valid measurement instrument existed until 2002, when the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire was published (Houghton & Neck,

2002). Following the implementation of this questionnaire, there was more empirical research conducted on self-leadership. However, there was almost 20 years from the establishment of self-leadership (Manz, 1986) until the creation of a valid measurement instrument (i.e., Houghton & Neck, 2002). Thus, there are several key areas that were examined within self-leadership articles that were not empirically based. Furthermore, there are still conceptual articles being published that seek to make arguments for conceptual linkages between self-leadership and a variety of different outcomes. Therefore, it is critically important to examine the conceptual papers and arguments presented within those manuscripts. The list of key conceptual articles that will be discussed can be seen in Table 2.

**Conceptual models relating to performance.** Organizational behavior research has a long history of examining individual performance as an outcome of different individual level variables. Therefore, an unsurprising finding is the number of studies that examine how self-leadership can influence individual performance. These studies are both conceptual and empirical, with the conceptual/theoretical articles being discussed in this section. The empirical articles will be discussed below, but first, an examination of the foundation and groundwork that was laid for the self-leadership to performance empirical linkage will be reviewed.

There are several key conceptual articles that discuss the linkage between self-leadership and individual performance. Manz and Neck (1992) published one of the first conceptual articles that made arguments that self-leadership would lead to higher performance. These authors argue that self-talk and mental imagery strategies of self-leadership would lead individuals to higher levels of performance. The proposed model was one that may appear relatively simplistic with just direct relationships between the self-leadership strategies and individual performance (Manz

& Neck, 1992). However there were great implications and a foundation for the self-leadership field that resulted from these proposed relationships.

Following early conceptual work on self-leadership and performance (i.e., Manz & Neck, 1992), research in the late 1990's followed suit with more conceptual work linking self-leadership strategies and individual performance. For example, Godwin, Neck, and Houghton (1999) sought to extend goal setting theory by integrating self-leadership. These authors developed a cognitive model and explanation explaining how thought self-leadership could result in higher levels of individual goal performance by influencing the relationship between goal setting and cognitive processes. As with Manz and Neck (1992), Godwin and colleagues (1999) helped to lay a foundation for the empirical research on self-leadership that would come later.

**Conceptual models relating to emotions.** Researchers have long sought to understand the role of emotions within a variety of contexts in organizational behavior. There are many different manners in which emotions can be studied including an examination of the emotions or how individuals can suffer from differing levels of emotional exhaustion. Within self-leadership, there has been some research that attempts to make connections between self-leadership and different aspects of emotions. These articles have been conceptual in nature. There are three main articles examining self-leadership and aspects of emotions that need to be discussed in greater detail.

First, Boss and Sims (2008) created a conceptual model where self-leadership and emotion regulation were moderating variables for recovery. The authors argue that higher levels of self-leadership and emotion regulation moderate the relationship from personal failure to recovery. The foundation of the argument from Boss and Sims was that if individuals engaged in self-leadership and emotional intelligence (as a form of emotion regulation), it could mitigate the



typically negative outcomes associated with personal failure (2008). This was the first step towards integrating the self-leadership and emotion literatures. By establishing the idea that a link may exist between emotions literature and self-leadership, these authors provided guidance for other researchers moving forward to examine the relatedness of these two areas.

Second, Houghton and colleagues (2012) examined how self-leadership and emotional intelligence could be used in a causal model (Houghton, Wu, Godwin, Neck & Manz, 2012). The basis of the propositions laid forward by Houghton and colleagues (2012) was theoretically based in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The authors argue that self-leadership and emotional intelligence can be used by students to influence levels of stress coping. The authors argue that higher levels of self-leadership and emotional intelligence could lead to better stress coping in students, who are in naturally stressful situations, through two mediating mechanisms (Houghton et al., 2012). These mediating mechanisms were positive affect and self-efficacy. The authors argued that higher levels of self-leadership and emotional intelligence led to higher levels of positive affect and self-efficacy. In turn, the higher levels of the mediating mechanisms led to better stress coping (Houghton et al., 2012). This article made a substantial contribution to the integration of self-leadership and emotions literatures by proposing how the constructs could work within a causal model, as opposed to just moderating effects, such as the arguments made by Boss and Sims (2008).

Finally, a recent article works to integrate the self-leadership and emotions literatures. Manz and colleagues (Manz, Houghton, Neck, Fugate, & Pearce, 2016) sought to develop a model of emotional self-leadership. These authors examine how emotional self-leadership strategies can be used to shape emotional responses and work related outcomes (Manz et al., 2016). A main takeaway from this article was that the authors develop strategies beyond

normally investigated self-leadership strategies to create a more complete model on how emotional self-leadership can drive a host of different outcomes. The authors argue that there are emotional self-leadership strategies that can be beneficial in detailing with emotions and work outcomes, which is new to both the self-leadership and emotions literature. This was a critical step in linking self-leadership and emotions literature by developing a more fully integrated model between the two literature streams.

**Conceptual models relating to OCBs.** OCBs are the extra-role behaviors that individuals can engage in that are beneficial to the organization as a whole (Organ, 1988). These extra role behaviors are not required by organizations and are essentially “completed by volunteers”. The organizational behavior field has a rich history of examining OCBs. Despite the clear importance of OCBs to the organizational behavior field, there has been a limited amount of research on self-leadership’s influence on OCBs. Within the self-leadership literature, there has been a singular article that attempted to explain the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs. Mansor, Darus, & Dali (2013) attempted to conceptually diagram and explain the relationship between these two variables in a school teacher sample. The authors of this manuscript propose that there is a positive effect of self-leadership on OCBs, through the mediating mechanism of self-efficacy (Mansor et al., 2013). This proposed study sought to examine self-leadership as both a global construct, as well as the individual dimensions of behavior focused strategies, constructive thought patterns, and natural reward strategies. Each of these forms of self-leadership were proposed to relate positively to both OCBO and OCBI.

Furthermore, the authors (Mansor et al., 2013) propose that self-leadership and each of the dimensions would positively relate to individual’s self-efficacy, which in turn would lead to higher levels of both OCBO and OCBI. The authors propose, though don’t empirically test, the

relationship described above using social cognitive theory and social exchange theory as the theoretical framework. This is similar to much self-leadership research that uses social cognitive theory and OCB research that uses social exchange theory. While there was not an empirical test conducted in this manuscript, it does lay a conceptual foundation for how self-leadership could potentially influence follower OCBs.

**Other key conceptual models.** There were additional conceptual articles that did not fit into the categories on self-leadership and performance, emotions, and OCBs. The first of the other key conceptual articles discusses how self-leadership is perceived and understood in different nationalities (Alvez, Lovelace, Manz, Toyasaki, & Ke, 2006). The authors examine the intersection of self-leadership and Hofstede's culture framework. The argument is made that different features of Hofstede's dimensions may dictate how self-leadership is understood and used. The findings of this conceptual perspective article found that indeed, self-leadership can be interpreted different across cultures (Alvez et al., 2006). In particular, each of Hofstede's dimensions can influence how self-leadership is understood and applied, through power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, femininity, and long term orientation. The authors argue that this suggests a contingency perspective of self-leadership where it is applied differently depending on the national culture (Alvez et al., 2006). This is important for understanding that not all individuals will interpret, understand, and use self-leadership in the same manner. Thus, research must consider the contingency perspectives when interpreting empirical findings.

The other conceptual article of note discusses how self-leadership, along with shared leadership, can be used in highly demanding job environments (Lovelace, Manz, & Alvez, 2007). The authors argued that high strain jobs can lead to increased risk of disease and higher levels of psychological strain. This results from highly demanding job environments putting

more pressure and stress on individuals. However, the incorporation and use of self-leadership and shared leadership can potentially mitigate some of the negative effects of the highly demanding job environment (Lovelace et al., 2007). In particular, self-leadership and shared leadership can lead individuals to be more active in highly demanding job environments, in turn, leading to more engagement and healthful regeneration. Thus, this article argues how self-leadership can be used to alleviate some of the strain that may be placed on individuals by managing the higher job demands.

### **Self-Leadership Empirical**

There has been an abundance of empirical self-leadership research, especially over the last 10 years. This empirical research has been very fruitful in helping researchers truly understand how engagement in self-leadership can positively impact a host of different individual level outcomes. Within this empirical research, there are two distinct streams that have been examined in regards to how self-leadership impacts employee outcomes. The first of these streams has sought to examine how engaging in self-leadership can lead to individuals hitting higher levels on various performance outcomes, whether that be job performance, creativity, innovation, or another form of performance. The second path of research that has developed in conjunction with examining self-leadership is how engaging in self-leadership can lead individuals to have certain beliefs, attitudes, etc., such as higher levels of job satisfaction or self-efficacy. Each of these different semi-streams of research has been critical to advancing the field and the knowledge of self-leadership within the organizational behavior field. Despite all of the empirical literature that will be discussed below, there is still gaps that remain within the self-leadership field. The potential holes that still exist within the self-leadership arena of research

will be discussed after the empirical research has been reviewed. The empirical articles that are being discussed within the literature review can be seen in Table 3.

### **Self-Leadership and Performance Outcomes**

**Self-leadership and job performance.** The most commonly studied empirical relationship within the realm of self-leadership examines the linkage between self-leadership and performance. When examining the results of the literature search, the particular relationship between self-leadership and performance was studied far more often than any other relationship, including relationships with creativity, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Early empirical work (i.e., Prussia et al., 1998) sought to first examine this linkage between self-leadership and job performance, finding a positive relationship existed. Prussia and colleagues (1998) also examined the role of self-efficacy as a mediating variable and found a positive mediating effect on the self-leadership to performance relationship. The authors established a linkage that could be further examined by other researchers by determining the positive link between self-leadership and performance, as well as one potential mediating mechanism.

Following the work by Prussia and colleagues (1998), Neubert and Wu (2006) conducted a study that examined the generalizability of the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002) in a Chinese context. After examination of the hierarchical structure of the construct, the authors tested the relationship of self-leadership with performance. The findings suggested that self-leadership was positively related to in-role performance. Also in 2006, Politis (2006) examined the role of self-leadership on performance within teams. Politis (2006) found that higher levels of individuals using self-leadership behavioral focused strategies led to higher levels of team performance. This shows that self-leadership not only relates to individual level performance, but also team level performance.

The early work on self-leadership and performance helped to establish a linkage that other researchers could investigate in more depth. Konradt, Andressen, and Ellwart (2009) expanded Politis' work examining self-leadership on team performance by examining how self-leadership influenced individual level performance within a team. The authors used hierarchical linear modeling to test the multi-level effects and found that self-leadership did positively relate to individual performance within a team, which was partially mediated by self-efficacy. The examination provided further evidence that self-leadership effects could be present, even within a team setting.

More recent research has begun to examine potential moderating and mediating effects on the self-leadership and performance relationship. For example, Sahin (2011) established a positive linkage between self-leadership and job performance in a Turkish sample. Sahin (2011) created a larger contribution by showing the interactive effects that psychological climate had with self-leadership, strengthening the impact of self-leadership on job performance. This was an early step towards understanding a potential moderating effect that could be changing the magnitude of the effect between self-leadership and job performance.

While there has been a substantial amount of self-leadership research that has examined the relationship between self-leadership and performance, there is still a continued focus on this particular relationship in recent years. One example of the focus on this relationship comes from Marques-Quinteiro and Curral (2012) who examined how self-leadership led to both proactive and adaptive work role performance. These authors contributed to the literature on this topic by explicitly examining two aspects of performance. The authors found that self-leadership behavior focused strategies were able to predict proactive and adaptive work role performance (Marques-

Quinteiro & Curren, 2012), again showing the positive effects that self-leadership has on performance.

While some prior work examined the role of self-leadership on work role performance in teams (i.e., Konradt et al., 2009), there has still been recent research that examined this similar relationship. In particular, Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) found that self-leadership had a positive effect on individual task performance. This study adds further support to the idea that self-leadership effects can be seen in team settings, not just in settings when individuals work on individually focused tasks.

Additionally, Andressen, Konradt, and Neck (2012) also examined how self-leadership could relatively influence performance by comparing different models between self-leadership, work motivations, and transformational leadership. These authors suggested that self-leadership led to work motivations, which led to performance (Andressen et al., 2012). This is another example of trying to fully understand how self-leadership works in a given situation to influence work performance. Understanding that self-leadership works as a process mechanism that drives work motivations to lead to higher performance helps to provide a fuller understanding of the overall impact that self-leadership can have.

Even with the substantial amount of research that examines self-leadership and job performance, there are still voids that recent literature attempts to fill. One such example comes from Ho and Nesbit (2014) who sought to examine how self-leadership influences job performance within a Chinese context. The authors found that self-leadership in a Chinese context was positively related to performance ratings. Furthermore, the authors contributed to the literature by showing that job autonomy could moderate the relationship between self-leadership and work performance (Ho & Nesbit, 2014). Thus, the amount of autonomy that individuals have

may strengthen the degree to which their engagement in self-leadership strategies can lead to higher performance.

Recently, Breevaart and colleagues (2016) examined the role of self-leadership and job performance with work engagement as a mediating mechanism. These authors used a fully mediated model and found that self-leadership was positively related to employees' job performance through work engagement (Breevaart et al., 2016). This finding helps to open up a new avenue into the self-leadership and job performance relationship by studying how work engagement can play a role in driving higher levels of performance. This is the most recent study on performance, however, it shows that there is still interest and need for research on how self-leadership can influence job performance.

This relationship between self-leadership and performance has often been placed within a multitude of different self-leadership studies. In particular, many of the variables that have been studied as resulting from self-leadership have been studied as mediators of the self-leadership to performance relationship. Thus, even with the plethora of research that has occurred on the self-leadership to performance relationship, there is still much that can be learned from this key dependent variable within the organizational behavior field when studied as a result of self-leadership.

**Self-leadership and creativity/innovation.** A second form of performance outcomes that has received a relatively fair share of research within the self-leadership field has been creativity and innovation. Both creativity and innovation are crucial outcomes that firms and employees seek to accomplish and mechanisms that can increase these behaviors are of great value to those. In particular, the very nature of self-leadership lends itself to individuals becoming more creative and innovation. The constructive thought pattern strategy within self-



leadership specifically attempts to change how individuals think from dysfunctional and mundane. The shift takes the thought processes from these negative perspectives to more positive and beneficial thought patterns that can lead individuals to greater levels of creativity and innovation. Creativity typically can be defined as an individual's ability to create new ideals about something within the firm (Mumford, 2003; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Creativity can lead to innovation, which is the successful integration and use of creative thoughts and ideas by an individual of firm (Amabile, 1979; Shavinina & Seeratan, 2003). Thus, there are slight differences in creativity and innovation, however, both should result from implementation of self-leadership strategies.

Studies that attempt to link self-leadership to creativity have produced promising results about the relationship between the two areas of research. Neubert and Wu (2006) were modifying the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002) to a Chinese context and tested the measurement model they developed in conjunction with creativity. These authors found a positive relationship between self-leadership and creativity, suggesting that if an individual engaged in self-leadership strategies, it would lead to more creativity. This was the first empirical step in examining the relationship between self-leadership and creativity. Thus, Neubert and Wu (2006) laid a foundation for future research on self-leadership and creativity.

More recently, Amundsen and Martinson (2015) examined the role that self-leadership had as a mediating variable between empowering leadership and creativity. As with prior research, the authors examined the direct link between self-leadership and creativity. Adding support to prior research, Amundsen and Martinson (2015) found that higher levels of self-leadership did lead to higher levels of creativity. Thus, this article adds further support to the idea that self-leadership can positively influence an individual's level of creativity.

In addition to the research on self-leadership and creativity, there has also been substantial research that has sought to examine how self-leadership influences individual level innovation. One of the earliest articles on self-leadership and innovation was published by Carmeli and colleagues (Carmeli, Meitar, & Weisberg, 2006). These authors sought to establish a linkage between self-leadership skills and innovative behavior at work in an Israeli sample. Carmeli and colleagues (2006) found that self-leadership did positively relate to innovative behaviors, as rated by both self-ratings and supervisor ratings. These authors provided the first step in attempting to establish a positive and direct relationship between self-leadership and innovation.

More early research on self-leadership and innovation presented the relationship nested within a mediated model (Cural & Marques-Quinteiro, 2009). These authors used a Portuguese sample to examine how self-leadership related to work role innovation by serving as the mediating variable between goal orientation and work motivation. This study allowed for an examination of the direct relationship between self-leadership and work role innovation, finding significant and strong positive relationship between the two variables (Cural & Marques-Quinteiro, 2009). These two studies laid the foundation for research on self-leadership and work role innovation by establishing this positive direct relationship between the two variables.

A more recent article from Kalyar (2011) examined a direct relationship between self-leadership and innovation. The author contributed to the literature on self-leadership and innovation by examining this relationship in Pakistan, a previously unstudied location for self-leadership research. The findings from this study showed that self-leadership did positively relate to individual innovation. While the direct relationship has already been shown to exist, Kalyar's (2011) study did add support to the existence of the relationship, as well as providing an

examination in a new context and culture.

The most recent examination of self-leadership and innovation took the first step in examining potential mediating mechanisms that may exist between the two variables (Gomes, Curral, & Caetano, 2015). These authors examined how self-leadership could influence individual innovation. The authors found a positive relationship between self-leadership and individual innovation through the mediating effect of work engagement (Gomes et al., 2015). This study help to establish a better idea of what exactly is occurring between self-leadership and innovation by branching into an examination of mediating mechanisms. By understanding how self-leadership influences individual's innovation, researchers can have a better grasp on why individual motivation strategies can lead people to be more innovative in their work.

### **Self-Leadership and Individual Beliefs/Attitudes**

**Self-leadership and job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction can be defined in relationship to the pleasure and positive emotional state that an individual has when reflecting on parts of their job (Locke, 1976). Further, job satisfaction relates to the degree to which individuals are happy with different aspects of their jobs, including coworkers, supervision, work, pay, and promotion (i.e., Smith Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Therefore, it is critical for individuals to understand what can drive job satisfaction since it relates to such a wide array of aspects in their job. One such manner that individuals can have higher levels of job satisfaction can be through the use of self-leadership strategies. The definition of self-leadership suggests that individuals can continue to motivate themselves and approach potentially negative or unpleasant situations in a more positive manner. This could relate to higher levels of job satisfaction when engaging in self-leadership strategies.

The relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction has received some empirical research that seeks to show a positive relationship between the variables.

Roberts and Foti (1998) were at the forefront of early research on self-leadership and job satisfaction. The authors sought to examine how person and situation factors could influence the affective response and lead individuals to be more satisfied with their jobs (Roberts & Foti, 1998). The authors found that individuals who were high on self-leadership and had low structure work environments were more satisfied with their jobs than individuals who had low scores on self-leadership (Roberts & Foti, 1998). This provide a glimpse into the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction by showing that self-leadership could shape a person's job satisfaction views.

Following Roberts and Foti (1998), Houghton and Jinkerson (2007) sought to examine the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction in greater detail. These authors proposed and tested a model where the constructive thought strategies of self-leadership ultimate lead to lower dysfunctional thoughts and higher job satisfaction (Houghton & Jinkerson, 2007). The results show that using constructive thought patterns may ultimately lead to an increase in job satisfaction through the causal model. This article provides another stepping stone for the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction by examining how one facet of self-leadership could influence individual's levels of job satisfaction.

The next key study that examined the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction tested the relationship between the two variables in a Chinese context. Ho and Nesbit (2014) sough to examine how self-leadership influences job performance and job satisfaction within a Chinese culture. The authors found a positive relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction, adding further support to the idea that engaging sin self-leadership strategies can

lead to individuals feeling more satisfied with their job. This study took a key step in examining the self-leadership to job satisfaction relationship by examining a global self-leadership construct with a direct relationship to job satisfaction.

The last study of importance on self-leadership and job satisfaction was an article that contained two studies examining the linkage between self-leadership and job satisfaction. While Amundsen and Martinsen (2015) were studying self-leadership as a step in their causal model, they did examine the direct relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction. The notable takeaway from this study was that while there was a moderate and positive relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction (Study 1:  $r = .22$ , Study 2:  $r = .34$ ), there was not a significant path between the variables and they were ultimately removed from the model (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). This suggests that not all is known on the self-leadership and job satisfaction relationship. However, it is unwise to assume that this one article automatically removes all of the support that exists for the relationship between these variables. There may be need for a more in-depth understanding of the moderating and mediating mechanisms that are at play in this given relationship.

**Self-leadership and self-efficacy.** The linkage between self-leadership and self-efficacy is one that has been studied in great detail in numerous studies (i.e. Prussia et al., 1998; Ho & Nesbit, 2009) for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, the frequency in studying this linkage may result from the similarity between the constructs, as discussed above. Due to similarities in self-leadership and self-efficacy, untangling any confusion about the nature of the relationship is crucial for advancing the stream of research involving self-leadership. Early research from Prussia and colleagues (1998) initiated research examining the potential relationship between self-leadership and self-efficacy, finding a positive direct relationship between the two variables.

This finding help to establish a baseline for self-leadership and self-efficacy related research.

One of the next key articles that examined a self-leadership and self-efficacy relationship did not actually have that relationship as the main focus of the study. Ho and Nesbit (2009) sought to establish the generalizability of the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002). After establishing a measure for self-efficacy in the Chinese culture, Ho and Nesbit (2009) tested the measurement instrument by examining the previously established positive relationship with self-efficacy. The authors found a positive direct relationship with self-efficacy, adding further support to the findings from Prussia and colleagues (1998).

More recent studies have examined the role of self-efficacy a mediator between self-leadership and another variable of interest. For example, in Konradt and colleagues' (2009) examination of how self-leadership could drive individual performance within a team, the authors examined how self-efficacy could serve as a mediating mechanism between self-leadership and performance. The authors found that self-leadership did lead to higher levels of self-efficacy, which in turn led to higher levels of individual performance (Konradt et al., 2009). This added further support to the positive relationship that was established between self-leadership and self-efficacy.

In addition, recent research has examined the mediating role that self-efficacy plays in the relationship between self-leadership and strain. In particular, Unsworth and Mason (2012) found that higher levels of self-leadership led to lower levels of strain. Of note from this study was the idea that self-efficacy could be a mediating variable. Thus, self-leadership led to higher levels of self-efficacy, which ultimately led to lower levels of strain (Unsworth & Mason, 2012). The findings from this empirical study add more support to the empirical relationship between self-leadership and self-efficacy, as well as helping to discriminate between the two constructs. While

similarities exist between the two variables, research has shown that they are two separate constructs.

**Self-leadership and work engagement.** There has been scant attention paid to the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, as well as the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. This dearth of research exists despite the potentially massive impact that this relationship could have on individuals within organizations. A review of the literature finds only three studies that have examined the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement (i.e. Gomes et al., 2015; Breevaart et al., 2016; Park et al., 2016). Perhaps more importantly, the studies examine a self-leadership linkage with work engagement, however, there is no research that examines potential mediating mechanisms that cause individuals who participate in self-leadership strategies to remain more engaged within their work.

For example, Gomes and colleagues (2015) examined the role of work engagement as a mediating mechanism between self-leadership and innovation. These authors found that self-leadership was likely to lead to increased work engagement, which in turn led to higher levels of innovation. This finding helped to establish a linkage between self-leadership and work engagement, something that had not previously been examined in the literature.

Additionally, Breevaart and colleagues (2016) examined the role of work engagement as a mediating mechanism between self-leadership and performance. While the link between self-leadership and individual performance is well established, the inclusion of work engagement as a mediating mechanism between these variables was a new addition to the literature. These findings helped to further add support to the relationship that was found by Gomes and

colleagues (2015). While the link that was found was part of a larger chain, it is critical to note the direct linkage that added support to the prior literature.

Finally, Park and colleagues (2016) examined the role of self-leadership as a mediating mechanism between organizational justice and work engagement. As with the prior research on self-leadership and work engagement, the relationship was cast within a larger model.

Additionally, this article again only examined the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. While further support was found for this relationship (Park et al., 2016), it does leave further questions about how the relationship actually works. This study did fulfill a critical role in helping add to the early research on the self-leadership and work engagement relationship.

While the positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement has been found, there is not enough research that examines this potentially critical relationship. This relationship has such a high level of importance because the very nature of self-leadership suggests that individuals in naturally unmotivating situations may remain motivated, and thus engaged in work that they may otherwise become demotivated from completing. Furthermore, the linkage between self-leadership and work engagement has only examined the direct relationship between the two variables, while not seeking to examine the mechanisms that may cause individuals who engage in higher levels of self-leadership to remain engaged within their work. Therefore, a gap remains to examine particular mediating mechanisms that may lead to higher levels of work engagement as a result of usage of self-leadership strategies.

#### **Self-leadership and other outcomes of interest.**

***Organizational Commitment.*** The degree to which individuals feel a sense of attachment to an organization is critical for determining whether individuals will remain with the



organization or leave. In particular, if individuals engage in more self-leadership strategies, it is likely that they will remain committed to the organization. This results from recognizing the importance of being in the organization, even if there may be naturally unmotivating situations that occur. While this is a potentially critical area of research within the self-leadership field, there is a dearth of literature that examines the linkage between self-leadership and organizational commitment. As individuals manage to positively influence their own behaviors, even in not so motivating situations, it may lead them to stay with an organization due to better being able to motivate themselves. There have been a few recent attempts to explore the relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment, yet much remains unknown. The articles that have examined this relationship will be discussed below.

Chung and colleagues (2011) found that self-leadership did partially moderate the relationship between charismatic leadership and organizational commitment, with the partial support being a result of not all dimensions of self-leadership moderating the relationship (Chung et al., 2011). In general, there were positive and moderate sized correlations between the dimensions of self-leadership and the dimensions of organizational commitment, suggesting that a positive relationship does exist (Chung et al., 2011). Thus, there is potentially a fruitful avenue that research could learn from by further exploring that positive relationship. With such an emphasis on what can make individuals feel a sense of connection and commitment to the organization, this represents a critical juncture in the literature that deserves more attention.

In addition to examining the self-leadership to performance relationships, Andressen and colleagues (2012) also looked at how self-leadership related to organizational commitment. These authors examined the relationships between self-leadership and affective organizational commitment (Andressen et al., 2012), finding moderate positive relationships between the facets

of self-leadership and affective organizational commitment. This was an early step to establish the link between self-leadership and organizational commitment. Thus, future research from this study should include an examination of how self-leadership relates to a global organizational commitment measure, as well as attempting to replicate the finding from this study (Andressen et al., 2012).

Finally, Pihl-Thingvad (2014) attempted to analyze the relationship between self-leadership and affective organizational commitment. The findings from this study suggested that there wasn't a relationship between self-leadership and affective organizational commitment, after the inclusion of a large number of controls. While this study did examine the relationship, there were several potential problems with this article. Most notably, self-leadership was not measured using any of the more conventional and well-accepted measures of self-leadership, but rather with a 5 item measure that was developed by the author (Pihl-Thingvad, 2014). The scale item actually seems to be more reflective of constructs other than self-leadership, such as job autonomy, as evidenced by sample items such as "Do you have influence over the planning of your work time/schedule?" (Pihl-Thingvad, 2014). This item, along with others, does not appear to be truly capturing the construct of self-leadership. Therefore, it is difficult to put a great deal of faith in the findings from this article since it does not appear as though self-leadership was actually measured.

***Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.*** While there is scant research on the relationship between self-leadership with both organizational commitment and work engagement, there is even less research on the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. When conducting the literature review on this topic, it was astonishing to find a void in the field regarding how engagement in self-leadership strategies can

lead to employees participating in OCBs. OCBs are the extra-role behaviors that individuals are not required to complete, but are beneficial to the organization (Organ, 1988). These are behaviors that are not mandatory and not explicitly part of an employee's job, yet are essential cogs in how an organization functions. Despite the idea that individuals who are more motivated and able to influence their own behaviors can create positive behaviors within the work force, there seems to be a lack of concern from the self-leadership field on how it can influence this particular individual level outcome. With such an important focus on extra role behaviors, it is critical to determine more antecedents that create these positive behaviors. Self-leadership represents a potential manner in which individuals may engage in more OCBs.

***Strain.*** There is scant research on linkages between self-leadership and negative outcomes, such as strain, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. The key article that has examined the relationship between these type of outcomes and self-leadership came from Unsworth and Mason (2012). These authors argued through a conservation of resources perspective that self-leadership could reduce levels of strain in individuals (Unsworth & Mason, 2012). The authors argued that psychological processes, such as self-efficacy, were the mechanisms through which self-leadership could lead to a reduction in strain. While this is only one article that examines a link between self-leadership and this type of negative outcome, it is a crucial first step in understanding how self-leadership can influence an individual's levels of these negative outcomes.

### **Key Findings**

After conducting a thorough and comprehensive literature review on self-leadership, there are several key findings to take away. These findings will help to distinguish what steps will be taken in developing the hypotheses and model that will be examined in this dissertation. The

findings from the literature review helped to identify the potentially over studied areas in self-leadership research, as well as underdeveloped areas and unanswered questions on the influence of self-leadership.

First, while individual performance has long been of interest within organizational behavior, the self-leadership and performance relationship is one that is approaching saturation from the attention that it has received in the field. Almost 35 percent of the empirical articles reviewed in this literature review examined job performance in some form in relation to self-leadership (i.e., Prussia et al., 1998; Konradt et al., 2009). Furthermore, by examining non-conventional forms of performance such as innovation and creativity (i.e., Neubert & Wu, 2006; Gomes et al., 2015), the number of studies that examined a type of performance in the literature review rises to almost 50 percent of the studies included. This has created a situation in the self-leadership literature where much focus has been paid to this type of outcome, while others have received substantially less research attention. While there may be some gaps and voids in the literature that still exist, the dissertation will not be examining performance due to potentially oversaturated nature of the self-leadership – performance relationship.

Second, in a similar manner to the relationship between self-leadership and types of performance, there has been an abundance of research on how self-leadership influences attitudes and beliefs, such as self-efficacy (i.e., Ho & Nesbit, 2014) and job satisfaction (i.e., Roberts & Foti, 1998). While these are critical outcomes within OB to understand, a similar situation to the self-leadership-performance relationship has arisen. While there are obviously important reasons to pay attention to these relationships, there is a wealth of studies on these topics, while other attitudes/beliefs, such as organizational commitment, have had less research done. Again, as with the self-leadership-performance relationship, the literature review has

shown that examining how self-leadership influences job satisfaction or self-efficacy may not result in the most fruitful research avenue.

Third, there is limited research on how self-leadership influence employee engagement in OCBs. With as much focus and emphasis placed on these areas within OB research, it would be expected that there would be a fair amount of attention paid to them within the self-leadership field. However, the opposite of that is true.

Self-leadership is a self-influence process that can motivate individuals to complete tasks. While the self-leadership and job performance relationships has been fleshed out in the literature, OCBs, which can be viewed as being non-task performance, have not received the same attention. Self-leadership may help to explain why an individual engages in OCBs by recognizing the importance of engaging in these extra role behaviors, even though they are not required to. While this could be a critical relationship for understanding how self-leadership motivates individuals to accomplish something that isn't required of them, there is a surprising dearth of literature. For example, there is a single conceptual article that predicts self-leadership influencing OCBs (Mansor et al., 2013). In addition, there are no empirical articles that examine this relationship. While logically speaking, OCBs should be of interest to self-leadership researchers, the opportunity to study them has not been taken. This represents an important hole to fill in the self-leadership literature. By better understanding how self-leadership can influence an individual to engage in something they don't have to, researchers will have a better idea of how self-leadership is affecting individuals. Furthermore, understanding how and when this relationship occurs may also be of interest. This will lead to an examination of mediating and moderating variables on a potential self-leadership and OCBs relationship.

Fourth, as with the self-leadership and OCB relationship, there is also limited research on self-leadership and work engagement. There have been three studies in the last few years (i.e., Gomes et al., 2015, Breevaart et al., 2016; & Park et al., 2016) that have examined a positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. That is a critical first step to allow for more research on these topics. For instance, these three articles all examine a direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. However, as research questions two and three discussed, this dissertation is also concerned with what mediating and moderating mechanisms may be modeled within the self-leadership literature. By understanding how self-leadership can influence levels of work engagement and through what variables that is transmitted would be an extension of the literature on self-leadership. Additionally, understanding in which situations this relationship may be strengthened or weakened may also extend research on self-leadership. By identifying these mediating and moderating variables, this dissertation will extend the knowledge base on self-leadership.

Fifth, there have been a few research studies, now all of which are well developed, that examined how self-leadership and organizational commitment may relate to one another (i.e., Chung et al., 2011; Andressen et al., 2012; Pihl-Thingvad, 2014). These studies are the extent of research on self-leadership and organizational commitment. Individuals who are able to motivate themselves and use self-leadership strategies may be more committed to the organization. The scant research on these topics provide an avenue for future research that this dissertation could attempt to answer. Organizational commitment may represent a mediating variable that explains how self-leadership influences OCBs and work engagement. Thus, an examination of self-leadership and organizational commitment could be fruitful within this dissertation.

Sixth, there has been relatively little research that examines self-leadership and emotions. In particular, the research has stretched across a broad range of emotions topics and has been conceptual in nature. Self-leadership could potentially mitigate negative emotions or emotional exhaustion from occurring as individuals can motivate themselves in situations that may typically lead to higher levels of these negatives. Thus, engagement in self-leadership as a way to reduce higher levels of emotional exhaustion could be important to understand. As with organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion may represent how self-leadership influences work engagement and OCBs. If an individual engages in self-leadership, that influence may be transmitted through lower levels of emotional exhaustion. Therefore, an examination of self-leadership and emotional exhaustion could be of great importance within this dissertation.

Finally, an examination of how perceived organizational support (POS) may be relevant within the self-leadership literature. There has been a study that examined a form of POS in conjunction with self-leadership, but it is not a common variable that is studied with self-leadership. POS could have particular relevance to the self-leadership field due to the importance that perceptions can play when examining relationships between variables. For example, higher levels of POS may strengthen self-leadership relationships, however, lower levels should lower self-leadership relationships. By better understanding how this perception that individuals have, which is out of the organization's control, researchers may be able to make better claims about how self-leadership's influence can be molded by other perceptions and attitudes. By examining a moderating variable such as POS, evidence and suggestions can be made to practitioners about how views of the organization influence different variables of interest. These critical findings from the literature review on self-leadership will help to provide the direction for this dissertation. By fully examining the current state of the self-leadership field, this literature

review has developed avenues of research that can be fruitful for the hypothesized model of the dissertation. The findings from this section will be used to develop the hypotheses and methods that will be used in Chapter 3 and 4 of the dissertation. The findings have helped to identify key variables of interest to include in this dissertation: work engagement, OCBs, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, and POS. Each of these constructs will be briefly reviewed in the coming section before proceeding to the hypothesis chapter.

### **Work Engagement**

Within both practical and academic realms, a critical aspect of research concerns whether or not employees remained engaged in their work. Businesses and individuals want individuals who remain engaged in work. Even when there are naturally unmotivating situations, it is necessary for individuals to keep high levels of engagement to ensure productivity at work. The concept of engagement was first introduced around 25 years ago and was conceptualized as the “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physical, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (Kahn, 1990: p. 694). This early conceptualization suggested that a person puts personal energy into a work role, while the work role simultaneously can let the person express themselves (Kahn, 1990, 1992). Building from Kahn’s early work on engagement, two separate conceptualizations on engagement developed. On one side, engagement was characterized as the opposite of burnout – otherwise known as energy, involvement, and efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The argument was based in the idea that the dimensions of work engagement were the direct opposites of the dimensions of burnout – i.e., exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness. This stream of thought on work engagement still considers work engagement to be a positive, work related state of well-being, however, it is intertwined with burnout (Bakker, Demourti, Sanz-Vergel, 2014).



On the other hand, the second stream of thought on work engagement considers it to be its own concept that is independent of and negatively related to burnout. In this camp, work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p.74). Furthermore, work engagement is not a “momentary state, such as an emotion, ... [but rather] refers to a more persistent -motivational state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior” (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008, p.118). Thus, in work engagement, fulfillment exists in contrast to the empty feelings that result from burnout. Within work engagement, there are three key dimensions that influence an individual: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Each of the three dimensions of work engagement listed above help to explain the why and how of work engagement. Vigor consists of many dimensions that help to drive an individual to remain engaged. For example, high levels of vigor are characterized by higher levels of energy and mental resilience during work. Furthermore, vigor includes an individual’s willingness to put forth effort into work and to persistently push forward (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Thus, vigor is particularly relevant in situations where roadblocks may impede their progress, yet individuals who exhibit high levels of vigor can still remain positive and accomplish what they set out to. Dedication is the second dimension of work engagement and can be viewed as being actively involved in the work that is being accomplished. Individuals are shown to be higher on dedication if they are more actively experiencing significance in work, enthusiasm for work, and acceptance of challenges at work. (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008) The last dimension of work engagement is absorption, which was added later to the typology of work engagement behaviors (Schaufeli, Taris, LeBlanc, Peeters, Bakker, & De Jonge, 2001).

Absorption refers to the degree to which employees remain fully engrossed by their work and have difficulty detaching from the work (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Therefore, absorption creates a situation where individuals can become fully attached to their work, lose track of time, and even have trouble separating (Bakker et al., 2014). All of these aspects of work engagement tap into different parts of an individual's attachment to the job and are of importance to consider when examining work engagement.

In particular, key differences can be drawn between the two conceptualizations of work engagement, with the second conceptualization being the one that will be applied in this dissertation. The major difference between work engagement and burnout lies within the focus of the individual. Work engagement is presented in a positive light where individuals have high energy levels and strongly identify with the work they are accomplishing. On the other hand, burnout presents the opposite situation, whereas individuals do not exhibit high levels of energy and have poor identification (Bakker et al., 2014). Conceptually, a distinction can be drawn where an argument can be made that individuals can be engaged in their work, but not necessarily be cynical or emotionally exhausted. At the same time, the reasons that an individual feels burnt out may not be work related, and therefore may not influence their level of work engagement.

As with most constructs in the management field, research has been conducted on the antecedents of engagement to try and determine what causes higher engagement levels in individuals. In a recent meta-analysis, Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) began to dig deeper into understanding what antecedents influenced work engagement, resulting in three categories: job characteristics, leadership, and dispositional characteristics. Perhaps, the most striking findings on antecedents of work engagement come within the dispositional

characteristics sections, where Christian and colleagues (2011) meta-analytically examined the relationship between conscientiousness, positive affect, and proactive personality in conjunction with work engagement. The meta-analytic results for these three individual differences showed strong, positive relationships between each of them and work engagement (Christian et al., 2011). These findings added more empirical support to claims about individual differences and work engagement, such as proactive personality (Bakker, Van Emmerik, & Van Riet, 2009) and more common personality traits and profiles (i.e., Macey & Schneider, 2008; Albrecht, 2010). Recently, a review of work engagement and personality factors found that certain Big 5 personality traits were more likely to lead individuals to be engaged in their work (Makikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2013). These authors found that conscientiousness, emotional stability, and extraversion were likely to lead to individuals remaining engaged in work (Makikangas et al., 2013). This adds further support to the findings from Christian and colleagues (2011) about individual differences influencing work engagement levels.

Engagement has been studied in conjunction with many traditional organizational behavior constructs, including job satisfaction (i.e., Alarcon & Edwards, 2011), organizational commitment (i.e., Hallberg & Schaufeli (2006), and performance (i.e., Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Within the meta-analysis, Christian and colleagues (2011) sought to establish discriminant validity between work engagement and the job attitudes. The authors found that no relationships amongst work engagement and job attitude variables approached unity, adding support for the discriminant validity (i.e., Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Performance was often studied as a consequence of work engagement. Thus, authors would argue that higher levels of work engagement would lead to higher levels of performance. For example, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) found that work engagement led to higher levels of self-reported, coworker

reported, and supervisor reported performance. The findings on work engagement and performance were also found to exist for extra-role/contextual performance as well. In one instance, Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, and Martinez (2011) found that higher levels of reported work engagement led to higher levels of extra-role performance. Meta-analytic results provide support for this argument with strong, positive relationships between work engagement and work performance (Christian et al., 2011).

There are several takeaways about work engagement that are crucial for this dissertation. First, the dissertation will be using the conceptualization of work engagement where it is a separate construct from burnout. The evidence lends support to this argument, and thus this perspective will be used moving forward in this dissertation (i.e., Bakker et al., 2014). Second, individual differences can drastically influence levels of work engagement. If an individual has a certain personality profile (Makikangas et al., 2013), it can lead them to be more engaged in their work, which in turn can result in higher performance levels (Christian et al., 2011). Finally, although work engagement and job attitudes are intertwined with one another (i.e., Christian et al., 2011), there is discriminant validity between these constructs. Thus, levels of job satisfaction or organizational commitment do not equal a one-to-one ratio with levels of work engagement. This is critical to the dissertation that will be examining the organizational commitment-work engagement link as one part of a proposed model.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behaviors**

OCBs are extra role behaviors that are essential for maintaining a well-functioning organization. These behaviors are not required by the organization, however, the organization is in a better situation if the employees choose to engage in these behaviors. OCBs have a long history within the organizational behavior stream of research, dating to the early seminal work from Organ

(Organ, 1988). OCBs can be defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person’s employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable” (Organ, 1988: pp. 4). The key points of this definition is that these are voluntary behaviors and are not financially rewarded by the organization. If an employee chooses not to engage in a behavior, it is posited that they should not be punished for the lack of engagement.

There are multiple perspectives relating to the number of dimensions that exist within OCBs. Arguably the two most used conceptualizations are either the 5-factor model or the 2-factor model. According to Organ (1988), OCBs can cover a host of different areas including altruism, compliance, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. Altruism relates to extra role behaviors that are present when an individual provides support or aid to a specific person (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Compliance is a form of extra role behavior that involves individuals’ impersonal contributions to the organization in manners such as respect, rule adherence, and attendances (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Courtesy can be defined as actions that are taken by an individual to help prevent other problems of colleagues (Organ, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995). Sportsmanship refers to extra-role behaviors that are undertaken, even if it creates a personal inconvenience, without complaint to better the organization (Organ, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995). Finally, civic virtue relates to behaviors of an individual that include involvement in how the organization is governed (Organ & Ryan, 1995).

On the other hand, OCBs have frequently been conceptualized as a two factor model, following the lead of Williams and Anderson (1991). Williams and Anderson (1991) make distinctions between the different forms of OCBs by arguing that a more relevant manner in which to study OCBs is to examine at whom the behaviors are directed. The two dimensions that resulted from this were OCBI and OCBO (Williams & Anderson, 1991). OCBI behaviors are “behaviors that immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization” (Williams & Anderson, 1991: p: 602). OCBI behaviors include common conceptualizations from the Organ (1988) taxonomy, specifically altruism and courtesy (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). OCBO behaviors are “behaviors that benefit the organization in general” (Williams & Anderson, 1991: p. 601), and are not focused on a particular individuals. The OCBO behaviors also feature conceptualizations from Organ’s (1988) taxonomy, including sportsmanship and civic virtue (LePine et al., 2002). OCBO behaviors can also be thought of as generalized compliance behaviors (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

After close to a decade of OCB research, Organ (1997) attempted to clarify what exactly was meant by the working definition of OCBs. This resulted due to criticisms suggesting a lack of clarity in what some of the words in the definition were. In particular, the words that raised confusion within the definition were discretionary and non-contractual rewards. The problems that arose from the use of the word “discretionary” centered on researchers arguing that some items could be considered part of the job or in-role (Morrison, 1994). The problems with non-contractual rewards focused on the fact that some forms of OCBs may actually lead to monetary rewards, despite the claims of the definition (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994). These potential problems led Organ (1997) to redefine OCBs as “contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” (pp: 91).

Thus, these are behaviors that are not considered enforceable job requirements, nor are seen as likely to lead to systematic rewards (Organ, 1997). It should be noted in recent meta-analyses (i.e., Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2007) on OCBs, there has been mention of the reconceptualization, however, the majority of studies still seem to use the formal definition put forth by Organ (1988), and the taxonomy from either Organ (1988) or Williams & Anderson (1991).

There has been an abundance of research on OCBs, leading to multiple reviews and meta-analyses on the construct (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2002; & Hoffman et al., 2007). The idea that there has been enough empirical research to justify this many reviews and meta-analyses speaks to the relative importance of OCBs within the organizational behavior field. Across the reviews, there are several key takeaways about OCBs that need mentioned.

First, the earliest meta-analysis on OCBs found a positive, moderate sized relationship between OCBs and variables such as job satisfaction, fairness, and organizational commitment (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995). More support was added to the findings on job satisfaction, fairness, and organizational commitment by later meta-analytic analysis from Podsakoff and colleagues (2000), as well as LePine and colleagues (2002). In addition to these results, Hoffman and colleagues (2007) also found meta-analytic relationships between OCBs and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and fairness perceptions that were positive and relatively the same size. This continual finding over time suggests that employees who are committed to the organization, satisfied with their job, and perceive the organization to be fair are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors that help out the organization or individuals in the organization.

Second, Organ and Ryan (1995) established that there was a moderately sized positive relationship between conscientiousness and OCBs, however, a relationship did not fully exist for other personality traits. Following the findings from Organ and Ryan (1995), LePine and colleagues (2002) found a similarly sized positive relationship between conscientiousness and OCBs, while not examining the relationship with other personality traits. An interesting note is that in addition to the moderately sized positive relationship between conscientiousness and OCBs, Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) also found a similar sized relationship between agreeableness and OCBs.

Third, there has been a great deal of research that has examined the relationship between OCBs and performance (i.e., Morrison & Podsakoff, 1994). Much of this research has attempted to distinguish between the two constructs, however the relationship has been examined in studies. In their review of the OCB literature, Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) found a generally strong and positive relationship when examining individual studies of performance and OCBs. More importantly, in their recent meta-analysis, Hoffman and colleagues (2007) found a strong, positive relationship between OCBs and performance, though not high enough to warrant concerns that the variables were measuring the same domain of interest. This adds support to the idea that if employees engage in OCBs, it will positively relate to performance.

While OCBs are typically viewed from a positive standpoint, there are situations where OCBs can have negative outcomes, which deserve mention as well. For example, multiple recent studies examine some of the negative consequences that can result from engagement in OCBs. For example, Bergeron, Shipp, Rosen, and Furst (2013) found that engagement in OCBs actually stunted career outcomes. These authors found that task performance was more important than OCBs when examining performance evaluation, salary increase, advancement speeds, and



promotions (Bergeron et al., 2013). Additionally, Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, and LePine (2015) examined the role that OCB engagement plays in citizenship fatigue. In particular, these authors found that OCBs can lead to higher levels of fatigue, which in turn leads to lower levels of subsequent OCBs. This finding was even stronger when in the presence of lower organizational support (Bolino et al., 2015). While these are just a few studies that touch on the negative side of OCBs, it is important to mention them in this review. In particular, so much focus is paid to the positives that come from OCB engagement, that the potential negative repercussions can often be forgotten.

There are several key takeaways that need to be noted about the history of OCBs within the organizational behavior field. First, while there has been much debate on the structure of OCBs, it is generally accepted that these are behaviors meant to help the organization in some shape or form (i.e., Organ, 1988; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Second, OCBs have exhibited positive and moderate relationships with several key organizational behavior variables, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and fairness (i.e., LePine et al., 2002; Hoffman et al., 2007). Furthermore, OCBs have demonstrated a strong and positive relationship with performance (Hoffman, 2007). Third, OCBs have exhibited the strongest relationship with conscientiousness amongst personality traits, with mixed findings regarding agreeableness (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Finally, while there are many positive items associated with OCBs, it is crucial to not overlook potential pitfalls of engaging in OCBs, such as fatigue or lower career success (i.e., Bergeron et al., 2013; Bolino et al., 2015). All together, these findings tap into some of the critical areas within the robust OCB literature and provide an understanding of how the construct works.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment refers to the level of identification that a particular individual has with the organization that they work for, as well as the degree of involvement that individual maintains within the organization (Steers, 1979; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). There are a variety of different factors that can be used to characterize an individual's commitment, such as strong belief/acceptance of organization goals, desire to remain within organization, and putting forth effort for the organization (Porter et al., 1974). Organizational commitment can be seen as a psychological state that individuals have that describe the relationship between employee and employer, as well as why or why not individuals would stay in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Thus, for organizations it is critical for employees to remain committed to their employer.

The prevailing manner in which organizational commitment is conceptualized is the Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997; Allen & Meyer, 1990) typology that consists of three types of organizational commitment. These represent three different ways in which individuals may feel bound and tied to the organization. The three parts of the organizational commitment proposes that the individuals are committed to the organization through continuance commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment. One way in which these three types of organizational commitment can be thought of is through *wanting*, *needing*, and *being obliged* to stay with the organization (Bergman, 2006). Each of the three types of organizational commitment has its time and place in which it pulls an employee to feel committed to the organization. Theoretically, these different forms of organizational commitment are distinct in the manner in which an individual bonds with the organization (Bergman, 2006). This three-component model of organizational commitment has also been supported by confirmatory factor analysis (i.e., Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990)

Affective commitment is the part of organizational commitment that draws upon the affective bonds, or liking, that an individual holds towards the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). There are a multitude of ways in which individuals can be affectively bonded to the organization, including identification with the organization, enjoyment for being part of the organization, and involvement within the organization (Bergman, 2006). Thus, affective commitment, as stated above, draws on the idea of an individual *wanting* to be with the organization due to some combination of identification, involvement, and enjoyment felt with the organization.

Continuance commitment is the aspect of organizational commitment that draws on the investment that an individual holds with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 2000). By drawing on investments that have been made, continuance commitment places a heavy focus on the cost that an individual would deal with if they were to leave the organization. There can be a host of reasons why individuals may feel there are costs associated with leaving, and these can increase organizational commitment (Bergman, 2006). As mentioned above, continuance commitment draws upon the idea that of an individual *needing* to be with the organization due to the high cost of not being with that organization.

Finally, normative commitment is the part of organizational commitment draws on a sense of obligation that an individual has to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997). Of the different forms of organizational commitment, normative commitment has undergone the most revision since the inception of the three part typology (Bergman, 2006). At different points, normative commitment has been related to norms about loyalty to an organization, obligations to stay without reference to loyalty, and reciprocity for a benefit (Meyer, 2003). Normative commitment can be realized through pressures to stay with an organization due to observation of

different factors. The common thread across definitions of normative commitment draw on the idea that an employee has a sense of obligation to the organization. As stated by Bergman (2006), normative commitment is “the individual’s bond with the organization due to an obligation on the part of the individual” (pp. 647). This draws on the final part of the synthesis listed above as individuals are *being obliged* to stay with the organization due to some reason that influences their behavior and attitudes.

As organizational commitment has been present within organizational behavior and human resources for almost 50 years, there is an abundance of research on the topic and how it relates to other key organizational behavior variables. As can be easily conceptualized, there are other job attitudes that potentially overlap the construct domain of organizational commitment, such as job satisfaction. Organizational commitment and job satisfaction are both positive attitudes that individuals hold as a result of different parts of their job. Meyer and Allen (2002) examined correlates of organizational commitment in their meta-analysis of the literature. These authors found that there was a strong, positive relationship, which was expected between affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction and its facets. The relationship was not as strong between normative organizational commitment and job satisfaction, while it was essentially non-existent between continuance organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 2002). These results are perhaps unsurprising since affective commitment essentially draws on the employee’s “liking” of the organization and job satisfaction draws on how well individual like different aspects of the job. The more important part is that the relationships between individual facets of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, while typically positive, were much lower than the overall job satisfaction measures (Meyer & Allen, 2002), leading to a potential additive effect when examining overall job satisfaction.

In addition to similar constructs, organizational commitment often was studied as a predictor of various outcome variables. These consequent variables of organizational commitment include turnover intentions (i.e., Jaros, 1997; Tourigny, Baba, Han, & Wang, 2013), absenteeism (i.e., Gellatly, 1995; Somers, 1995), job performance (i.e., Cuyper & De Witte, 2011; Fu & Despande, 2014), and OCBs (i.e., Kidwell, Mossholder, & Bennett, 1997; Moorman et al., 1998; Lau, McLean, Lien, & Hsu, 2016). Each of these outcomes has added knowledge to the organizational commitment field. The positive relationships that organizational commitment has with job performance and OCBs helps to show that as employees remain bonded to the organization, it leads to better individual levels of performance. At the same time, higher levels of commitment should lead to lower levels of absenteeism and turnover intentions because the more committed the person is the less likely they are to leave.

The takeaways about organizational commitment that are relevant for this dissertation are as follows. First, organizational commitment has a long and storied history within the organizational behavior field, dating to the 1970's (i.e., Porter et al., 1974; Steers, 1979). This has allowed for an abundance of research to be conducted on a variety of relationships between organizational commitment and other variables. Second, the three component typology from Meyer and Allen (1991) still appears to be the prevailing conceptualization of organizational commitment. While some authors (i.e., Bergman, 2006) have attempted to prove a lack of discriminant validity between normative and affective commitment, the Meyer-Allen model (1991, 1997, & 2002) is still the predominant model within organizational commitment research. Finally, while there is a storied history on organizational commitment, gaps still exist within the literature. There is a reason that research is still conducted on organizational commitment, even though the construct has been around for almost 50 years. That is due to the importance of

employees remaining tied to an organization, which can fit into a variety of different models that should be examined.

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Within the workplace, managers have shown great concern for what drives poor performance, lower satisfaction, and other outcomes. Emotional exhaustion may be one such item that is influencing individuals' days. Emotional exhaustion consists of an individual having "feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources" (Maslach, 1993, p.20-21). Emotional exhaustion is typically characterized by mental weariness and emotional depletion (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), thus leaving individuals without the resources needed to cope emotionally with a given situation. Essentially, emotional exhaustion is when individuals don't have high levels of energy and mood is low. When individuals are facing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, it potentially impedes their ability to cope with demands of the job and meet expectations. Emotional exhaustion typically is viewed as one-third of Maslach's (1982) and Maslach and Jackson's (1986) work on a three component model of burnout. Emotional exhaustion can be shown through physical fatigue and feeling drained at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Emotional exhaustion, which is the core dimension of burnout, can often be considered as a manner in which individuals respond to prolonged job stressors (i.e., Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Thus, an inadequate manner for responding to job stressors will create individuals who feel emotionally exhausted. Additionally, emotional exhaustion has been found to commonly occur in individuals who are in physically and mentally demanding and draining roles (i.e., Bradley & Cartwright, 2002; Thanacoody, Newman, & Fuchs, 2014). Thus, more stressful and load bearing jobs are likely going to lead to higher levels of emotional exhaustion in employees.

With such an important focus on emotional exhaustion, understanding what causes levels of emotional exhaustion can be key for organizational researchers. Following early research on emotional exhaustion (mainly as a part of burnout), Cordes and Dougherty (1993) found several key causes of emotional exhaustion. These causes were labeled into three categories: job and role characteristics, organizational characteristics, and personal characteristics. The authors argue that items such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload can drive individuals to become emotionally exhausted due to the inability to simultaneously meet all demands of the role (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Cordes and Dougherty (1993) also argue that organizational constructs such as outcomes and job context can drive emotional exhaustion, as a form of burnout, by having contingent rewards and outcomes tied to performance. This can create stressors, which in turn lead to emotional exhaustion. Finally, Cordes and Dougherty (1993) argue that personal characteristics can drive emotional exhaustion levels. In particular, demographics, social support, and personal expectations can all drive higher levels of emotional exhaustion if there is misalignment between the individual and the role. The key takeaway on antecedents of emotional exhaustion is that there are a host of different variables that can influence levels of emotional exhaustion at different levels.

In a review on burnout and job performance, Taris (2006) found that emotional exhaustion led to lower levels of OCBs, in role-performance, and customer satisfaction. The relationship between emotional exhaustion and both in-role performance and OCBs was moderate and negative, exhibiting the problems that can arise from emotionally exhausted individuals. The findings from Taris (2006) were further supported by Halbesleben and Bowler (2007) who found that emotional exhaustion led to lower performance. These results have been further supported by recent research in China that also found higher levels of emotional

exhaustion led to lower levels of performance (Touigny, Baba, Han, & Wang, 2013). In addition to the negative influence on performance that results from emotional exhaustion, emotional exhaustion also has adverse impacts on other job attitudes and beliefs, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (i.e., Cropanzano et al., 2003; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Thanacoody et al., 2014). These findings suggest that as emotional exhaustion levels increase, individuals will become more dissatisfied and more likely to leave an organization – both negative outcomes that the organization does not want to occur.

The negative outcomes of emotional exhaustion are far reaching for an organization and employees within the organization. When job stressors become too much for individuals to handle, it becomes difficult for the individuals to not become emotionally depleted. If this occurs, several key outcomes may result. Arguably most important, if individuals feel higher levels of emotional exhaustion, it can lead to lower overall levels of job performance. This can result from an inability to balance different tasks and items due to the depletion of the emotional resources. Second, higher levels of emotional exhaustion can drive lower organizational commitment and job satisfaction – further influencing employee turnover intentions. As employees become less satisfied and committed to the organization, lower performance may result. Thus, it is crucial for employees to learn how to prevent emotional exhaustion from occurring so that the negative consequences do not follow.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the construct within organizational behavior research that developed out of organizational support theory. Organizational support theory is based on a norm of reciprocity between the organization and its employees. Generally speaking,



organizational support theory suggests that employees will develop beliefs about the organization based on a variety of factors (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995). For instance, the beliefs that employees hold are related to the extent to which the employees feel that the organization actually values what the employee brings to the company and that the organization actually cares about employee well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Then, employees use these global beliefs about the organization to establish their perceptions of how ready the organization is to reward effort and meet socioemotional needs (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Out of organizational support theory came the construct of perceived organizational support (POS). POS encompasses many different areas that are of relevance to employees regarding their personal feelings and perceptions about the organization. The overarching idea for POS is that the level of POS is created by employees' treating organizations as having humanlike traits and characteristics. (Eisenberger et al., 1986). If an employee views that the organization has treated them fairly or unfairly, it will further influence their beliefs about the organization. POS has underlying consequences that are driven by certain psychological processes, as posited by organizational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). There are three critical psychological processes at play within POS: felt obligation, fulfillment of socio-emotional needs, and strengthening of beliefs. The results of these psychological processes suggest that felt obligation should lead individuals to care about the organization's success, fulfillment of socio-emotional needs should lead individuals to identify with the organization, and the strengthening of beliefs creates stronger ties between increased performance and rewards (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). There has been an abundance of research on POS, leading to a key meta-analysis on the topic on over 70 studies that synthesized the literature (Rhoades &

Eisenberger, 2002). The sheer amount of literature that has been conducted on POS shows the importance of the construct within organizational behavior. This was further proven by a recent second meta-analysis on POS and organizational support theory (Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, & Adis, *in press*).

Research on POS has examined many antecedents that are crucial for understanding why individuals have differing levels of POS. One of the most frequently studied antecedents of POS examines how perceptions of fairness drives levels of POS. The argument that is made for this antecedent is that favorable/unfavorable views of the organization often result from the degree to which the employee feels as though they were treated fairly by the organization. In particular, there is a long history of examining fairness perceptions and POS (i.e., Shore & Shore, 1995; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998), with fairly consistent results across the studies that have examined this relationship. In particular, Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) and Kurtessis and colleagues (*in press*) found a strong positive relationship between fairness and POS. This suggests that if individuals feel that if they are treated fairly, then the organization will support them and provide them with what they need to succeed.

The other form of antecedent that has been regularly studied for POS is organizational rewards and job conditions (in particular, organizational rewards and role stressors). Studies that examined rewards that individuals received were common amongst the job conditions criteria (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Witt, 1992; Eisenberger, Rhoades, & Camerson, 1999; O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999) Organizational rewards have been found to have a positive relationship with POS, suggesting that greater levels of rewards were more likely to lead to higher levels of POS in employees. This relationship was positive and moderate after controlling for fairness, which suggests that again, fairness plays a role in determining employee levels of POS (Rhoades &

Eisenberger, 2002). The idea that individuals feel as though there are rewards that align with performance is a key aspect of POS, possibly explaining the relationship between these two variables. On the other hand, role stressors were one of the most commonly studied antecedents (i.e., Yoon & Lim, 1999; Yoon, Han, & Seo, 1996) that led to lower levels of POS. These role stressors are present when the work environment demands that the employee deal with something that the employee feels unable to cope with (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In their meta-analysis, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that there was a moderate and negative relationship between role stressors and POS. This suggests that increased strains in the work environment can lead individuals to feel as though they are not supported. This may be due to the idea that employees feel that organizations should be meeting socioemotional needs and if the environment does not support that, then the organizational doesn't support the employees.

In addition to many examinations of antecedents of POS, there has also been a fair amount of research that has examined the consequences of POS. Among the constructs that have been examined as a result of POS, there has been a wide host of outcomes, including organizational commitment (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993), job satisfaction (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001), performance (i.e., Eisenberger et al., 1999), turnover intentions (i.e., Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997), job involvement (i.e., O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999), and strains (i.e., Cropanzano et al., 1997). While there have been substantial additions made to the organizational behavior literature from each of these areas, this review will cover the more dominant organizational behavior constructs of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance.

Within the organizational behavior field, job attitudes have received much attention in conjunction with POS. For example, organizational commitment is one research area in which POS has been examined in depth. (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993). POS has been studied very frequently in conjunction with organizational commitment (i.e., Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Cropanzano et al., Eisenberger et al., 2001), with important findings. This suggests that if individuals feel as though the organization will provide what they need and support them, it will in turn lead to the employees being more committed to the organization, particularly through affective commitment (i.e., Settoon et al., 1996; Shore & Barksdale, 1998). In regards to organizational commitment, the relationship with POS was found to be strong and positive in meta-analytic results (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., *in press*). This adds further support for the concept that POS can drastically influence employee attitudes. It is critical for organizations who want employees to remain committed to them to understand that perceptions of the organization can strongly influence those levels of commitment.

POS has often been studied with job satisfaction as an outcome variable (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Job satisfaction relates to feelings of satisfaction/happiness with different facets of the job. It is easy to see how an employee can have lower job satisfaction if they do not feel the organization supports them. If individuals feel as though the organizational will provide them with what they need to be successful and various forms of support, it is more likely that the employee will be satisfied with the outcomes. This is supported by studies from many researchers showing that higher levels of POS lead to higher levels of job satisfaction (i.e., Cleveland & Shore, 1992; Witt, 1992; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). In regards to job satisfaction, the relationship with POS was found to be strong and positive in meta-analytic results (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., *in*

*press*). This adds further support for the concept that POS can drastically influence employee attitudes.

Finally, while not to the extent of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, POS has been studied as a predictor of individual performance in a host of studies (i.e. Eisenberger et al., 2001). The linkage between these two areas is rather easy to see since a key aspect of organizational support theory suggests that the linkage between performance and rewards can be derived from POS. This suggests that if individuals have higher levels of POS, they are more likely to engage in higher levels of performance because of the linkage between performance and rewards. However, the opposite is also true, where individuals who exhibit lower levels of POS are more likely to display poorer performance. There have been quite a few studies that have examined this relationship (i.e., Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Eisenberger et al., 2001), typically finding a positive relationship between POS and individual performance. Adding further support to the relationship between POS and individual performance is the meta-analytic findings that show a moderate and positive relationship between the two constructs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., *in press*). This shows the importance for organizations to provide support as it can directly influence individual performance levels.

There are several key takeaways on POS. As evidence by the inclusion of two meta-analytic studies within the last 15 years, POS research is on the upswing in popularity and there are important findings for organizational behavior. First, the perceptions that employees have of the organization's level of support matter. POS directly influences employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment and individual performance (i.e., Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., *in press*). Second, while there are multiple causes of fluctuations in POS, arguably the most important of these antecedents is perceptions of fairness. Multiple meta-

analytic studies found a strong, positive relationship between the two areas suggesting that if employees feel that there is not a fair work environment, it will create unfavorable perceptions of the support levels of the organization.

### **Theories**

There will be multiple theories used to argue the hypothesis in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The primary theoretical view will be social cognitive theory. As the primary theoretical explanation, social cognitive theory will provide understanding for the relationships between self-leadership and the other variables in the model. Additional theories that will be used include conservation of resources theory, social exchange theory, and organizational support theory. Each of these theories will help to add in support of various hypotheses within the proposed model. The theories will be discussed here to lay a foundation before moving into the hypothesis development chapter.

#### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory is one of the most prominent theories used within the organizational behavioral field. Developed around 30 years ago (Bandura, 1986; 1991), social cognitive theory helps to explain how human behavior occurs. In particular, social cognitive theory suggest that individuals are “both products and producers of their environment” (Bandura, 1989; p. 4). Social cognitive theory suggests that human behavior is driven by a reciprocal relationship among multiple influences. These influences include internal influences, external influences, and behavior (Bandura, 1986). Thus, these influences create a triadic reciprocal model where each of the types of influence can impact others within the model. What people think, believe, and feel can affect how individuals behave, which can influence how they think, believe, and feel

(Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory suggests that there a self-regulatory system in place where individuals constantly regulate their behaviors based on other factors (Neck et al., 2017).

The driving idea behind social cognitive theory is that an individual's behaviors, attitudes, and environment will constantly influence one another, creating changes within human behavior. This suggests that human behavior is largely driven by self-influence (Bandura, 1991). Social cognitive theory differs from other forms of determinism which states that behaviors is controlled either by environmental influences of internal dispositions, but not the combination of these (Bandura, 1989). Individuals learn the norms, protocols, actions, and expectations that are desired within the environment in which they operate. Thus, the environment can influence the behaviors and beliefs that an individual holds towards the environment. A person can potentially modify their own behaviors and actions to better match what is desired within the environment.

Each of the three subsystems of influence exists within the triadic reciprocal model to serve a particular purpose. For example, personal factors can influence behavior by examining how thoughts impact action. In this manner, an individual's expectations, beliefs, and thoughts will subsequently influence the behaviors they engage in (Bandura, 1989). Likewise, the behaviors that an individual experiences can shape the feelings, beliefs, and expectations that a person may feel. Similarly, there can be reciprocal interactions between the environment and personal factors. The environment in which an individual operates can exert influence by shaping how a person reacts to the situation, through thoughts, beliefs, and expectations (Bandura, 1986; 1989). The personal factors can influence the environment by either strengthening or weakening the environmental expectations. This can result in a shift in the environment or more support in what the environment dictates. Finally, the behaviors and environment within the triadic model can also exert influence over each other. There is a clear two way interaction between behavior

and environment. As an individual engages in a particular behavior, it will influence change and shape the environment (Bandura, 1989). Likewise, the environment can shape which and how behaviors are completed. These three elements create situations where individuals contribute to their own reciprocal model through the personal factor, environment, and behaviors.

Thus, social cognitive theory has a large importance within the organizational behavior field by explaining that individual behaviors cannot be studied in isolation from personal factors and environmental factors. By better understanding why individual's behaviors are shaped by the environment and personal factors, researchers can create a better idea of why items occur how they do. For example, the multiple interactional links between the systems of influence are critical in this area. In particular, social cognitive theory helps to explain the importance of each element within this model, while not ignoring the other parts of the model. A key point from social cognitive theory is that individuals are neither solely influenced by inner forces nor does the environment automatically shape those same individuals (Bandura, 1989). Thus, there is a reciprocal nature to how individuals both receive and exert influences.

### **Conservation of Resources Theory**

Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1988) lays out a framework that explains how individuals attempt to manage resources. In particular, conservation of resources theory suggests that "the basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster those things that they value" (Hobfoll, 2001: p. 341). Individuals want to protect current resources and gain new resources. This suggests that individuals want to maintain levels of valuable resources to themselves. Resources can fall into multiple categories, such as objects, conditions, personal characteristics, or energy resources. Individuals strive to not lose resources, which means that losing resources is more important than gaining resources. Therefore,



individuals seek to maintain and keep whatever valuable resources they hold due to the negatives associated with losing those resources. Value of resources can vary depending on the individual and what role that resource has to them (Halabesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, Westman, 2014).

Conservation of resources theory suggests that individuals can suffer from higher levels of psychological stress when various instances occur to resource level. First, higher levels of stress occur when individuals' resources are threatened with loss. When there is an imminent loss of resources that could happen, it creates psychological stress as individuals seek to prevent the loss from occurring (Hobfoll, 2001). Second, psychological stress increases when individuals' resources are actually lost. This creates a situation where individuals are seeking to recoup the loss of the resources, leading to more psychological stress (Hobfoll, 2001). Third, psychological stress increases when there is failure to recoup sufficient resources when resource investment occurs. Thus, if individuals invest their valuable resources and don't recoup at a similar level, it creates a stress from not managing resources in an efficient manner (Hobfoll, 2001). As individuals seek to control levels of psychological stress and preserve resources, conservation of resources theory explains why the loss or gain of resources is so important. This can help to explain why individuals may or may not engage in particular behaviors within a workplace setting. If the behavior saps resources that are extremely valuable, individuals may not be willing to risk that resource.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory was developed in the 1960s (Blau, 1964) to explain interactions between parties. Researchers tend to state that social exchange involves interactions that create obligations (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2005). Social exchange theory is based on a central premise:

the exchange of social and material resources is a fundamental form of human interaction. Thus, interactions within social exchange theory are interdependent and rely on another party's actions (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory has tenets that are based on norms of reciprocity. The exchange depends on bidirectional transactions (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2005). In other words, something must be given and received by a party. This creates situations where a party's responses is contingent on what the other party has provided. By understanding why individuals feel as though they need to fulfill their part of a relationship, researchers can understand why the relationship works how it does.

The social exchange process goes through a series of steps that are put forth by social exchange theory. First, one actor treats a targeted individual in either a positive or negative way. Thus, the initial actor has begun the social relationship between the parties – either through providing a benefit or doing harm to the target (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2016). Second, the target responds to the initial actor by reciprocating behaviors with their own either positive or negative behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2016). Social exchange theory suggests that if there is an initial positive action, the target will tend to respond with positive responses. In turn, this can create a situation where individuals have a high quality social exchange relationship if there are a series of repeated successful and positive interactions. On the other hand, negative actions can cause weaker social exchange relationships and less successful future interactions.

Thus, social exchange theory consists of voluntary actions that parties engage in that are motivated by returns they are expected to bring from others (Blau, 1964). Thus, social exchange theory can help to explain why a party may engage in a particular behavior or action. That is due to the expectation that the favor will be returned by the other party in the relationship. Social exchange theory is wide stretching conceptual framework that can be applied in a variety of

manners. That helps to create more situations where it is applicable, which in turn can help explain why individuals act in a certain manner within relationships they hold with other actors.

### **Organizational Support Theory**

Organizational support theory was developed within the social exchange framework as a specific mechanism for understanding reciprocity norms of employees and employers (Eisenberger & Rhoades, 2002). Reciprocity norms relate to when one party treats another well, the second party should return the favorable treatment. Organizational support theory extends these concepts to understand the degree to which an organization's support of employees dictates reciprocation of good will from the employees. Organizational support theory's main tenet rests on the organization's willingness to reward effort and meet socioemotional needs (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This is based on individual's beliefs on whether or not the organization cares about them and values what is brought to the table by the employee. Thus, perceptions that individuals hold can be critical for understanding reciprocation between employee and employer.

Organizational support theory helps to explain how individuals develop perceptions of organizational support (POS). In particular, individuals create situations where they associate humanlike characteristics to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). By assigning humanlike characteristics, individuals view actions as by parties representing the organization as indications of how the organization intends to act. In particular, individuals can make judgments about either favorable or unfavorable treatment as a way to show how much the organization either supports or doesn't support those (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, perceptions on levels of organizational support can create different views towards the organization.

Organizational support theory helps to explain from a reciprocal norms perspective why the psychological processes underlying POS exist (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This is

through three main reasons. First, organizational support theory posits that there is felt obligation to care about the organization based on reciprocation norms. Second, socioemotional needs should be met, which leads to individuals feels as though they are supported. Finally, organizational support theory suggests that individuals will have stronger beliefs about the organization. These should all create more favorable outcomes for the individuals and the organization. This is due to the reciprocation between the employees and organization. (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, organizational support theory can lead credible explanations for why individuals may or may not engage in particular behaviors.

### **Conclusion**

Now that the literature review has been conducted, this dissertation has a foundation of variables to study with self-leadership. In particular, the literature review has helped to identify potential dependent, mediating, and moderating variables of interest to develop hypotheses around from the research questions. Additionally, a brief review of key theories has been conducted. Moving forward, the hypothesis chapter will be developed around self-leadership's relationships with dependent variables (work engagement and OCBs), mediating variables (emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment), and a moderating variable (POS). These constructs will help to further build the self-leadership literature by expanding the literature into critical avenues of research.

### CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES

Chapter 3 of the dissertation will lay forth the hypotheses that will be tested in the dissertation. The theoretical and empirical backing for each hypothesis will be discussed in the lead up to each hypotheses. All hypotheses are pictorially diagramed in Figure 1. The hypotheses will discuss the relationships between self-leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, work engagement, OCBs, and perceived organizational commitment.

#### Hypothesis 1

Within both practical and academic realms, a critical aspect of research falls on whether or not employees remained engaged in their work. Businesses and individuals want individuals who remain engaged in work. With both motivating and unmotivating situations, it is necessary for individuals to keep high levels of engagement to ensure productivity at work. Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p.74). Furthermore, work engagement is not a “momentary state, such as an emotion, ... [but rather] refers to a more persistent motivational state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior” (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008, p.118). Work engagement presents relevant situations in which organizations want individuals to remain engaged and accomplish all work that is needed. There is a host of research on work engagement that examines three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

All three of the dimensions of work engagement are particularly intriguing for why individuals do stay motivated in their work. Vigor relates to individuals having high levels of energy and resilience when working, thus maintaining positive actions while working (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). When roadblocks exist that can impede progress, vigor takes on more

importance for successful engagement. The second key dimension of work engagement is dedication. Dedication relates to individuals having enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride in their job – essentially how well individuals identify with the job itself (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). If individuals identify with their job, exhibit pride, and exhibit enthusiasm it will lead to higher levels of work engagement. Finally, the remaining dimension of work engagement is absorption. Absorption refers to the degree to which employees remain fully engrossed by their work and have difficulty detaching from the work (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). If individuals find that they are becoming engrossed in their work, it can become difficult for them to separate from their work, which can create higher levels of work engagement for individuals. All of these aspects of work engagement tap into different parts of an individual's attachment to the job and are important to consider when examining work engagement.

A critical question for both researchers and practitioners revolves around how to increase levels of employee work engagement. The practical and research implications of high levels of work engagement are critical for employees. By understanding how organizations can potentially influence work engagement levels, researchers will have a better understanding of what can cause levels of work engagement to fluctuate. One way through which individuals may exhibit higher levels of work engagement may be through the use of self-leadership strategies.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of a host of tasks. The three dimensions of work engagement may be lower in the context of both naturally motivating and un motivating tasks, leading to lower levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption. This is inherently bad for individuals and organizations if the workers do not exhibit higher levels of engagement towards the aspects of their jobs.

As briefly mentioned above, self-leadership may be a way through which individuals can motivate themselves and remain engaged in their work. Particularly, social cognitive theory has been used as a lens through which to examine many self-leadership relationships (i.e. Neck & Houghton, 2006). Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and the triadic reciprocal model between person, behavior, and environment lend themselves to understanding why and how self-leadership can positively influence work engagement levels. Social cognitive theory suggests interrelationships between an individual, their behavior, and their environment. This triadic reciprocal behavior model is a key point within social cognitive theory and a point that lends itself quite nicely to understanding why employees may stay engaged in their work. Within this model of human behavior, individuals are influenced by personal factors, behaviors, and the environment. These reciprocal influences could potentially explain why an influence may remain engaged in their work. Thus, employees who engage in self-leadership (i.e. particular strategies to influence their own behavior) may be more able to see the linkage and importance of them remaining engaged in their work. As individuals practice self-leadership strategies, those individuals will be exerting influence on different elements of their life.

In particular, individuals who are engaging in self-leadership practices should be better able to recognize the importance of their own actions within an environment. This can be accomplished through the influence that the environment, person, and behaviors have on one another. Therefore, as individuals use these self-leadership strategies, in essence they are impacting their own environment. Thus, practicing self-leadership strategies can fundamentally shape the environment, which in turn can influence the person and his/her behaviors. In this particular example, as an individual takes part in self-leadership strategies, it can influence their environment by remaining more engaged in their work. This could potentially be a direct result

of individuals who are choosing to use self-leadership practices being able to see the importance of remaining engaged in work, even when in naturally unmotivating situations. In turn, if individuals remain engaged in their work, it is likely to result in positive outcomes in their environment. In particular, behavior focused strategies can help individuals who face necessary but unmotivating behaviors by providing mechanisms through which individuals can shape their actions and remain engaged in their work. Additionally, natural reward strategies can help individuals shape and structure their work environment in such a manner that is more naturally motivating, thus increasing their level of work engagement. Finally, constructive thought strategies can be used to shape think and remove dysfunctional thoughts about work. All of these strategies are manners in which self-leadership can lead to greater levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption. These strategies will be used to help explain how individuals can influence their own behaviors and beliefs.

Self-leadership and work engagement are two extremely important constructs within the organizational behavior field. The relationship between these two areas of research is one that can provide fruitful research that is important for furthering the development of the self-leadership field. While there is not an overabundance of research that examines the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, there are a few recent studies that seek to examine the direct relationship between these constructs. These studies have found a positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. For example, Gomes and colleagues (2015) found a positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. This early finding was further supported by two articles published in 2016 (i.e. Breevaart et al., 2016; Park et al., 2016). Both of these sets of authors also established a positive relationship between self-



leadership and work engagement. Thus, the research to this point, while limited, has found a positive relationship between self-leadership and work engagement.

Based on the theoretical arguments made above from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), as well as the scant, but critical empirical research that has been completed on self-leadership and work engagement, the following hypothesis is advanced:

*Hypothesis 1: Self-leadership will be positively related to work engagement.*

### **Hypothesis 2**

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have one of the richest histories of variables within the organizational behavior field. OCBs are extra role behaviors that individuals engage in that directly or indirectly help the organization by helping individuals within the organization. OCBs can be defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person’s employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable” (Organ, 1988: pp. 4). There has been an abundance of research on OCBs in the literature, spurring multiple meta-analyses and literature reviews (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Hoffman et al., 2007). These studies have typically found that there are positive benefits associated with employees engaging in extra-role behaviors that are necessary for proper functioning of the organization.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of a host of tasks. Self-leadership is a process through which individuals can exert influence over themselves and

motivate themselves to accomplish a particular task. By having the ability to influence their own behaviors, individuals can motivate themselves, even when they may not want to complete a particular task or job. Despite the relatively large importance that OCBs have played within the field, there has been limited research that seeks to address why or how self-leadership influences engagement in extra role behaviors. As a self-influence process, it is possible to see how engagement in self-leadership processes could lead individuals to complete extra-role behaviors.

Using social cognitive theory as a basis, it is plausible to investigate how self-leadership can influence engagement in OCBs. Social cognitive theory is frequently used as an underlying explanation for self-leadership relationships and it provides a unique lens for examining how self-leadership relates to OCBs (Neck & Houghton, 2006). This theory is used to explain self-leadership relationships due to the way that individuals can exert influence over themselves, which in turn can affect different elements of their lives, such as behaviors and environments. Social cognitive theory has a key self-influence process that motivate individuals (Bandura, 1986). First, social cognitive theory suggests a triadic reciprocal model of behavior. This consists of an idea that human behavior is related to external factors relating to the world individuals are involved in, personal factors, and the behavior itself (Neck et al., 2017). As individuals motivate themselves, it can influence their behaviors. This relates to a crucial link in social cognitive theory between individuals attitudes/beliefs and their behaviors. OCBs are crucial for successful running of an organization, so finding ways to have these completed is important for researchers. By examining this way in which individuals influence their attitudes/beliefs towards the behaviors, it increases the likelihood of the extra-role behaviors being completed.

As with the hypothesized relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, self-leadership strategies could potentially allow for individuals to see the importance and

relationship between the strategies, behaviors, and the environment. One such manner in which this could occur is through active engagement in OCBs. As a result of practicing self-leadership, an individual who uses self-leadership practices can see the relationship between their motivation, the engagement in the OCB, and the resulting effect on the environment in which the person works. As individuals engage in OCBs, it will have a positive effect on the environment; this positive effect can be more easily seen through the usage of self-leadership strategies. Individuals who exhibit higher levels of self-leadership are possibly able to see the connection between completing extra-role behaviors and a positive influence for the organization. As a result, individuals who present higher levels of self-leadership are more likely to complete OCBs. As argued above, self-leadership and OCBs can relate to one another as explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

From the conceptual article standpoint, there has been a singular article that attempted to explain a relationship between self-leadership and OCBs. (Mansor et al., 2013). The authors argued using social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) to explain why individuals would engage in OCBs if they had high levels of self-leadership (Mansor et al., 2013). Furthermore, from an empirical standpoint, the results of the literature review find that there hasn't been empirical research to examine this particular linkage. This is potentially concerning due to the influence of OCBs within the organizational field to have no empirical research testing this relationship. It is conceivable from a conceptual thinking perspective to understand how self-leadership strategies that help individuals motivate themselves to accomplish particular tasks could lead those individuals to engage in OCBs. The individuals who are motivating themselves can possibly see the importance of OCBs more than individuals who are lower on usage of self-leadership skills. Building on the foundations of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and the singular

conceptual article that links self-leadership and OCBs, which also was based on social cognitive theory arguments (Mansor et al., 2013), this dissertation will put forth a hypothesis relating these constructs. Thus:

*Hypothesis 2: Self-leadership will be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors.*

### **Hypothesis 3**

A direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was proposed for Hypothesis 1 in this dissertation. The next step in developing the model in this dissertation is the inclusion of mediating variables. After reviewing the literature on self-leadership, a gap was found involving research on self-leadership and emotional exhaustion. In particular, emotional exhaustion could explain why individuals become disengaged in their work. However, engagement in self-leadership practices could help individuals to experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion by better managing their emotional load. Therefore, as individuals use self-leadership practices, they could remain more engaged in their work because they are less emotionally exhausted. Organizations may not be able to influence work engagement levels. This could be due to their inability to monitor or control levels of emotional exhaustion. If this is the situation facing them, the positives of self-leadership may be able to help mitigate higher levels of emotional exhaustion. In turn, employees may remain more engaged in their work because they do not feel as emotionally exhausted. This idea will serve as the basis for Hypothesis 3.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of naturally motivating and un motivating tasks (Manz, 1986). As briefly mentioned above, self-leadership may be a way through which individuals can motivate themselves and remain engaged in their work. Self-leadership is a self-influence process that can be used in a multitude of situations. Self-leadership

can positively influence outcomes and create favorable outcomes for individuals. These strategies consists of behavior focused, constructive thought patterns, and natural reward strategies. These strategies can be used to help influence levels of work engagement, as argued in Hypothesis 1.

Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p.74). Furthermore, work engagement is not a “momentary state, such as an emotion, ... [but rather] refers to a more persistent motivational state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior” (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008, p.118). When roadblocks exist that can impede progress, vigor takes on more importance for successful engagement. If individuals identify with their job, exhibit pride, and exhibit enthusiasm it will lead to higher levels of work engagement. If individuals find that they are becoming engrossed in their work, it can become difficult for them to separate from their work, which can create higher levels of work engagement for individuals. (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). The next step in examining this relationship is to examine mediating mechanisms of the relationship. In this hypothesis, emotional exhaustion will be examined as a mediating variable of the self-leadership and work engagement relationship.

Within the workplace, managers have shown great concern for what drives poor performance, lower satisfaction, and other outcomes. One way in which individuals' days may be negatively influence is through higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion consists of an individual having “feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources” (Maslach, 1993, p.20-21). Mental weariness and emotional exhaustion are characteristics that are stereotypical of individuals experiencing emotional

exhaustion. (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), thus leaving individuals without the resources needed to cope emotionally with a given situation. When individuals are facing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, it potentially impedes their ability to cope with demands of the job and meet expectations. Emotional exhaustion typically is viewed as one-third of Maslach's (1982) and Maslach and Jackson's (1986) work on a three component model of burnout. Emotional exhaustion can be shown through physical fatigue and feeling drained at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Much research on emotional exhaustion exists within a conservation of resources theoretical framework (Hobfoll, 1989). Conservation of resources theory suggests that individuals have limited resources to accomplish and cope with different aspects relating to a job, life, etc. (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, individuals have a finite amount of resources that can be applied to managing different areas, such as performance and emotions. It is plausible to see how an individual can become emotionally exhausted if they do not have proper resources to balance out the negative and emotional load they are under. Conservation of resources theory argues that "people employ key resources in order to conduct the regulation of the self, their operation of social relationships, and how they organize, behavior and fit into the greater context of organizations" (Hobfoll, 2011: p. 117). Additionally, conservation of resources theory argues that individuals who possess a variety of resources (i.e., physical energy, resilience, directed attention) are better suited to handle an array of tasks at work (Hobfoll, 2002). If individuals do not properly manage the resources that are at their disposal, it can create situations where resources are overextended and potentially not useful in regulation of different aspects of their life.

By combining social cognitive theory and conservation of resources theory, the link between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion can be established. As discussed above, social cognitive theory often is used in conjunction with self-leadership research. This results from the research showing that self-leadership can influence an individual, and thus influence thoughts/beliefs, behaviors, and environments. Therefore, individuals who engage in self-leadership are more capable of modifying their situations. Conservation of resources theory argues that individuals who are better capable of handling resources are better suited to handle different types of tasks. This can result in better management of resources, which in turn, can mean better allocation of resources. By engaging in self-leadership, individuals should be able to manage their levels of emotional exhaustion. When individuals engage in self-leadership and can influence their own behaviors, they are placed in a better situation for influence thoughts, actions, behaviors, etc. In this situation, individuals would be better suited to manage their level of emotional exhaustion by conserving resources in a more efficient manner. In turn, this means that self-leadership would be influencing thoughts, behaviors, and the environment by conserving resources, which leads to lower levels of emotional exhaustion. Thus, the first part of this hypothesis is that self-leadership will lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion. In turn, the lower levels of emotional exhaustion are expected to influence outcomes of interest.

The second half of this hypothesis will connect emotional exhaustion and work engagement to one another. Again, social cognitive theory and conservation of resources theory will be used for the theoretical backing. Within conservation of resources theory, individuals are trying to best manage their resources and not become overwhelmed. This creates situations where individuals must prioritize how resources will be used to avoid situations where they are overextended. Since self-leadership could lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion,

individuals may be better placed to manage their resources because they are not coping with emotional overload and overextension. In turn, social cognitive theory would suggest that the lower levels of emotional exhaustion could influence the person's behaviors and their environment. By managing emotional exhaustion, an individual would not have such prevalent negative thoughts that would negatively influence their behavior, actions, and environment. Thus, individuals can better manage and use their resources. Specifically, individuals who are not coping with emotional exhaustion and being overextended and direct valuable resources towards remaining engaged in their work. By managing resources in a way that prevents emotional exhaustion, individuals set themselves up to have better individual outcomes.

The relationship between emotional exhaustion and work engagement has been briefly examined in the literature. One such case showed that emotional exhaustion (which was being used as a control variable) was negatively related to the dimensions of work engagement at moderate, negative levels (Alarcon & Edwards, 2011). Another recent article has shown that when emotional demands are high on an individual (which could result from emotional exhaustion), individuals reported lower levels of work engagement (i.e., Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Fischbach, 2013). Thus, as individuals have higher levels of emotional loads present, it can draw resources away from work engagement levels. Furthermore, a recent article on burnout and work engagement, Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2014) propose and argue that within the job demands-resource model that emotional exhaustion negatively influences levels of work engagement. In particular, emotional exhaustion represents a way that self-leadership may influence work engagement. By lowering levels of emotional exhaustion, individuals can then redirect resources towards remaining engaged their work. Thus, hypothesis three is as follows:



*Hypothesis 3: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, such that higher levels of self-leadership will decrease levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn will lead to higher levels of work engagement.*

#### **Hypothesis 4**

A direct relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors was proposed for Hypothesis 2 in this dissertation. The next step in developing the model in this dissertation is the inclusion of mediating variables. After reviewing the literature on self-leadership, a gap was found involving research on self-leadership and emotional exhaustion. In particular, emotional exhaustion could explain why individuals don't engage in extra-role behaviors. However, engagement in self-leadership practices could help individuals to experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion by better managing their emotional load. Therefore, as individuals use self-leadership practices, they could complete extra role behaviors that they aren't required to. Organizations may not be able to influence engagement in extra-role behaviors. This could be due to their inability to monitor or control levels of emotional exhaustion. If this is the situation facing them, the positives of self-leadership may be able to help mitigate higher levels of emotional exhaustion. In turn, employees may complete more OCBs. This idea will serve as the basis for Hypothesis 4.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of naturally motivating and unmotivating tasks (Manz, 1986). As briefly mentioned above, self-leadership may be a way through which individuals can motivate themselves and remain engaged in their work. The self-influence processes that self-leadership provides can help explain why individuals may engage in particular extra-role behaviors. Self-leadership is a process that can be used by individuals to

motivate themselves in a variety of different situations and tasks. The host of strategies that are present in self-leadership can help to drive motivation through different tools, such as behavior focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies. These strategies may be useful in motivating individuals to accomplish tasks and engage in extra-role activities that they are not required to do. This relationship between self-leadership and OCBs formed the foundation of Hypothesis 2.

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have one of the richest histories of variables within the organizational behavior field. OCBs are extra-role behaviors that individuals engage in to provide benefits to the organization and individuals in the organization. Specifically, OCBs are an “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person’s employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable” (Organ, 1988: pp. 4).

There has been an abundance of research on OCBs in the literature, spurring multiple meta-analyses and literature reviews (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Hoffman et al., 2007). The first step that this dissertation takes towards furthering this literature is by looking at self-leadership as a process that may drive engagement in OCBs. The next step in examining this relationship is to examine mediating mechanisms of the relationship. In this hypothesis, emotional exhaustion will be examined as a mediating variable of the self-leadership and OCBs relationship. In particular, lower levels of emotional exhaustion may lead to higher engagement in OCBs.

Emotional exhaustion consists of an individual having “feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one’s emotional resources” (Maslach, 1993, p.20-21). Mental weariness and emotional exhaustion are characteristics that are stereotypical of individuals experiencing emotional exhaustion. (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), thus leaving individuals without the resources needed to cope emotionally with a given situation. If individuals face high levels of emotional exhaustion, there are additional roadblocks that can prohibit abilities to cope with job demands. Physical fatigue and symptoms of feeling drained at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) are examples that can be observed when an individual is experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

Much research on emotional exhaustion exists within a conservation of resources theoretical framework (Hobfoll, 1989). Conservation of resources theory argues that “people employ key resources in order to conduct the regulation of the self, their operation of social relationships, and how they organize, behavior and fit into the greater context of organizations” (Hobfoll, 2011: p. 117). Individuals have a set number of resources that can be used to cope with any demands that they may come across. If individuals do not have the proper resources or enough resources, situations can exist where individuals feel emotionally exhausted. If individuals have a variety of resources (i.e., physical energy, resilience), they can be better suited to handle different tasks without feeling as though they are being emotionally overloaded. However, an inability to manage these resources can result in higher levels of emotional exhaustion and reallocation of resources that may be needed elsewhere to cope with being emotionally exhausted.

By combining social cognitive theory and conservation of resources theory, the link between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion can be established. As discussed above, social

cognitive theory often is used in conjunction with self-leadership research. Individuals can influence their own thoughts/beliefs, behaviors, and environments, according to social cognitive theory. Self-leadership provides strategies through which individuals can directly influence themselves. This suggests that individuals who engage in self-leadership are better suited to modify different parts of their situations to best suit a given task. This can result in better management of resources, which in turn, can mean better allocation of resources. When individuals engage in self-leadership and can influence their own behaviors, they are placed in a better situation for influence thoughts, actions, behaviors, etc. In this situation, individuals would be better suited to manage their level of emotional exhaustion by conserving resources in a more efficient manner. As a result, individuals would be influencing various parts of their situations, which in can be seen through conservation of resources. In turn, self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion by using these strategies to better control resources and prevent higher levels of emotional exhaustion from occurring. Thus, the first part of this hypothesis is that self-leadership will lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion. In turn, the lower levels of emotional exhaustion are expected to influence individual outcomes.

The second half of this hypothesis will connect emotional exhaustion and OCBs to one another. Again, a combination of conservation of resources theory and social cognitive theory will be used to theoretically explain the relationship. Using conservation of resources theory, individuals want to manage their resources to best cope with different demands they may face. As self-leadership is argued to lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, individuals should have more resources which aren't being used to cope with being emotional exhausted. In turn, social cognitive theory would argue that lower levels of emotional exhaustion could influence behaviors in a positive manner. In particular, if individuals have lower levels of emotional

exhaustion, resulting from higher levels of self-leadership, they may be able to use resources to engage in extra-role behaviors. By not using the resources on emotional exhaustion coping, individuals can use valuable resources in a way that is beneficial to the organization. Thus, by managing levels of emotional exhaustion through self-leadership, individuals set themselves up to be better suited to complete extra-role behaviors that are beneficial for themselves and the organization.

There is empirical evidence to support the relationship between emotional exhaustion and OCBs. Cropanzano, Rupp, and Byrne (2003) found that emotionally exhausted individuals were more likely to withhold OCBs toward the organization. Thus, as individuals felt higher levels of emotional exhaustions, it resulted in those individuals not engaging in extra-role behaviors to help the organization. This was an early step towards establishing a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and OCBs. Another recent study that examined how emotional exhaustion and OCBs related to one another showed partial support for such a hypothesized relationship (Van Emmerik et al., 2005). These authors found a weak negative association between emotional exhaustion and OCBs. Thus, there is slight support for the idea that as individuals are emotionally exhausted, they are less likely to engage in OCBs.

A recent meta-analysis on emotional strain and OCBs had findings that are of importance to this dissertation and hypothesis development. While the focus in the meta-analysis was on emotional strain, which the authors define as negative emotions and emotional responses produced by stressors (Chang, Johnson, & Yang, 2007), there is a key empirical finding in this meta-analysis. Chang and colleagues (2007) make a clear point in the discussion section that while emotional strain and emotional exhaustion are different constructs, it is important to note how many studies measured emotional strain. The relevance for this dissertation is that many of

the studies used the emotional exhaustion dimensions of the burnout scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Therefore, an empirical link can be drawn from this meta-analysis which found a small negative relationship between the emotions variable and OCBs (Chang et al., 2007). Thus, the second half of this hypothesis is that lower levels of emotional exhaustion will lead to higher engagement in OCBs. This is because self-leadership will lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which will free up resources that can be allocated to accomplishment of OCBs. Thus, *Hypothesis 4: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs, such that higher levels of self-leadership will decrease levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn will lead to higher levels of OCBs.*

#### **Hypothesis 5**

A direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was proposed for Hypothesis 1 in this dissertation. The next step in developing the model in this dissertation is the inclusion of mediating variables. After reviewing the literature on self-leadership, an opportunity was found involving research on self-leadership and organizational commitment. In particular, if research examines why individuals remain engaged in their work focuses on organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism, an interesting avenue of research may be opened. Organizational commitment is an attitudinal variable that individuals hold, which may make it harder to track and influence from the organization's perspective. This could be an opportunity for organizations to place a focus on self-leadership as a way to understand how to influence these attitudinal variables. Individuals may remain more engaged in their work because they are committed to the organization. If individuals engage in self-leadership, it may lead them to be more committed to the organization because they can motivate themselves. This in turn, could

lead to individuals remaining more engaged. This concept will serve as the basis for Hypothesis 5.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of naturally motivating and unmotivating tasks (Manz, 1986). As briefly mentioned above, self-leadership may be a way through which individuals can motivate themselves and remain engaged in their work. Self-leadership is an all-encompassing self-influence process through which individuals modify their actions, thoughts, behaviors, and environment. This is captured through multiple strategies: constructive thought pattern strategies, behavior focused strategies, and natural reward strategies.

Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p.74). Furthermore, work engagement is not a “momentary state, such as an emotion, ... [but rather] refers to a more persistent motivational state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior” (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008, p.118). Vigor relates to individuals having high levels of energy and resilience when working, thus maintaining positive actions while working (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Dedication relates to individuals having enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride in their job – essentially how well individuals identify with the job itself (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Absorption refers to the degree to which employees remain fully engrossed by their work and have difficulty detaching from the work (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). The next step in examining this relationship is to examine mediating mechanisms of the relationship. In this hypothesis, organizational commitment will be examined as a mediating variable of the self-leadership and work engagement relationship.

Organizational commitment can be defined as how strong an individual identifies with an organization (Steers, 1979). Organizational commitment can be determined from a variety of factors including belief in organization goals, putting effort into the organization, adapting to organization norms, and exhibiting a desire to remain with the organization (Porter et al., 1977). Organizational commitment can be seen as a psychological state that individuals have that describe the relationship between employee and employer, as well as why or why not individuals would stay in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Given the high cost of turnover for organizations, it is critical for employees to remain committed to their employer.

The most common structure of organizational commitment within research is the three part typology developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). The authors identified and developed this typology based on prior research, extending earlier work that examined attitudinal and behavioral perspectives of organizational commitment. The three component model of organizational commitment contains the following: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Each of these forms of commitment tap into a different area of the overarching domain of organizational commitment. Affective commitment refers to an affective liking and attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment relates to perceived costs with leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This suggests that any part of the job that would create a perceived cost of leaving would create stronger feelings for an individual to stay with the organization. Normative commitment relates to an individual's feelings and obligation to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Normative commitment can be realized through pressures to stay with an organization due to observation of different factors. These forms of



organizational commitment can be seen as *wanting*, *needing*, and *being obliged* to stay with the organization (Bergman, 2006).

Self-leadership is expected to relate to organizational commitment in a variety of ways. Self-leadership is an influence process that individuals can use to exert influence over their own behaviors, actions, etc. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggest that individuals can influence their own behaviors, environment, and attitudes. As individuals motivate themselves, in both positive and negative situations, it can create a sense of commitment. Specifically, self-leadership can create a sense of affective commitment because individuals can approach their job in a positive manner and see the parts of the job they enjoy (through natural reward strategies). That would create a sense of affective commitment where individuals like the organization and want to remain with the organization.

Normative commitment can also result from higher levels of self-leadership. Individuals who are able to motivate themselves and are better at understanding their environments may be more obliged to stay because they understand the norms. Additionally, those individuals may feel as though they need to remain with the organization to help accomplish a specific task or goal. This can result from them motivating themselves to accomplish tasks and understand their environment. Finally, self-leadership may influence continuance commitment in a different way than other forms of organizational commitment. In particular, continuance commitment results from feeling like an individual needs to stay with the organization, often due to lack of feasible alternatives. If individuals engage in self-leadership, they will influence themselves and may see other opportunities to leave the organization. Thus, self-leadership could lead to higher levels of affective and normative commitment, while leading to lower levels of continuance commitment.

The early work that examined self-leadership and organizational commitment was conducted by Andressen and colleagues (2012). These authors found small to moderate positive sized relationships between the various self-leadership strategies and affective organizational commitment (Andressen et al., 2012). Furthermore, AbuShmais (2013) conducted a dissertation attempting to explain this relationship. This dissertation found a small, positive relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment within IT employees. Finally, Pihl-Thingvad (2014) also attempted to establish a relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment. However, Pihl-Thingvad's (2014) measurement of self-leadership seem to be more appropriate for measurement of job autonomy. Thus, the first half of this hypothesis relates self-leadership positively to affective and normative commitment. Additionally, the first half of this hypothesis negatively relates self-leadership to continuance commitment.

For the second half of this hypothesis, social cognitive theory will be used to explain why the different forms of organizational commitment will influence work engagement. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggest that human behavior is modified by a triadic reciprocal model. Within this model, personal beliefs/attitudes, behaviors, and the environment can all exert influence over one another and change the other elements of the model. Therefore, individuals who have certain attitudes will engage in behaviors that are influenced by those beliefs, as well as exert influence over their environment because of those attitudes.

The three types of organizational commitment may relate to work engagement in different ways. Affective commitment is based on the feelings that an individual has regarding "liking" the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Thus, affective commitment suggests that individuals stay attached to the organization because they like the organization and want to be

there. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that the environment, behaviors, and attitudes/beliefs can influence one another. If individuals exhibit affective organizational commitment, they want to be with the organization, which should lead to positive benefits within the triadic reciprocal model. As individuals want to be with the organization, it should lead to higher levels of work engagement. Since individuals like the organization, there should be a draw to stay engaged in their work to benefit the organization.

The second type of organizational commitment is normative commitment. Normative commitment typically receives less attention in the literature and has often been modified as to what it actually is. Normative commitment relates to the ideas that individuals feel obliged to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The sense of obligation is what drives the bond the organization has. Again, within the social cognitive theory model of reciprocal behavior (Bandura, 1986), these feelings of obligation can influence their behaviors and their environment. As individuals feel obliged to stay with the organization, they should remain more engaged in their work. Since individuals have a sense of obligation, they should feel a sense of obligation to do the best they can at their job. This can be exhibited through their levels of work engagement.

The third part of the organizational commitment typology is continuance commitment. Continuance commitment is different in conceptualization from affective and normative commitment. Continuance commitment relates to feelings of needing to be with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 2000). This feeling of needing to be with the organization can be a result of the costs that an individual has associated with leaving, as well as a lack of alternatives that they could use as options for leaving. This form of organizational commitment is expected to influence levels of work engagement in a different way. While still operating within the triadic

reciprocal model of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), continuance commitment can influence other elements of the model. In particular, higher levels of continuance commitment should lead to lower levels of work engagement. If the only reason that an individual remains committed to the organization is because of lack of feasible alternatives, they may not remain engaged in their work because they don't want to be there. However, lower levels of continuance commitment should lead to higher levels of work engagement. If there are alternative options, there should be higher levels of affective or normative commitment because individuals don't have to stay with that organization.

When examining past research on work engagement and organizational commitment, it is clear that researchers have argued the relationship in the opposite causal order to what is hypothesized in this dissertation (i.e., Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010; Albrecht, 2010)). However, there is a potential flaw in the stream of research that has examined the relationship between organizational commitment and work engagement. First, conceptually and theoretically speaking, an argument can be made for the direction of the relationship to go either way. It is plausible and understandable that the authors argue that as an employee is engaged in their work, they become more committed to the organization. However, it is equally plausible and understandable that as an employee is more committed to the organization, that same employee is more likely to remain engaged in their work. Conceptually speaking, this could be presented by the idea that an employee who is not committed to the organization will not remain engaged in their work because they do not possess a desire to remain with the organization. Based on the theoretical arguments listed above, the following is hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 5A: Affective commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to higher levels of affective organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement.*

*Hypothesis 5B: Normative commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to higher levels of normative organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement.*

*Hypothesis 5C: Continuance commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to lower levels of continuance organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement.*

### **Hypothesis 6**

A direct relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors was proposed for Hypothesis 2 in this dissertation. The next step in developing the model in this dissertation is the inclusion of mediating variables. After reviewing the literature on self-leadership, an opportunity was found involving research on self-leadership and organizational commitment. In particular, if research examines why individuals complete extra-role behaviors focuses on organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism, an interesting avenue of research may be opened. Organizational commitment is an attitudinal variable that individuals hold, which may make it harder to track and influence from the organization's perspective. This could be an opportunity for organizations to place a focus on self-leadership as a way to understand how to influence these attitudinal variables. Individuals may complete more OCBs because they are committed to the organization. If individuals engage in self-leadership, it may

lead them to be more committed to the organization because they can motivate themselves. This in turn, could lead to completion of OCBs. This concept will serve as the basis for Hypothesis 6.

Self-leadership, as described previously in this dissertation, is a set of strategies through which individuals can motivate themselves towards the accomplishment of naturally motivating and unmotivating tasks (Manz, 1986). As briefly mentioned above, self-leadership may be a way through which individuals can motivate themselves and remain engaged in their work. Self-leadership involves a self-influence process that individuals use to motivate themselves. The strategies of self-leadership include: behavior focused strategies, constructive thought patterns, and natural reward strategies. As individuals engage in more of these strategies, they are more capable of motivating themselves towards accomplishment of a variety of tasks.

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have one of the richest histories of variables within the organizational behavior field. OCBs are extra-role behaviors that individuals engage in to provide benefits to the organization and individuals in the organization. There has been an abundance of research on OCBs in the literature, spurring multiple meta-analyses and literature reviews (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Hoffman et al., 2007). The next step in examining this relationship is to examine mediating mechanisms of the relationship. In this hypothesis, organizational commitment will be examined as a mediating variable of the self-leadership and OCB relationship.

Organizational commitment is related to the ties that an employee has with the organization through feelings of *wanting*, *needing*, and *feeling obliged* to remain with the organization (Bergman, 2006). Thus, the degree to which an employee feels committed to the organization could have far reaching influences onto a host of different outcomes. The three component model of organizational commitment contains the following: affective commitment,

normative commitment, and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Each of these forms of commitment tap into a different area of the overarching domain of organizational commitment.

The self-leadership and organizational commitment relationship will be studied in the realm of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory states that human behavior can be influenced by the triadic reciprocal model. This model includes personal factors, behaviors, and the environment. Each of these elements of the model are capable of exerting influence on the other areas, which in turn can influence other parts of the triadic reciprocal model. Self-leadership is a self-influence process through which individuals motivate themselves and can influence how they think, view, and act in different in situations. With organizational commitment being the feelings of attachment that an individual holds, self-leadership can shape those attitudes of attachment to the organization. Specifically, the environment, behaviors, and beliefs can all drive individuals to view the organization in different views and self-leadership can help motivate them to have different levels of organizational commitment. As argued in other hypotheses, self-leadership could lead to affective organization commitment. Individuals who motivate themselves in a positive manner and enjoy pleasing parts of the task will want to be with the organization because they like the organization. Similarly, individuals who understand the norms and obligations towards the organization can motivate themselves because of the importance of remaining committed. Finally, individuals who engage in self-leadership may be better able to see the alternatives and not feel as though there are no other options for them. Thus, self-leadership may lead to lower levels of continuance commitment. Thus, the first half of this hypothesis suggests that self-leadership could lead to higher levels of affective and normative commitment, while also leading to lower levels of continuance commitment.

The second half of this hypothesis will revolve around the relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs. This is a common relationship within the organizational behavior research field. This part of the hypothesis will be framed within social cognitive theory and social exchange theory. Each of these theories adds potentially relevant theoretical explanations for the organizational commitment and OCB relationship.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that human behavior can be modified within the triadic reciprocal model. This model incorporates elements of attitudes/beliefs, behavior, and the environment. Within this model, a theoretical link can be made from organizational commitment to OCBs. Organizational commitment represents an attitude that individuals have regarding the level of attachment they have. As individuals exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that are more beneficial to the organization. In particular, the positive attitude can lead to higher levels of OCBs. These are the extra-role behaviors that result from individuals remaining committed to the organization.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) may also help to explain the relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs. Social exchange theory rests upon reciprocity norms between two actors. This is based on a continuous relationship where actors voluntarily engage in behaviors that they expect to be rewarded at some point in the future. Individuals who exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment are more likely to engage in OCBs because of the norms of reciprocity. In particular, individuals who are committed know that if they engage in OCBs, it is likely that they will be rewarded later. Thus, there is a benefit to engage in these behaviors because of the expectation that completion of extra-role behaviors leads to some positive benefit from the organization later.



Following the call from Williams and Anderson (1991), many researchers have studied the relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs. One article that helped to review what had been accomplished within the OCBs literature in regards to multiple different areas was a meta-analysis (Hoffman et al., 2007) that used confirmatory factors analysis to distinguish OCBs from relatively similar constructs. Furthermore, Hoffman and colleagues (2007) examined the effects of attitudinal variables as predictors of OCBs. The findings suggested that organizational commitment was a significant predictor of OCBs (Hoffman et al., 2007). This study helped to quantitatively review prior relationships that had been examined between organizational commitment and OCBs. More recently, Lin, Hung, & Chiu (2011) examined how organizational commitment related to service oriented OCBs of loyalty, service delivery, and participation. The findings of their study found that organizational commitment was a significant predictors of these forms of OCBs (Lin et al., 2011), suggesting further support for claims that OCBs result from organizational commitment. Another example was provided by Fu, Li, & Duan (2014) who examined the mediating role of organizational commitment between reputation and OCBs. These authors found a strong positive relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs (Fu et al., 2014), adding support to the idea that if individuals are committed to the organization, they will engage in extra-role behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have one of the richest histories of variables within the organizational behavior field. OCBs are extra-role behaviors that individuals engage in to provide benefits to the organization and individuals in the organization. There has been an abundance of research on OCBs in the literature, spurring multiple meta-analyses and literature reviews (i.e., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Hoffman et al., 2007). Thus, hypotheses have been developed

regarding the role of different forms of organizational commitment in the self-leadership and OCB relationship:

*Hypothesis 6A: Affective commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to higher levels of affective organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of OCBs.*

*Hypothesis 6B: Normative commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to higher levels of normative organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of OCBs.*

*Hypothesis 6C: Continuance commitment will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs, such that higher levels of self-leadership lead to lower levels of continuance organizational commitment, which in turn leads to higher levels of OCBs.*

### **Hypothesis 7**

Organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995) argues that employees develop beliefs about the organization as a manner to determine how the organization will react in certain situations. Organizational support theory was developed out of social exchange theory and relates to reciprocity norms. Essentially, the theory argues that if an employee has needs, the organization should be readily available to meet those needs. Organizational support theory suggests that by meeting these needs, it is representative of the degree to which employees feel as though the organization cares about them. (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Organizational support theory lends itself nicely to understanding why individuals may or may not act in a certain manner. Organizational support theory suggests that there are three main reasons that explain the psychological processes in action. These include felt obligation to care about the organization, meeting of socioemotional

needs, and creation of stronger beliefs about the organization. It accomplishes this through the use of a construct that was developed alongside it: perceived organizational support.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the idea that individuals have that organizations will come through when they need the organization to. POS was developed in conjunction with organizational support theory and represents how organizational support theory influences individuals. In particular, POS can provide reassurance to employees that when something is needed, a stressful situation arises, or rewards are present, that the organization will follow through and provide whatever is necessary to the employees to help them succeed (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the other side of the situation, low levels of POS can create stress or urgency if an employee does not feel as though the organization will do what is needed to help them accomplish a certain task.

It is easy and clear to see the positive consequences and negative ramifications that can occur if there is either high or low levels of POS within an organization. In particular, higher levels of POS can result in a host of positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. It is possible for there to be higher levels of organizational commitment (i.e., Shore & Tetrick, 1991), job related affect (i.e., Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001) and lower levels of negative outcomes, such as burnout (i.e. Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997). As evidenced by research, having the belief that the organization will support you has multiple benefits for individuals. The opposite side of this argument is just as crucial. If individuals feel as though the organizational will not be there and provide what is needed, it can lead to lower levels of the typically studied positive outcomes and higher levels of negative outcomes. By understanding how POS can influence relationships, researchers can better conceptualize how this perception influences individuals.

Within this dissertation, POS is being studied as a potential moderating variable of several of the hypothesized direct relationships that are being studied. In particular, POS is being examined in conjunction with the four direct relationships hypothesized between self-leadership and other variables of interest. Self-leadership is a construct that suggests that individuals can motivate themselves, even in situations that are naturally unmotivating to achieve higher levels of various outcomes. Within the self-leadership research stream, there has not been much research that examines how POS may moderate these potential relationships.

Within the dissertation, there is particular interest in examining POS as a moderating variable of only the self-leadership relationships. Organizational support theory suggests that individuals make judgments about the organization that could potentially influence their motivation and the results of the motivation. The belief is that if an individual has a higher belief of POS, it will strengthen the positive relationships between self-leadership and other variables in the model (i.e., emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviors). If individuals are able to motivate themselves and understand how their actions, behaviors, and thoughts fit into the grander scheme (per social cognitive theory; i.e., Bandura, 1986), it is plausible to propose that their perceptions of the organization's support levels could also be intertwined with the three part reciprocal model.

Organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) suggests that levels of POS are representative of an individual's perceptions of the organization providing what is needed. Therefore, if individuals believe that the organization does support them and provides what they need, it will create stronger feelings of reciprocation towards the organization. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that there is a triadic reciprocal model between personal factors, behaviors, and the environment. This model of reciprocity influences human behavior. Thus, the

beliefs and attitudes that an individual holds can influence their behaviors and their environment. Thus, combined with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), POS could influence an individual's behaviors and actions since POS could be representative of the environment. The inner relationships between POS and an individuals' motivational levels could have drastic influences on individual level outcomes. If individuals have certain perceptions, that can influence their environment and their behaviors. For example, stronger levels of POS should lead to behaviors that are beneficial for the organization and positive influences on the environment. On the other hand, lower levels of POS could lead to lower levels of behaviors that are beneficial for the organization.

The focus of the dissertation is on how self-leadership impacts these variables of interest, thus the focus will remain there. However, if individuals do not believe there is high levels of POS, it could potentially negatively impact these same relationships. It is not believed that the weakening of the relationships will actually flip the sign, however, since self-leadership strategies should help motivate individuals in both motivating and unmotivating situations, such as not believing that the organization will support you when needed. It is critical to understand how these perception that individuals hold can influence how individuals act within an organization.

Using organizational support theory as a basis, hypotheses will be laid forth outlining the potential moderating effect of POS on self-leadership relationships. Of note, the results of the literature review on self-leadership did not uncover empirical articles that sought to examine a hypothesized relationship examining the moderating effect of POS on self-leadership relationships. In fact, the only article that was found discussing this phenomenon was a conceptual article from DiLiello and Houghton (2006) that proposed that POS could influence

the degree to which individuals practicing self-leadership could be more creative and innovative. More importantly, this conceptual article focused on a specific type of POS, otherwise known as perceived organizational support for creativity. Thus, the extent to which the environment was conducive to provide individuals with the various support they needed to be creative was of focal interest. While this provides a foundation for a moderating relationship between self-leadership and various outcomes, it is a far stretch from being able to address how self-leadership would work in the hypothesized relationships. Thus, a gap remains to test the empirical work on POS as a moderating variable. Thus, the following moderating hypothesis were developed.

*Hypothesis 7a: Perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, such that the relationship is strengthened.*

*Hypothesis 7b: Perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors, such that the relationship is strengthened.*

*Hypothesis 7c: Perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion, such that the relationship is strengthened.*

*Hypothesis 7d: Perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment, such that the relationship is strengthened.*

## CHAPTER 4: METHODS

Chapter IV of this dissertation lays out the proposed methodology that will be used to examine the hypothesized relationships that were developed in Chapter III. This chapter discusses common method concerns, research design, measurement instruments to be used, and proposed analysis techniques. First, this chapter will discuss the sample and population from which the data will be drawn. Following the discussion on research design, concerns and potential solutions for common method variance will be discussed. Each measurement instrument will be discussed in greater detail, including reasoning behind the choice of instrument, prior reliability information, and sample items. Finally, the proposed data analysis technique will be reviewed to ensure alignment between research design and statistical analysis.

The sample in which the developed hypotheses will be tested will be transportation employees in a mid-Atlantic state. The employees within the transportation department provide an ideal testing ground for the hypothesized relationships that were developed in Chapter III. In particular, all of the constructs of interest are ones that have great importance to organizations that operate in this field. For example, when working in transportation, it is crucial for individuals to remain engaged within their work, to conduct extra-role behaviors, to not face high levels of emotional exhaustion, and to remain committed to the organization. Furthermore, this is a prime context for studying how perceptions of whether or not an organization supports the employees' impacts outcomes such as work engagement and OCBs. The sample will consist of employees within the organization who are part of the same regional district.

### Survey Design

The data was collected via a survey instrument that will be completed individuals within the organization. Data was collected at a single time point due to limitations and constraints from

the organization. All participants were required to attend a mandatory training session. The surveys were distributed and data was collected at these training sessions. Furthermore, separating the collection of the data points allows for causal inferences to be made regarding the results that are found in this study. The survey instrument was distributed in a pen and paper method to the employees with the support of management within the organization (This project was supported by the district supervisor and the director of personnel).

The variables that are being measured will be captured at one time point. While cross sectional data collection is not ideal, it is the best case scenario for this dissertation. Without the ability to capture variables at multiple time points, a lagged approach to data collection does not address concerns better than cross-section. Additionally, the cross-sectional approach helps deal with concerns over attrition, which is a concern with multiple time points. The use of self-report measures is appropriate due to idea that “we can expect that people are able to report many internal states including attitudes, emotions, perceptions, and values” (Spector, 2006: p. 229). This suggests that objective environmental data may not be the best for people to report on. However, measures that capture items internal to those individuals are appropriate for self-report assessment. This argument is further supported by Conway and Lance (2010) who argue that self-reports are appropriate for private events, while job characteristics and job performance should use other forms of measurement than self-report.

The variables that are being measured within this dissertation are self-leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, work engagement, OCBs, and perceived organizational support. These are variables that are of hypothesized interest within the study. Furthermore, demographic information will be collected to be used as control variables. These



variables that will be used as controls variables (and will be discussed in greater detail below) are age and gender.

### **Addressing Common Method Bias Concerns**

Within the organizational behavior field, there are an abundance of concerns regarding common method bias that can result when conducting survey research. According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012), method bias occurs due to “response tendencies that raters apply across measures, similarities in item structure or wording that induce similar response, the proximity of items in an instrument, and similarities in the medium, timing, or location in which measures are collected” (Edwards, 2008; p: 478). As discussed by Podsakoff and Organ (1986), shared method variance can result from a host of different reasons, such as transient mood states, item similarity, social desirability, etc. Thus, method bias can occur in a variety of different manners and effect a relationship in different ways that can trouble in a research design. In particular, uncontrolled method factors can bias parameter estimates between constructs (i.e., Podsakoff et al., 2012). This can lead to inflated, deflated, or non-existent estimates of relationships (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Ultimately, this means that a researcher can obtain inaccurate estimates of what is actually occurring between any two variables within the data.

The concerns over common method bias within this dissertation will be addressed in the research design by taking several key steps to reduce the detrimental effects of method bias. These steps include reduction in common scale properties. This step will help to reduce the common method bias problems and ensure that the scales are truly capturing what they are attempting to measure.

First, common method concerns will be addressed by attempting to eliminate some common scale properties amongst the measures in this dissertation. Method bias “will occur to the extent that the question formats are perceived to be similar by respondents,” because the similarity of the response format “enhances the probability that cognitions generated in answering one question will be retrieved to answer subsequent questions” (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; p: 427). While the measures being used in this dissertation are all Likert-type scales, there are some distinctions made between the response formats for the scales. While not likely to address all concerns tied to the format of questions, the inclusion of measures that use both 5-item and 7-item Likert scales are likely to help reduce some common scale properties problems (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

## Scales

### Independent Variable

*Self-leadership.* Self-leadership will be operationalized using the Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ) developed by Houghton, Dawley, and DiLiello (2012). The ASLQ has been chosen from the various self-leadership measurement instruments available for several key reasons. First, and most importantly, well-developed measurement instruments for self-leadership are limited in their nature. The two most reliable measurement instruments are the ASLQ and the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ), which was developed by Houghton and Neck (2002). Given the fact that reliability of the measurement scales is of critical importance, it makes empirical sense to decide between the two well-developed instruments.

When deciding between the ASLQ and RSLQ, there were two main factors that led to the selection of the ASLQ. First, the ASLQ was developed as an alternative for studies that were not interested in the effects of the sub-dimensions of self-leadership, but rather in a “universal” self-

leadership measure. The main focus of this dissertation is on how self-leadership influences work engagement and OCBs, not how the facets of self-leadership (i.e., behavior focused, constructive thought pattern, and natural reward strategies) affect outcomes. Therefore, the RSLQ is not a favorable choice in this situation since it is better suited for capturing the sub-dimensions of self-leadership, not a “global” self-leadership construct. Second, due to concerns over respondent fatigue, the ASLQ is a much more favorable option since it is only 9 items in length, as opposed to the RSLQ that is 35 items in length. With employees filling out multiple surveys at different time points, it is realistic to assume that respondent fatigue could be a factor if the survey instrument is too long. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that individuals filling out the survey do not feel exhausted when submitting responses. That suggests the better fit for use in this dissertation is the ASLQ.

The ALSQ is a nine-item measurement instrument that is scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree. The ASLQ has demonstrated reliability with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .73 to .80, above the rule of thumbs in regard to cut off limits (e.g., Steinbauer et al., 2014). Sample items from the survey include “I establish specific goals for my own performance” and “I visualize myself successfully performing a task before I do it.”

### **Mediating Variables**

*Emotional Exhaustion.* Emotional exhaustion will be measured using the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The emotional exhaustion subscale describes feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one’s work. The subscale consists of 9 items that are scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from “1” = “strongly disagree” to “5” = “strongly agree”. The length of the emotional

exhaustion subscale of the MBI is one that should not lead to high levels of respondent fatigue. The MBI emotional subscale has exhibited strong reliability, with Cronbach's alphas as high as .93 (i.e., Baer, Dhensa-Kahlon, Colquitt, Rodell, Outlaw, & Long, 2015). Sample items from the emotional exhaustion subscale include "I feel emotionally drained from my work" and "I feel like I'm at the end of my rope".

*Organizational Commitment.* Organizational commitment will be measured using the revised organizational commitment scale from Meyer and Allen (1997). This scale was developed based on the earlier Meyer and Allen (1990) organizational commitment measure. The revised measure consists of 6 items for each of normative, affective, and continuance commitment. Each item will be scored on a 7 point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree". This measure has exhibited strong reliability, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .65 to .88 (i.e., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Sample items from the organizational commitment measure include "I would feel guilty if I left my organization now" and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own".

### **Dependent Variables**

*Work Engagement.* As with self-leadership, there was a debate as to which work engagement scale to use to examine the construct of interest in this dissertation. And as with self-leadership, there was great concern for respondent fatigue, which led to the selection of the UWES-9 over the UWES-17 (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). The UWES-9 demonstrates comparable reliability to the UWES-17, while not placing the respondent under heavy levels of fatigue for a cumbersome survey instrument. Additionally, the UWES-9 was chosen over the Wright Work Engagement Scale (WWES) (Alarcon, 2009). The WWES was developed in a dissertation (Alarcon, 2009) as an alternate option to the UWES. At that point in

time, the UWES and its adaptations were used for 80% of work engagement studies (Alarcon, 2009). However, despite the scale development that occurred, there is not a distinguishable difference that can be made to say that the WWES is a better option than the UWES. The UWES is 9 items, while the WWES is 12 items; thus, the UWES is better for addressing respondent fatigue. Additionally, the UWES, despite being three items smaller, exhibited greater levels of reliability (the UWES was .96, while the WWES was .89; Alarcon, 2009), suggesting that the newly developed instrument was not even at a similar level of reliability, despite having more items. Thus, the decision was made to use the UWES-9 scale to measure work engagement.

Work engagement will be measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9), which was developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova (2006). The UWES-9 is a nine-item measure that captures each of the three sub dimensions of work engagement (i.e., vigor, dedication, and absorption) using three items. The UWES-9 is measured on a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "Never" to 7 = "Always". The UWES-9 has demonstrated reliability levels above recommended rules of thumb, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .85 to .92 (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

*Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.* There is a host of different OCBs measures that have been developed that can capture the construct of interest. These include the scales developed by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990) that captures the 5 original dimensions of OCBs that Organ (1988) proposed, Williams and Anderson's (1991) OCBO and OCBI measure that examines who the OCBs are directed at, and Moorman and Blakely's (1995) measure that examines 4 dimensions of OCBs that align with Graham's (1989) conceptualization. OCBs will be measured using the OCBO and OCBI items from Williams and Anderson (1991) for two main reasons.

The first reason relates to respondent fatigue. As is the concern with any measure, the longer the item is, the more likely that attention can stray and the respondent can become fatigued by the process. The Williams and Anderson (1991) measure of OCBs is the shortest of the 3 prevalent options at 14 items, compared to 19 (Moorman & Blakely, 1995) and 25 (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Second, the OCBI and OCBO measure has been argued to best represent the original conceptualization of OCBs and was the choice of conceptualization chosen for a recent meta-analysis on the topic (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Thus, this measure seems to most accurately capture the concept of OCBs, by tapping into the key dimensions of the construct.

The OCBI and OCBO measures each consist of 7 items that capture the dimensions of extra-role behaviors. The item will be scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. This measure has exhibited strong levels of reliability with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .61 to .88 (Fields, 2013). Sample items from this measure include “helps others who have been absent” and “adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order”. These items will be completed by either the supervisor or the subordinate (depending on whether access to supervisors is provided by the organization in which the data is being collected).

### **Moderating Variable**

*Perceived Organizational Support.* Perceived organizational support will be measured using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support developed by Eisenberger and colleagues (i.e., Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). The version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support will be the 6-item version that was developed by Eisenberger and colleagues (2001) by using the 6 highest loading items from the original scale. This scale has exhibited strong levels of reliability, with

Cronbach's alpha of .77 (i.e., Eisenberger et al., 2001). Sample items from the scale include "The organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor" and "The organization strongly considers my goals and values". The questions will be answered on a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree".

### **Control Variables.**

*Age.* Age will be completed by survey respondents. Respondent will write physical age on the survey.

*Gender.* Gender will be completed by survey respondents. Respondent options will be either Male or Female.

*Organizational Tenure.* Organizational tenure will be completed by survey respondents. Respondents will fill out the years that they have worked at the organization.

*Education.* Education will be completed by survey respondents. Respondent options will be a multiple-choice question with options for highest level of education completed, ranging from "High School" to "Doctorate", with 4 other options in between.

## **Statistical Analysis**

### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The first step in data analysis before the testing of the hypotheses will be a confirmatory factor analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis works in a similar manner to an exploratory factor analysis, however, more control is given to the individual running the statistical analysis (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 2013). This is accomplished through setting a set number of factors and specifying which items will load onto those factors. Following the advice of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the CFA will be ran before the path model to make sure that the factors are loading on the variables they are supposed to. Thus, this ensures that items are loading onto the

factor that they are theoretically and conceptually supposed to at acceptable levels (typically above .35). The use of confirmatory factor analysis also ensure that items are not cross-loading too highly on other factors. This is a step taken before diving into the statistical testing of the hypotheses to help ensure that the items load at appropriate levels on the constructs that they represent.

### **Mediation, Moderation, Moderated Mediation**

Mediation analysis seeks to answer the question as to how a causal agent  $X$  transmits its effect on  $Y$  (Hayes, 2013). Mediation analysis can contain pathways from  $X$  to  $Y$  that either do or do not pass through a mediator,  $M$ . The path that does not pass through the mediating variable is the direct effect of  $X$  on  $Y$ , while the path that passes through the mediating mechanism is the indirect effect of  $X$  on  $Y$ . This occurs when  $X$  influences  $M$ , which in turn influences  $Y$  (Hayes, 2013). Mediation analysis seeks to help answer the “how” questions that exist within research. The standard equations for mediation analysis are as follows:

$$M = i_1 + aX + e_M$$

$$Y = i_2 + c'X + bM + e_y$$

In these equations,  $i_1$  and  $i_2$  are regression intercepts,  $e_M$  and  $e_Y$  are errors in the estimation of  $M$  and  $Y$ , respectively, and  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c'$  are the regression coefficients of the consequents.

Moderation occurs when the effect of  $X$  on  $Y$  is influenced by the presence of a third variable,  $M$ . The moderator,  $M$ , can influence the relationship if the size, sign, or strength depends on the level of  $M$  (Hayes, 2013). By examining moderating variables, boundary conditions of an effect can be establish. This allows researchers to better understand how  $X$  influences  $Y$  in a host of different situations. This is where the term conditional effect can be used, since the influence of  $X$  on  $Y$  is conditional on the level of  $M$ .



The standard equations for moderation analysis are as follows:

$$Y = i_1 + b_1X + b_2M + b_3XM + e_Y$$

In this equation,  $i_1$  is a regression intercepts,  $e_Y$  is the error in the estimation of  $Y$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $b_2$ , and  $b_3$  are the regression coefficients of the consequents, and  $XM$  is a variable constructed as the product of  $X$  and  $M$ .

Moderated mediation is a form of analysis in which an integration occurs between the two different methods of analysis. Hayes (2013) terms this analysis *conditional process analysis*. Conditional process analysis is appropriate when the research goals are to understand and describe the conditional nature of the mechanism or mechanisms by which a variable transmits its effect on another and to test hypotheses about such contingent effects (Hayes, 2013: p. 327).

Conditional process analysis states that “the mechanism linking  $X$  to  $Y$  can be said to be conditional if the indirect effect of  $X$  on  $Y$  through  $M$  is contingent on a moderator (Hayes, 2013: p. 329). Within conditional process analysis, there are both direct and indirect effects that can be moderated by another variable. The most important takeaway for hypothesis testing on “conditional direct and indirect effects is that the analysis and interpretation should be based on a formal estimate and inference of the conditional direct/indirect effects” (Hayes, 2013: p. 334).

The standard equations for the conditional process analysis (as this dissertation would test) with multiple mediators is as follows:

$$\text{For each mediator: } M_k = i_k + aX + a_2W + a_3XW + e_M$$

$$\text{For each dependent variable: } Y = i_k + c'_1X + c'_2V + c_3XV + b_{11}M_1 + b_{12}M_2 + b_{31}M_1V + b_{32}M_2V + e_Y$$

In this equation,  $i$ 's are regression intercepts,  $e$ 's are errors in the estimation of  $M$  and  $Y$ ,  $a$ 's are the regression coefficients of the consequents, and  $XW$  is the product of  $X$  and  $Y$ .

### Statistical Analysis Tool

The analysis for this dissertation will be completed using MPLUS. This technique will be discussed below. In the discussion, a brief explanation of the benefits above using PROCESS, another conditional process analysis tool, will be discussed. MPLUS provides advantages that are not readily available within PROCESS.

*MPLUS*. MPLUS is a software program that allows for analysis of moderated mediation. MPLUS allows for researchers to statistically analyze the conditional indirect and direct effects that are occurring within the dataset. MPLUS is being used instead of PROCESS due to the benefits that it provides that go above and beyond what PROCESS is capable of doing. Both MPLUS and PROCESS are capable of conducting moderated mediation, however, MPLUS offers statistical capabilities that PROCESS cannot match.

First, MPLUS allows the researcher to test unlimited configurations of moderation and mediation, not simply the model that have been developed by Hayes for the PROCESS macro. Within MPLUS, multiple independent and dependent variables can be used. Additionally, MPLUS does not have the same restrictions on types of variables that PROCESS has built in. In particular, PROCESS is limited to continuous mediators and either continuous or dichotomous outcomes (Stride, Gardner, Catley, & Thomas, 2015). This limits the models that can be analyzed by this statistical tool. However, MPLUS is capable of handling other types of variables. This allows for more complex models to be analyzed, as opposed to using either analyzing simpler models due to restrictions on types and number of variables.

In particular, this research design contains parallel mediators and multiple dependent variables. MPLUS is capable of handling this model in one statistical analysis, as opposed to having to run independent regression analyses for each of the dependent variables. Therefore,

statistical tests using MPLUS will allow a finer-grained look at the results of the hypothesized model than if PROCESS was used for analysis purposes. The sample syntax required to run this analysis in MPLUS can be seen in Appendix D.

There are potential downsides to using MPLUS. Notably, MPLUS is a much more rigorous and labor-intensive analysis to conduct than PROCESS. While the syntax for PROCESS is relatively straightforward, MPLUS's syntax is much more in-depth with more opportunities for mistakes to happen. Thus, an extremely fine attention to detail is required when writing the syntax code for MPLUS. Second, not only is the actual syntax more labor intensive than PROCESS, but the complex models using bootstrapping can be very time-intensive to run. Therefore, it can take longer to actually analyze the data within this model. However, the benefits that MPLUS provides make that form of statistical analysis a better match to the research design within this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for study variables are include in Table 5 below. Of note, the average age of participants was 48.27 years old with an average tenure at the organization of 10.44 years. Thus, the individuals, on average, had some level of experience in the organization and working. Among the variables of interest, we see moderate, significant correlations between self-leadership and both work engagement ( $r = .429$ ) and organizational citizenship behaviors ( $r = .385$ ). Additionally, self-leadership had expected relationships with emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.144$ ) and organizational commitment (AC:  $r = .197$ , NC:  $r = .212$ , and CC:  $r = .203$ ).

In addition, most significant correlations were in the expected direction, with the exception of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and affective commitment ( $r = .167$ ). This relationship was expected to be negative, however, the corresponding correlation was positive. While this is of note, there is not a hypothesized relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment, so the data analysis will proceed as expected. Of note, most hypothesized relationships showed significant correlations in the expected direction. Additionally, while there are some correlations that seem troublesome (above .60), a word of caution in interpretation is needed. The correlations that exceed the thresholds for concerns about multicollinearity are between individual facets of organizational commitment with organizational commitment, as well as between individual facets of organizational citizenship behaviors with organizational citizenship behaviors. Therefore, these are not as concerning as at first glance since the correlations in question are between a sub dimension of a variable and a global measure of the variable, which would be expected.

### Baseline Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 4, the first analysis conducted was a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that all items were loading at acceptable levels on the variables of interest. This was conducted with Mplus Version 8. As can be seen in Table 6, three separate confirmatory factor analyses were conducted. These three models are as follows: (1) hypothesized model, (2) one-factor model, and (3) a model where the facets of organizational commitment were all loaded onto a single latent variable, as opposed to individual facet latent variables. As can be seen in Table 6, the hypothesized model (with latent variables for self-leadership, work engagement, organizational citizenship behaviors, emotional exhaustion, perceived organizational support, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment) was the best fit to the data. While not all fit indices met traditional thresholds for good fit (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999; Steiger, 2007), the hypothesized model will be the one that this dissertation proceeds forward with.

There are several key indices to examine and understand when looking at model fit. First, the  $X^2$  test for the model “assesses the magnitude of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices” (Hu & Bentler, 1999: 2). However, there are limitations to this test, mostly driven by the restrictiveness of the test.

The second statistic that can be examined for model fit is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). There is a lack of consensus regarding what constitutes good fit for an RMSEA value. Recommendations range from below .08 showing good fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996), below .07 showing good fit (Steiger, 2007), or a value close to .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The third fit statistic that is examined is the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Acceptable values for SRMR are between .05 and .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Finally, the comparative fit index (CFI) is the last statistic that will be examined to determine fit of the model. A model with a CFI above .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) indicates good fit. The limitation to the CFI is that it assumes that all latent variables are uncorrelated with one another. Thus, if latent variables are related to one another, it can skew the CFI values.

There are a host of different concerns when using any one particular fit statistic for evaluating the fit of a model. Thus, a battery of fit statistics is used to determine how well the data fits the model. It is important to note that the values are guidelines (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and not meant to be strict cutoff values for model fit. Thus, this dissertation looked at all of the fit indices discussed above. These include the  $X^2$  test, the  $X^2/df$  test, the CFI, the RMSEA, and the SRMR. The results for the three confirmatory factor analyses that were ran can be seen in Table 6.

The  $X^2$  model test for the hypothesized model did show the lowest value of the CFAs that were ran. Furthermore, the value of the  $X^2/df$  test was lowest for the hypothesized model and fell near accepted levels for this statistic. Moving on, the RMSEA shows good fit, depending on the cutoff value that is used. The RMSEA value was .073, which is good fit based on MacCallum and colleagues (1996) cutoff, while it falls just short of more stringent cutoff values of .07 (Steiger, 2007) and .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). At worst, the RMSEA statistic suggests adequate fit. In a similar manner, the SRMR falls just short of conventionally accepted cutoff values. The SRMR is .091 for the hypothesized model, while the guidelines suggest a SRMR between .05 and .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Thus, the SRMR would suggest adequate fit.

The CFI value for the hypothesized model shows the most concern in regards to fit indices that are being examined for this model. While the CFI for the hypothesized model is the best out of analyzed models, it still follows well short of conventional guidelines at .734. This is

concerning, as it suggests that the model has poor fit. The one caveat to this concern is that the CFI assumes all latent variables to be uncorrelated. With the variables in this dissertation, there is an expectation that they could be related and correlated with one another. This may be having an influence on the model.

### **Moderated Mediated Model, Structural Equation Modeling**

As discussed in Chapter 4, the second analysis was a structural equation model to test the series of conditional direct and indirect effects. These hypotheses address the role of self-leadership on emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Originally, this data analysis was going to be conducted using path modeling with latent variables. However, due to model convergence issues, latent variables were not able to be used. Instead, the path model was run using averages of the variables of interest. This allowed for the entire model to converge while still running the path model in its entirety, as opposed to piecemeal. Using the averages of the variables allowed for the model to converge, thus providing results that were all included in the same model. It is of note, that the ability to run the model in its entirety was the overarching reason for using Mplus, so that takes precedent over using latent variables but not having the model converge. Due to model convergence problems, control variables were excluded from the Mplus analysis. There were not many significant relationships between controls and other variables of interest. Additionally, a post hoc analysis will run in SPSS PROCESS to ensure this exclusion is an appropriate step.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that higher levels of self-leadership would positively impact employee levels of work engagement. As shown in Table 7, this hypothesis was not supported ( $\beta = .059, p = .802$ ). Thus, the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was not significant. Hypothesis 2 suggested that higher levels of self-leadership would positively

impact employee completion of organizational citizenship behaviors. As shown in Table 7, this hypothesis was supported ( $\beta = .453, p < .01$ ). Thus, the direct relationship between self-leadership and organizational behaviors was significant and positive.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. As can be seen in Table 8, this hypothesis was supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals do not overlap zero, suggesting support for the hypothesis. As can be seen in Table 7, the piecemeal approach to indirect effects also provides support with the path from self-leadership to emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.786, p < .05$ ) and emotional exhaustion to work engagement ( $\beta = -.225, p < .01$ ). This suggests that higher levels of self-leadership lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement. Similarly, Hypothesis 4 proposed that emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. As can be seen in Table 8, this hypothesis was supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals do not overlap zero, suggesting support for the hypothesis. As can be seen in Table 7, the piecemeal approach to indirect effects also provides support with the path from self-leadership to emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.786, p < .05$ ) and emotional exhaustion to work organizational citizenship behaviors ( $\beta = -.115, p < .01$ ). This suggests that higher levels of self-leadership lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 (parts a, b, and c) proposed that facets of organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and both work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. Due to model convergence issues, the facets of organizational commitment were collapsed into a single organizational commitment variable for



analysis in Mplus. Post hoc analysis in SPSS PROCESS will be conducted to determine if there is reason to suspect differential outcomes for each of the organizational commitment facets. Hypothesis 5a-c suggested that organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. As can be seen in both Tables 7 and 8, this hypothesis was not supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals overlapped zero, suggesting non-support for the relationships. Hypothesis 6a-c suggested that organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. As can be seen in both Tables 7 and 8, this hypothesis was not supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals overlapped zero, suggesting non-support for the relationships. Again, these analyses were conducted using a single organizational commitment variable. Post hoc analysis using the individual facets of organizational commitment will be conducted to determine the extent to which there is similar results between the two analyses. However, this initial support suggests that organizational commitment does not mediate the relationship between self-leadership and either work engagement or organizational citizenship behaviors.

The role of perceived organizational support was examined as a moderating influence on certain relationships in the model. The results of the moderation hypotheses can be seen in Table 9, Hypothesis 7a suggested that the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was conditional on the level of perceived organizational support. As can be seen in Table 9, the interaction between self-leadership and perceived organizational support on work engagement was not significant ( $\beta = .103, p = .075$ ). This suggests that the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement is not conditional on the level of perceived organizational support, not supporting Hypothesis 7a. Hypothesis 7b suggested that the relationship between

self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors was conditional on the level of perceived organizational support. As can be seen in Table 9, the interaction between self-leadership and perceived organizational support on organizational citizenship behaviors was not significant ( $\beta = -.046, p > .10$ ). This suggests that the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors is not conditional on the level of perceived organizational support, not supporting Hypothesis 7b. Hypothesis 7c suggested that the first stage of the mediated paths involving emotional exhaustion were conditional on levels of perceived organizational support. As can be seen in Table 9, the interaction between self-leadership and perceived organizational support on emotional exhaustion was significant ( $\beta = .215, p < .01$ ). This suggests that the relationship between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion is conditional on the level of perceived organizational support, supporting Hypothesis 7c. Hypothesis 7d suggested that the first stage of mediated paths involving organizational commitment were conditional on levels of perceived organizational support. As can be seen in Table 9, the interaction between self-leadership and perceived organizational support on organizational commitment was not significant ( $\beta = -.052, p > .10$ ). This suggests that the relationship between self-leadership and organizational commitment is not conditional on the level of perceived organizational support, not supporting Hypothesis 7d.

The plot of the interaction between self-leadership and perceived organizational support on emotional exhaustion can be seen in Figure 2. As can be seen in the figure, when there are high levels of self-leadership and perceived organizational support, there are lower levels of emotional exhaustion than at high levels of self-leadership and low levels of perceived organizational support. Additionally, when there are high levels of perceived organizational support, but low levels of self-leadership, there is still a lower level of emotional exhaustion than

when an individual exhibits low levels of both perceived organizational support and self-leadership.

The conditional indirect effects for the supported moderation hypotheses can be seen in Figures 3 (for work engagement) and Figure 4 (for OCBs). The figures have plots of the conditional indirect effects, as well as plots of the 95% upper and lower confidence intervals. As can be seen, the indirect effect does vary, depending on the level of the moderator. The confidence intervals did not overlap zero, suggesting that the indirect effect is significant. As levels of perceived organizational support increase, the indirect effect of self-leadership on work engagement and OCBs through emotional exhaustion weakens. Similarly, if the levels of perceived organizational support decrease, the indirect effect of self-leadership on work engagement and OCBs through emotional exhaustion because strengthens.

### **Supplemental Analyses**

In response to the above results, several supporting analyses were conducted to further explore the hypothesized relationships.

The first issue addressed in post hoc analysis looked at individual facets of organizational commitment as mediators of the hypothesized paths and exclusion of control variables. These were originally hypothesized, however model convergence constraints prevented the testing in Mplus. Thus, post hoc analysis are being conducted in SPSS PROCESS to see if there are differing results. No control variables significantly predicted either outcome variable. As can be seen in Table 10, the pattern of results in SPSS PROCESS for the individual components of organizational commitment align similarly to the Mplus results that used a composite organizational commitment variable. Thus, this additional analysis adds support to the finding from above that organizational commitment (whether individual facets or composite) does not

mediate the relationships between self-leadership and both work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. The bootstrapped confidence intervals for these variables included zero, suggesting a rejection of the hypothesis.

The second issue that was addressed post hoc in the supplemental analyses examined the effects of removing items that loaded poorly onto their factors in the confirmatory factor analysis. These items were included in the initial analyses, as the scales were all well established in the literature and exhibited acceptable levels of reliability. However, one cause of the poor fit, particular with the CFI, could be the result of poorly loading items. Thus, this supplemental analysis will exclude the poorly loading items and compare the resulting fit indices with the initial confirmatory factor analysis. The comparison of these results can be seen in Table 11.

As can be seen in Table 11, the exclusion of the poorly loading items improved the fit of the model. In particular, the RMSEA and the SRMR are now firmly within traditionally accepted ranges for each of these values (.070 and .075, respectively). However, while the CFI improved from .734 to .802, this still falls short of traditionally accepted levels. Thus, while this is a better fitting model in regards to the CFI, the CFI still suggests poor fit for the model. The results of this post hoc analysis suggests that the model fit does improve with the exclusion of these particular items, however, there is still not unanimous support from all of the fit indices.

A summary of hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 12. Additionally, the supported hypotheses can be seen pictorially in Figure 2. Overall, the hypotheses involving emotional exhaustion tended to be supported. On the other hand, hypotheses involving organizational commitment tended to not be supported. There was partial support for hypotheses that predicted a direct effect of self-leadership on outcome variables. There was also partial support for the moderating role of perceived organizational support on various relationships.

### Further Post Hoc Analyses

After running initial and supplemental analyses, several post hoc analyses will be conducted to further examine some of the nuances that were found in the results. There will be three further post hoc analyses that will be conducted. These analyses include further diagnostic information, correlating errors of the dependent variables, and examining models that don't include the moderating variable of perceived organizational support.

The first of these analyses examines diagnostic data to determine if the data was normally distributed. By examining skewness and kurtosis of the data, it may explain why the model was unable to converge. As can be seen in Table 13, the OCB variable was not normally distributed and was skewed left and was just above acceptable ranges for kurtosis. To be skewed left, it suggests that the data for OCBs tended to fall on the higher end of the range. The kurtosis value for OCBs was 3.126, which is just above the score for normal distribution of kurtosis at 3.0. That being said, these values do not raise as much concern due to the data analysis that was conducted. By implementing bootstrapping procedures, the non-normality of the data should not have affected the analysis and model convergence. Bootstrapping draws on the original data sample (with replacement) to create X number of new distributions to run the analysis with. Due to the large number of "new samples", issues regarding normality of the data are addressed since there is now a more normally distributed sample.

The second set of post-hoc analyses that was examined attempted to see if correlating the errors between the dependent variables would help with model convergence. Work engagement and OCBs had a significant correlation of .466, which could have impacted the ability of the model to converge. To attempt to address this issue, three models were examined that looked at if the errors of those variables were correlated, would the model with latent variables converge.

The three models that were examined were the original hypothesized model (which included all three facets of organizational commitment, the first modified model (which contained a single dimension of organizational commitment), and the model which included parcels (which contained a single dimension of organizational commitment). Unfortunately, the model still did not converge. This suggests that correlating the errors between the variables did not solve the converge issues that were present with latent variables in the model.

The third post-hoc analysis that will be discussed in this section involves an examination of main effects (direct and indirect) without the moderating variable included. This analysis is being conducted to attempt and understand why the self-leadership and OCB direct relationship was significant with the presence of a moderator, while the self-leadership and work engagement direct relationship is not significant. The hope is that information will be found that can potentially help explain what occurred at this step.

As can be seen in Table 14, the results show an interesting pattern. As can be seen, the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was significant ( $\beta = .446$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, the direct relationship between self-leadership and OCBs was also significant ( $\beta = .261$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The pattern of results also suggests that the indirect effect of self-leadership on work engagement through organizational commitment would also be significant, while the relationship between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion no longer remains significant. This is a shift from the initial analysis that examined the direct effects in conjunction with the moderator. Thus, perceived organizational support appears to play an important role in how self-leadership affects work engagement, OCBs, organizational commitment, and emotional exhaustion.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

### Major Findings

This dissertation had four major findings. These include probing the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors, examining the relationship between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion, examining the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement, and probing the role of perceived organizational support in self-leadership relationships. The first major finding was a significant direct effect of self-leadership on organizational citizenship behaviors. To date, the only research on this relationship was a conceptual article (Mansor et al., 2013). This dissertation found support for the positive relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors.

The second major finding from this dissertation examined the usage of emotional exhaustion as a mediating mechanism in self-leadership relationships. The findings support that self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. By taking a step towards incorporating emotional exhaustion in to the self-leadership literature, this dissertation has a major finding in understanding how self-leadership influences individual outcomes.

The third major finding found that work engagement had an interesting relationship with self-leadership. In particular, the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was not significant. However, further probing of the relationship found that there was a significant mediating effect through emotional exhaustion. Therefore, self-leadership may be impacting work engagement, just not without a mechanism through which this process can be transmitted.

The fourth major finding was that perceived organizational support had some support for being a moderating factor on self-leadership relationships. While not all of the moderating hypotheses were supported, there was support for the moderating impact on the direct relationship between self-leadership and both organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional exhaustion. Thus, under certain conditions the degree to which individuals feel supported by their organization can shift their levels of emotional exhaustion and extra-role behaviors.

There was interesting findings from the dissertation regarding how perceived organizational support influenced the direct relationships between self-leadership and both work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. The hypothesis testing found that the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was not significant, while the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs was significant. This is an interesting finding that one of these direct relationships was supported, however, the other was not. In post hoc analyses, the moderating variable was removed from the analysis to see if that changed the direct relationship between self-leadership and both of the outcomes. In this post-hoc analysis, it was found that the direct relationship for self-leadership and work engagement was significant, as well as the direct relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors was also significant. Therefore, it appears that perceived organizational support may play a major role in whether self-leadership significantly impacts work engagement. In the presence of perceived organizational support, this significant direct relationship disappeared. This may be something of interest in future research.

### **Contributions of the Dissertation**

Overall, there appears to be four general contributions of this research that impact both research and practice. The first contribution from this dissertation is the finding that self-



leadership does influence organizational citizenship behaviors. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) support this finding theoretically. The purpose of this hypothesis was to establish a baseline understanding of if and how self-leadership influenced these outcomes, before proceeding to a more complex and in-depth model. This finding produced several other key findings.

Second, this dissertation took the first step toward understanding the roles that emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment play as mechanisms through which self-leadership influences outcomes. The relationship with emotional exhaustion is theoretically supported by both social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). To this point, research has not examined how self-leadership can reduce levels of emotional exhaustion (i.e., emotional overload, mental weariness, emotional drain), which can have detrimental effects on outcomes for those employees. This dissertation filled a void in the literature by critically examining how emotional exhaustion may act as a mechanism in between self-leadership and work engagement/organizational citizenship behaviors.

Third, this dissertation sheds some light on our understanding of the relationship that self-leadership holds with organizational commitment. To this point, there has been limited, and perhaps confusing (i.e., Andressen et al., 2012; Park et al., 2011) research on how self-leadership and organizational commitment relate to one another. This dissertation provides a clear idea for research about the exact workings of the relationship by probing linkages between self-leadership and the different facets of organizational commitment. The findings from this dissertation were that self-leadership did not influence organizational commitment in a significant manner and that organizational commitment did not mediate the relationships

between self-leadership and either work engagement or organizational citizenship behaviors. This adds to the somewhat muddled research waters on organizational commitment's role with self-leadership. This finding held for both a composite organizational commitment variable, as well as the individual facets. This work suggests that more research may need done to examine the self-leadership-organizational commitment relationship. However, this study does provide a baseline for understanding the differing relationships with the different aspects of organizational commitment.

The fourth contribution of this dissertation lies in creating a better understanding of the self-leadership and work engagement relationship. To this point, there has been limited research that has examined this relationship in any manner (Gomes et al., 2015; Breevaart et al., 2016; Park et al., 2016). While these studies did contribute to the literature, all three studies examined a direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. Thus, this dissertation contributes to the field by examining two mediators, emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment, and one moderator, perceived organizational support, of this relationship. This helps lay a foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which self-leadership influences work engagement, as well as understanding under what circumstances the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement changes strength. The contribution that was found showed that emotional exhaustion did mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement. This contributes to the understanding of what causes work engagement by showing that self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

#### **Strengths**

Given the nature of this sample (a working sample that was collected at a single time point), there are numerous strengths and weaknesses of the design. One primary strength of this design is the utilization of transportation workers, as opposed to a student sample. The sample consists of working individuals, which provides a fruitful sample that actually experiences the phenomena being studied in this dissertation. The advantages of using actual employees in a company, as opposed to student samples, is well known in the literature. With the variables of interest in this dissertation, a sample was desired where individuals had higher levels of work experience than is typically found within student samples (Landers & Behrend, 2015). If a student sample could be found that consisted of older, non-traditional students with higher levels of work experience, it would potentially be a benefit. However, a working sample provides the context need to make inferences from the findings.

A second key strength of this dissertation was the inclusion of a comprehensive self-leadership model. Recent reviews (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011) have called for more inclusive models of self-leadership. This dissertation answers those calls by examining some mediating and moderating mechanisms that may be present. As self-leadership is a newer construct, having been developed 30 years ago (Manz, 1986), much of the research has simply looked at developing the construct and establishing direct relationships. There has not been many moderated, mediated models that have been examined. This is a major strength of this dissertation as it provides a clearer and better-rounded picture of the self-leadership influence process.

The third strength of this dissertation is the use of Mplus statistical software for conducting the data analysis. As opposed to PROCESS, Mplus allows for individuals to examine a statistical model in its entirety, as opposed to a piecemeal approach for each dependent

variable. By examining the entire path model, all relationships were able to be examined at one time. These advantages make the usage of Mplus especially beneficial to researchers. This adds another strength to the dissertation, as opposed to other statistical analysis software.

The strengths listed above are key parts of this dissertation. The ability to collect data from a working sample, as opposed to students, provides a richness to the data that is being analyzed. The ability to examine a comprehensive self-leadership model, both theoretical and empirically, adds to the contributions to this model by not using piece meal approaches to understand how self-leadership influences individual outcomes. These strengths are important to the dissertation and help to make it thorough throughout.

### **Limitations**

Despite the above strengths within this dissertation, there are also several weaknesses of this design that should be relevant to readers when drawing conclusions. The primary limitation of this study is the use of self-report, cross-sectional survey data. While the above strengths do provide a realistic work context, individuals were still completing the surveys. The problems with self-report data are well known within the literature (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003). While self-report data does inherently present certain problems, there are situations in which self-report data are acceptable in (Spector, 2006). Within this dissertation, most of the variables of interest were individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs – that is, variables that are most accurately reported by one's self, as opposed to another individual. While it would have been ideal to have supervisors rate organizational citizenship behaviors, that was not possible because I was only given access to the employees, not paired dyads of employees and supervisors. Therefore, there are some limitations tied to this part of the data due to all measures being self-reported.

The second limitation of this data is that it was collected in a cross sectional manner. This does limit the causal inferences that can be drawn from the results that I have reported above. The problems with cross sectional data being used for causal inferences are well known within the field (e.g., Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 2013). Given the opportunity to collect the data that I was, there were some limitations placed on how I could collect data. The majority of data was collected at annual meetings that the transportation workers were required to attend. The surveys were distributed at these meetings, which did limit the number of times that I could collect data from the employees. There would not be another opportunity to have all individuals who completed the survey in one location and the organization preferred for a single time point for data collection. The hypotheses can be theoretically argued to occur in the manner suggested, which can help with causal assertions being made.

The third limitation of this dissertation is that due to model convergence issues, there were some restrictions placed on the data analysis. One, latent variables could not be used, so composite average variables were used within the path model. Second, organizational commitment had to be collapsed into a composite average variable in Mplus. However, this limitation was addressed by running analysis in SPSS PROCESS that examined the individual facets of organizational commitment, with findings replicating the pattern of results from the Mplus analysis.

Without a doubt, collecting all self-report data and cross sectional data present some limitations to this dissertation. However, due to the richness of the data that was collected, as well as the uniqueness of the sample, these were limitations that were accepted moving into the data collection stage. Due to the benefits that were provided by this data sample, these were viewed as being acceptable limitations. Additionally, the bias that exists from self-report was not

as concerning since many of the variables were best reported by the individual. Additionally, the theoretical arguments presented can be used to eliminate some of the concerns regarding causality due to the nature in which they are presented.

### **Research Implications**

The first research implication from my dissertation involves the usages of theories that are not commonly used in the self-leadership literature. While conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) are all important theories in the organizational behavior field, they are not commonly applied to self-leadership research. By applying these theories, my dissertation helps to explain theoretical rationales for why self-leadership would have the impact that it does on the outcome variables studied. By extending the theoretical views used to explain self-leadership, this research helps move the field forward by understanding different ways in which individuals exhibiting higher levels of self-leadership engage in particular outcomes. By integrating these theory with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), a staple of self-leadership research, better arguments have been developed for why self-leadership matters, as well as how it can matter.

The second major research implication from my dissertation addresses comments raised by previous literature reviews on self-leadership (i.e., Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011). These reviews stated a need for more in-depth and comprehensive self-leadership models. Both of these pieces make argument that the research stream involving self-leadership has evolved to the stage where simply discussing the construct and examining direct relationships no longer satisfies the needs of the field. This dissertation has very important research implications by presenting and testing an in-depth model of self-leadership that examines multiple mediating

and a moderator variable, in addition to the direct relationships. This is a step towards understanding more comprehensive models of self-leadership. Future research should continue to move in this direction by examining other complex self-leadership models.

The third major research implication from my dissertation is helping to understand how self-leadership can influence individual outcomes. To this point, much self-leadership research has solely focused on what self-leadership influences, not through what mechanisms or under what circumstances. By understanding not just that self-leadership can influence work engagement and OCBs, but that it occurs because of the relationship self-leadership has with emotional exhaustion, researchers can gain a better understanding of mechanisms through which self-leadership's influence can be felt. By providing a better understanding of how self-leadership projects onto outcomes, researchers are better informed for future research projects. This allows for the knowledge around self-leadership to grow as research moves forward.

### **Practical Implications**

There are several key practical implications that can be drawn from my dissertation. First, my dissertation lends support to the idea that organizations should encourage self-leadership practices in the workplace. My dissertation shows the relationships between self-leadership and increased levels of work engagement, OCBs, and organizational commitment, while showing decreased levels of emotional exhaustion. Thus, organizations could gain a better understanding of how encouraging motivational techniques, such as self-leadership, could help their employees to have better outcomes. By encouraging self-leadership, organizations would be supporting the idea that individuals are able to influence themselves, which can lead to greater levels of motivation and accomplishment in those employees.

The second practical implication of note is how perceptions of organizational support may play a role in determining whether or not employees engage in positive outcomes, such as higher work engagement and higher level of OCBs. Even if individuals can motivate themselves, how they feel about the organization can have a negative influence on other areas of their work. This is of the utmost importance for managers. By understanding that individuals who motivate themselves may be less likely to let lower levels of perceived organizational support influence other areas of their work, it provides suggestions that managers should promote the practicing of self-leadership in the workplace. Therefore, while individuals may not feel they are supported, they could still engage in OCBs and have higher levels of work engagement if they do motivate themselves towards that outcome.

### **Future Research**

There are many areas of future research that I hope to examine that are based on my dissertation. I feel as though my dissertation has provided me with a solid foundation to examine these potential streams of research. The first area of future research that could be looked at is a continued examination of the self-leadership and work engagement relationship. While there has been some examination of the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement (e.g., Breevaart et al., 2016), this dissertation represents the first step towards understanding through what mechanisms this relationship operates. By understanding how exactly self-leadership influences work engagement levels, researchers will have a more complete picture of the process through which individuals who engage in self-leadership influence their own outcomes. This could be a potentially fruitful area of research as it is unlikely that these are the only mediating mechanisms that need to be examined between self-leadership and work engagement.



The second area of future research to develop out of this dissertation involves a more in-depth look at the self-leadership and OCB relationship. Of note, prior to this dissertation there was a singular conceptual paper (Mansor et al., 2013) that sought to understand how different levels of self-leadership may cause different levels of OCB participation of employees. While this dissertation takes the first step towards empirically understanding the self-leadership and OCB relationship, there are still many avenues that need to be examined. There are other potential interesting mediators, such as self-efficacy, which could explain how exactly self-leadership leads to increases in OCBs. Furthermore, other moderating variables, such as perceptions of politics or job autonomy, may provide interesting findings about under what circumstances individuals are more likely to complete OCBs. Additionally, a finer look at the different mediators and moderators that influence employee participation in either OCBOs or OCBI may be of interest. There may be different reasons and situations that lead individuals to help others or help the organization, which is of interest in future research.

The next area of future research to develop out of this dissertation involves more complex models of self-leadership and organizational commitment. There is limited research on self-leadership and organizational commitment (e.g., Andressen et al., 2012; Park et al., 2011). These studies did not examine in-depth and complex models of self-leadership in great detail. Furthermore, these studies focused on singular forms of organizational commitment. A finer look at the relationship between self-leadership and different facets of organizational commitment may provide interesting streams of research. For example, future research may examine mediating mechanisms through which self-leadership influences different types of organizational commitment (i.e., normative, affective, and continuance). Furthermore, future research may

examine other moderators beyond perceived organizational support that influence the degree to which self-leadership causes organizational commitment.

The fourth area of future research to potentially develop out of this manuscript concerns other mediating variables of self-leadership relationships. While this dissertation takes an early step in examining comprehensive and in-depth models of self-leadership, there are still many other potential mediators to examine. Mediating mechanisms explain how a variable influences another. Thus, further examination of mediators in self-leadership would help to explain how self-leadership can influence an outcome, such as work engagement, OCBs, job performance, etc. Some examples for this stream of research may include negative or positive affect, conflict, turnover intentions, etc. By understanding how self-leadership can influence change in these mediating mechanisms, researchers can have a more complete idea of how self-leadership influences outcomes. These are just a few potential mediating mechanisms that may provide fruitful avenues of research.

The fifth area of future research that could be based on this dissertation examines the self-leadership and emotional exhaustion relationships. The idea engaging in self-leadership practices can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion is a core area in this dissertation. However, this dissertation is limited to examining the direct relationship. Future research should seek to examine how self-leadership practices can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion. For example, does this reduction in emotional exhaustion occur because individuals who practice self-leadership exhibit more positive affect? Are these individuals less likely to engage in conflict? These are few questions and areas that researchers could develop in future research on self-leadership. By understanding how self-leadership reduces the level of emotional exhaustion, researchers will better understand why it is important to engage in self-leadership.

### Conclusion

This dissertation focused on the role of self-leadership as a way to increase positive employee outcomes by examining how self-leadership influences employee work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. In addition, this dissertation proposed that emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment would mediate the relationships between self-leadership and employee outcomes. This dissertation also sought to understand how perceptions of organizational support could influence the relationships that an individual's level of self-leadership had with other outcomes of interest. Using a sample of 283 transportation workers, it was found that self-leadership had a positive relationship with organizational citizenship behaviors. This positive relationship occurred both as a direct relationship and an indirect relationship through emotional exhaustion. Similarly, self-leadership had a significant relationship with work engagement through emotional exhaustion. Finally, perceived organizational support moderated the relationships between self-leadership and both organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional exhaustion.

Appendix A

<b>Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire</b>					
I make a point to keep track of how well I'm doing at work	1	2	3	4	5
I work towards specific goals I have set for myself	1	2	3	4	5
I visualize myself successfully performing at a task before I do it	1	2	3	4	5
I establish specific goals for my own performance	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I picture in my mind a successful performance before I actually do a task	1	2	3	4	5
When I have successfully completed a task, I will often reward myself with something I like	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to work through difficult situations	1	2	3	4	5
I try to mentally evaluate the accuracy of my own beliefs about situations I am having problems with	1	2	3	4	5
I think about my own beliefs and assumptions whenever I encounter a difficult situation	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Perceived Organizational Support</b>							
The organization takes pride in my accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization really cares about my well-being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization values my contributions to its well-being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization strongly considers my goals and values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization shows little concern for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Controls</b>		
Gender	Male	Female
Age		
Education		
Organizational Tenure		

## Appendix A (continued)

<b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>							
I feel emotionally drained from my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel used up at the end of the workday	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Working with people all days is really a strain for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel burned out from my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel frustrated by my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel I'm working too hard on my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Organizational Commitment</b>							
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This organization deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I owe a great deal to this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would be very hard for me to leave the organization right now, even if I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Right now staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the major reasons that I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits that I have here	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix A (continued)

<b>Work Engagement</b>							
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am enthusiastic about my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My job inspires me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am proud of the work that I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel happy when I am working intensely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am immersed in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I get carried away when I am working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors</b>					
Helps others who have been absent	1	2	3	4	5
Helps others who have heavy work loads	1	2	3	4	5
Assists supervisor with his/her work (when not asked)	1	2	3	4	5
Takes time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries	1	2	3	4	5
Goes out of way to help new employees	1	2	3	4	5
Takes a personal interest in other employees	1	2	3	4	5
Passes along information to co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance at work is above the norm	1	2	3	4	5
Gives advance notice when unable to come to work	1	2	3	4	5
Takes undeserved work breaks	1	2	3	4	5
Great deal of time spent with personal phone conversations	1	2	3	4	5
Complains about insignificant things at work	1	2	3	4	5
Conserves and protects organizational property	1	2	3	4	5
Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order	1	2	3	4	5

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Table 1: Key Self-Leadership Definitions

Authors	Year	Relevant Definitions of Self-Leadership
Manz	1986	“is conceptualized as a comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating”
Manz	1991	“a self-influence process and set of strategies that address what is to be done (e.g., standards and objectives) and why (e.g., strategic analysis) as well as how it is to be done . . . [it] incorporates intrinsic motivation and has an increased focus on cognitive processes.”
Prussia et al.	1998	“involves the influence people exert over themselves to achieve the self-motivation and self-direction needed to behave in desirable ways”
Houghton & Neck	2002	“is a process through which people influence themselves to achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to behave and perform in desirable ways.”
Neck & Houghton	2006	“is a self-influence process through which people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform”
Stewart et al.	2011	“the process of influencing oneself.”
Gomes et al.	2015	“is a process through which individuals motivate themselves to achieve higher levels of performance and effectiveness”
Breevaart et al.	2016	“is a self-influence process that people use to guide and motivate themselves to behave and perform in desirable ways”

Table 2: Self-leadership articles in literature review

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Article Type</b>
Alvez et al.	2006	Conceptual
Amundsen and Martinsen	In press	Empirical
Andressen et al.	2012	Empirical
Boss and Sims	2008	Conceptual
Breevaart et al.	2016	Empirical
Carmeli et al.	2006	Empirical
Chung et al.	2011	Empirical
Curral and Marques-Quintiero	2009	Empirical
DiLiello and Houghton	2006	Conceptual
Dolbier et al.	2001	Empirical
Furtner and Hiller	2013	Factor Structure
Furtner and Rauthmann	2010	Factor Structure
Furtner et al. (a)	2010	Empirical
Furtner et al. (b)	2010	Factor Structure
Furtner et al.	2011	Factor Structure
Furtner et al.	2015	Empirical
Godwin et al.	1999	Conceptual
Gomes et al.	2015	Empirical
Hauschildt and Konradt (a)	2012	Empirical
Hauschildt and Konradt (b)	2012	Empirical
Heiss et al.	2010	Factor Structure
Ho and Nesbit	2009	Empirical
Ho and Nesbit	2014	Empirical
Houghton and Jinkerson	2007	Empirical
Houghton et al.	2004	Factor Structure
Houghton et al.	2012	Conceptual
Kaylar	2011	Empirical
Konradt et al.	2009	Empirical
Lovelace et al.	2007	Conceptual
Mansor et al.	2013	Conceptual
Manz and Neck	1992	Conceptual
Manz et al.	2016	Conceptual
Marques-Quintiero and Curral	2012	Empirical
Marques-Quintiero et al.	2012	Empirical
Neubert and Wu	2006	Empirical
Park et al.	2016	Empirical
Pihl-Thingvad	2014	Empirical
Politis	2006	Empirical
Prussia et al.	1998	Empirical
Roberts and Foti	1998	Empirical
Sahin	2011	Empirical
Steinbauer et al.	2014	Empirical
Unsworth et al.	2012	Empirical

Table 3: Key conceptual self-leadership articles

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Alvez et al.	2006	Examines how differences in national cultures impact understanding of self-leadership
Boss and Sims	2008	Relates emotion regulation and self-leadership work to help move past personal failure
DiLiello and Houghton	2006	Relates self-leadership to innovation/creativity potential
Godwin et al.	1999	Relates self-leadership to goal performance through goal setting
Houghton et al.	2012	Relates self-leadership and emotional intelligence to stress coping
Lovelace et al.	2007	Examines self-leadership and shared leadership as mechanisms to help leaders in highly demanding work environments
Mansor et al.	2013	Relates self-leadership to OCBs through self-efficacy
Manz and Neck	1992	Relates self-leadership to performance
Manz et al.	2016	Developing model of emotional self-leadership

Table 4: Empirical articles on self-leadership

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Amundsen and Martinsen	In press	Links self-leadership to job satisfaction and creativity
Andressen et al.	2012	Links self-leadership to job performance and affective organizational commitment
Breevaart et al.	2016	Links self-leadership to work engagement
Carmeli et al.	2006	Links self-leadership to innovation
Chung et al.	2011	Uses self-leadership as a moderator between charismatic leadership to organizational commitment
Curral and Marques-Quintiero	2009	Links self-leadership to individual innovation
Dolbier et al.	2001	Links self-leadership to work satisfaction
Furtner et al.	2010	Links self-leadership to socioemotional intelligence
Furtner et al.	2015	Links self-leadership to effort
Gomes et al.	2015	Links self-leadership to innovation via work engagement
Hauschildt and Konradt (a)	2012	Links self-leadership to performance and proficiency
Hauschildt and Konradt (b)	2012	Links self-leadership to proficiency
Ho and Nesbit	2009	Links self-leadership to self-efficacy
Ho and Nesbit	2014	Links self-leadership to performance and job satisfaction
Houghton and Jinkerson	2007	Links self-leadership to job satisfaction
Kaylar	2011	Links self-leadership to innovation
Konradt et al.	2009	Links self-leadership to performance in team setting
Marques-Quintiero and Curral	2012	Links self-leadership to performance
Marques-Quintiero et al.	2012	Links self-leadership to cognitive flexibility
Neubert and Wu	2006	Links self-leadership to creativity and performance
Park et al.	2016	Links self-leadership to work engagement
Pihl-Thingvad	2014	Links self-leadership to affective organizational commitment
Politis	2006	Links self-leadership to team performance
Prussia et al.	1998	Link self-leadership to performance via self-efficacy
Roberts and Foti	1998	Links self-leadership to job satisfaction
Sahin	2011	Links self-leadership to performance
Steinbauer et al.	2014	Links self-leadership to moral judgement
Unsworth et al.	2012	Links self-leadership to strain

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations

		Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	Gender	1.08	.277															
2	Age	48.27	11.98	-.020														
3	Educ	3.22	.735	.202**	-.287**													
4	Tenure	10.44	9.30	.031	.476**	.034												
5	SL	33.27	7.40	-.038	.012	-.052	.002	(.875)										
6	POS	22.35	7.50	.098	.079	.016	.043	.436**	(.860)									
7	EE	28.82	12.59	-.148*	-.036	-.042	-.033	-.144*	-.204**	(.928)								
8	AC	22.54	5.59	.010	.092	.073	.097	.197**	.185**	.167**	(.631)							
9	NC	22.18	7.45	.059	.103	-.019	.046	.212**	.400**	-.013	.435**	(.756)						
10	CC	23.27	8.74	-.038	-.037	.036	.036	.203**	.223**	.096	.372**	.511**	(.862)					
11	OC	67.9	17.10	.011	.048	.064	.091	.249**	.325**	.117	.694**	.824**	.837**	(.829)				
12	WE	38.57	11.10	.073	.159*	-.049	.112	.429**	.429**	-.397**	.312**	.437**	.271**	.403**	(.902)			
13	OCBO	22.45	4.07	-.033	.123*	.006	.154*	.214**	.091	.067	.223**	.218**	.160**	.236**	.272**	(.723)		
14	OCBI	27.63	5.48	.010	.104	.050	.079	.401**	.185**	-.231**	.226**	.217**	.141*	.203**	.506**	.390**	(.878)	
15	OCB	50.16	7.81	-.013	.141*	.025	.116	.385**	.163**	-.109	.255**	.238**	.150*	.248**	.466**	.776**	.884**	(.855)

Note: \*\* correlation is significant at .01 level; \* correlation is significant at .05 level. Cronbach's alpha values are reported on the diagonal.

Table 6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Statistics

Model	$X^2$	$df$	$X^2 / df$	$X^2_{diff}$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Single Latent Factor	9640.645	2015	4.784		.318	.116	.135
Six Latent Factor Model							
Single Org Commitment Latent Variable	5372.501	2000	2.686	4268.14	.698	.077	.102
Eight Factor Model							
Separate Org Commitment Latent Variables	4962.551	1987	2.498	409.95	.734	.073	.091

Table 7: Mplus Path Analysis Results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	P-Value
SL -> WE	.059	.23	.80
SL -> OCB	.453	.18	.01**
SL -> EE	-.786	.34	.02*
SL -> OC	.274	.18	.13
SLxPOS -> WE	.103	.06	.08
SLxPOS -> OCB	-.046	.04	.28
SLxPOS -> EE	.215	.08	.01**
SLxPOS -> OC	-.052	.06	.35
EE -> WE	-.225	.04	.00***
EE-> OCB	-.115	.03	.00***
OC -> WE	.446	.08	.00***
OC -> OCB	.102	.05	.03*



Table 8: Mplus Bootstrapped Confidence Intervals

Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Condition	Estimate	S.E.	95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	Low	.225	.100	{.029, .421}
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	Medium	.177	.081	{.018, .336}
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	High	.128	.063	{.006, .251}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	Low	.116	.053	{.012, .219}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	Medium	.091	.042	{.008, .174}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	High	.066	.032	{.003, .129}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	Low	.146	.107	{-.065, .356}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	Medium	.122	.084	{-.043, .287}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	High	.099	.063	{-.023, .222}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	Low	.033	.031	{-.027, .093}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	Medium	.028	.024	{-.019, .075}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	High	.023	.018	{-.012, .058}

Table 9: Mplus Interaction Estimates and Bootstrapped Confidence Intervals

Interaction	Dependent Variable	Estimate	S.E.	95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval
SLxPOS	Work Engagement	.103	.058	{-.011, .217}
SLxPOS	Organizational Citizenship Behaviors	-.046	.042	{-.129, .037}
SLxPOS	Emotional Exhaustion	.215	.083	{.053, .377}
SLxPOS	Organizational Commitment	-.052	.055	{-.160, .056}

Table 10: Post-Hoc PROCESS Moderated Mediation Analyses

Path			Effect	S.E.	95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval
SL	EE	WE	-.0390	.0189	{-.0827, -.0073}
SL	AC	WE	-.0033	.0085	{-.0287, .0083}
SL	NC	WE	-.0212	.0192	{-.0628, .0135}
SL	CC	WE	.0012	.0062	{-.0073, .0218}
SL	EE	OCB	-.0161	.0089	{-.0412, -.0029}
SL	AC	OCB	-.0035	.0082	{-.0239, .0097}
SL	NC	OCB	-.0013	.0043	{-.0145, .0041}
SL	CC	OCB	-.0001	.0027	{-.0069, .0047}

Table 11: Post Hoc Analysis – Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	$X^2$	$df$	$X^2 / df$	$X^2_{diff}$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Hypothesized Model	4962.551	1987	2.498		.734	.073	.091
Modified Model	3458.748	1456	2.376	1503.803	.802	.070	.075
Excludes factors that did not load at a .35 level							

Table 12: Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis		
H1	SL->WE	Not supported
H2	SL->OCB	Supported
H3	SL->EE->WE	Supported
H4	SL->EE->OCB	Supported
H5	SL->OC->WE	Not supported
H6	SL->OC->OCB	Not supported
H7a	SLxPOS->WE	Not supported
H7b	SLxPOS->OCB	Not supported
H7c	SLxPOS->EE	Supported
H7d	SLxPOS->OC	Not supported

Table 13. Post Hoc Diagnostics

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Leadership	-.723	.608
Perceived Organizational Support	.100	-.506
Emotional Exhaustion	.659	-.012
Organizational Commitment	-.072	-.209
Work Engagement	-.209	.010
Organizational Citizenship Behaviors	-1.315	3.126

Table 14. Post Hoc Analysis Excluding Moderator

Path	Estimate	S.E.	P-Value
SL -> WE	.446	.08	.00***
SL -> OCB	.261	.06	.00***
SL -> OC	.339	.07	.00***
SL -> EE	-.247	.131	.06
EE -> WE	-.219	.05	.00***
EE -> OCB	-.112	.03	.00***
OC -> WE	.483	.07	.00***
OC -> OCB	.062	.04	.12

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

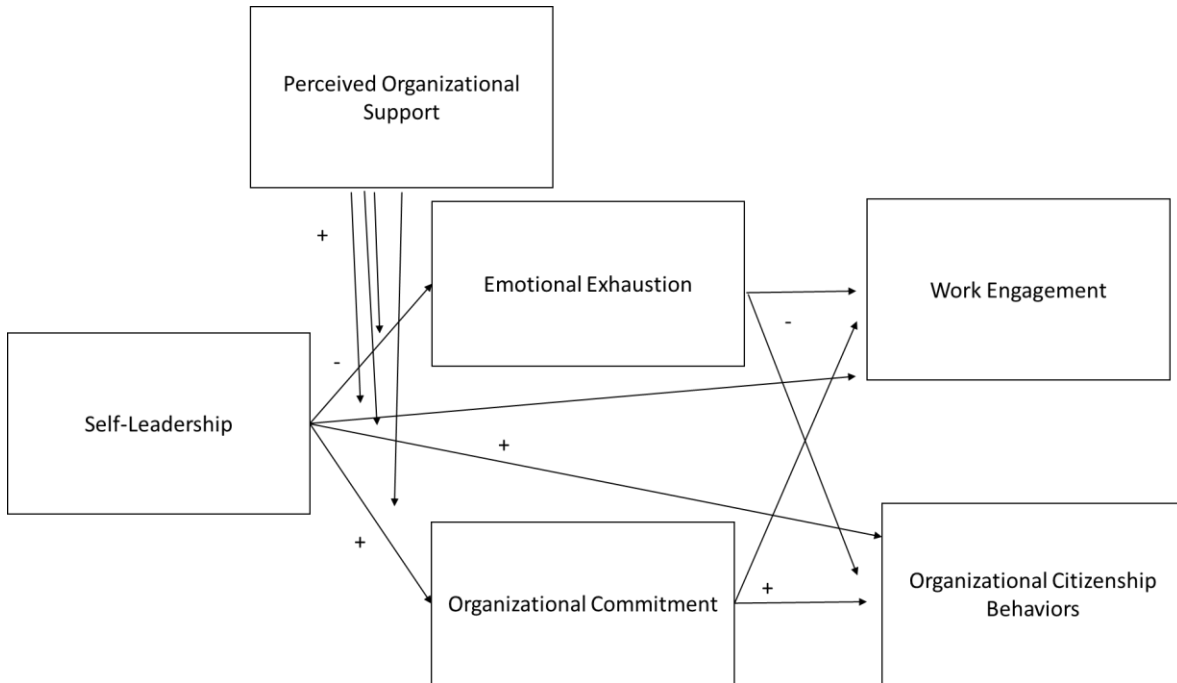




Figure 2: Self-leadership/Perceived organizational support interaction on emotional exhaustion

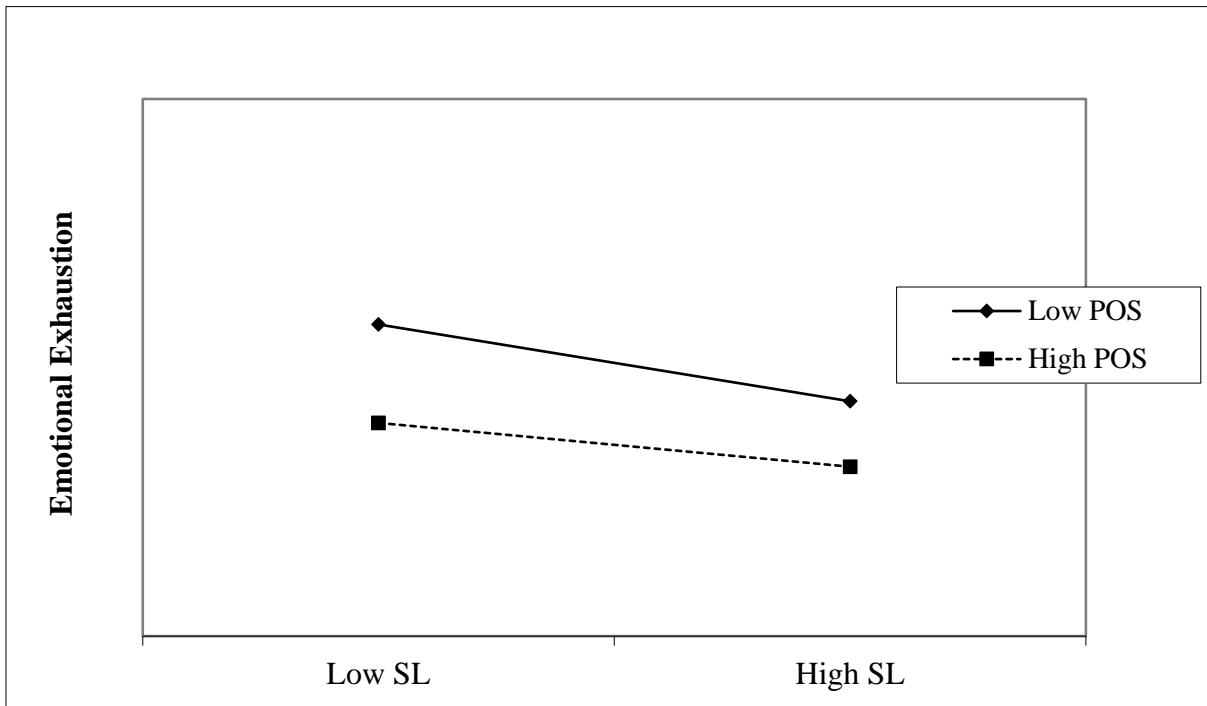


Figure 3: Conditional indirect effect of SL on WE at values of POS through EE

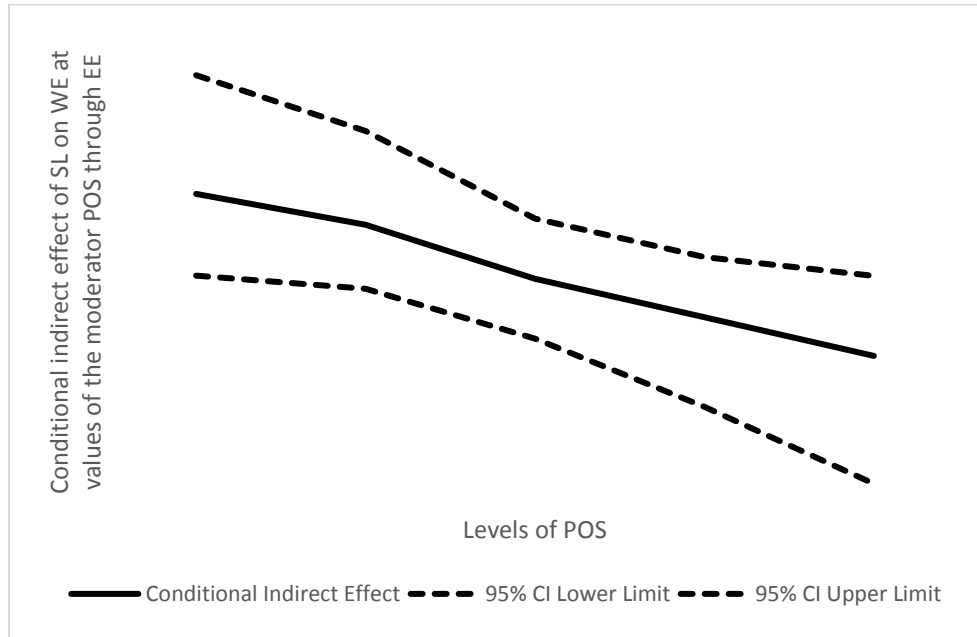


Figure 4: Conditional indirect effect of SL on OCBs at values of POS through EE

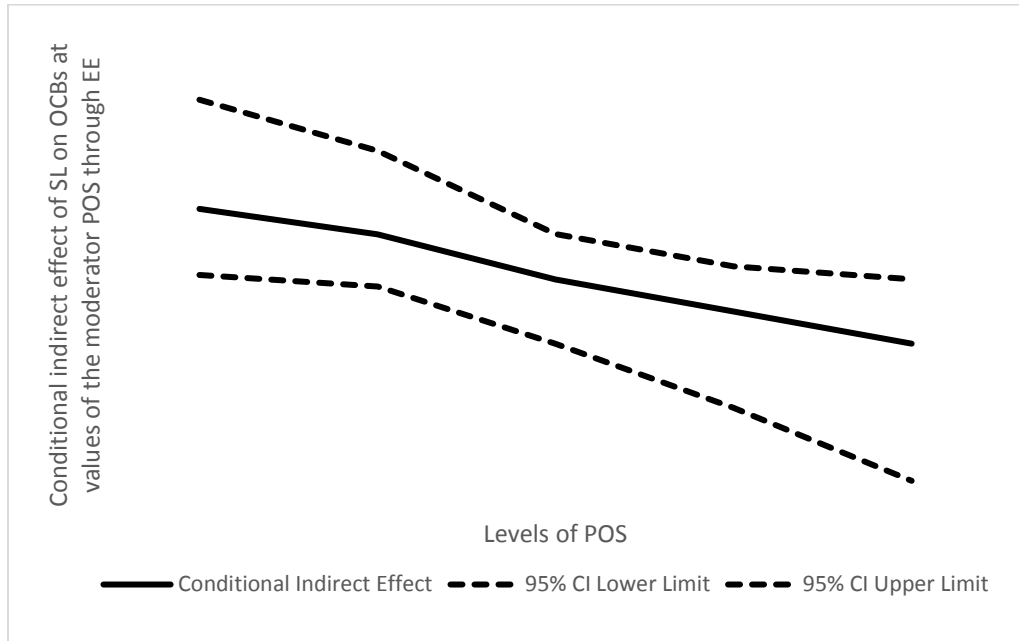


Figure 5: Model with Results

