

Personal Responsibility in the Financial Services Industry:  
The Cognitive Antecedents and Behavioral Consequences of an Employee's Sense  
of Responsibility in Organizations

Submitted to Regent University

School of Business & Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

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**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES  
INDUSTRY: THE COGNITIVE ANTECEDENTS AND BEHAVIORAL  
CONSEQUENCES OF AN EMPLOYEE'S SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY  
IN ORGANIZATIONS**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to define and examine the cognitive antecedents and behavioral consequences of personal responsibility within the workplace. A quantitative research design was conducted on a sample of 200 full-time employees working at The Hartford. Confirmatory structural equation modeling confirmed the a priori model, a full mediation model, as the best fit to represent the relationships found within the personal responsibility model. Self-concept beliefs, as manifested by locus of control and self-efficacy, were strong predictors of one's ascription of responsibility back to the self. Contextual job beliefs, however, were not found to predict personal responsibility and were rather an indirect influence based on the covariant relationship with self-concept beliefs. As predicted, attitudes towards personal responsibility were a strong predictor of whether one intended to engage in helpful behaviors. Therefore, helpful behavioral intentions were found as a direct consequence of personal responsibility. This study provides an extensive model that evaluates the motivational cognitions and intentions of personal responsibility within the workplace based on the theory of reasoned action framework. The findings call into question the job characteristics model as the most appropriate measure of personal responsibility, which states personal responsibility as a byproduct of autonomy. Rather, personal responsibility may be defined as a cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's action back to the self. Perhaps rather than focusing on the amount of autonomy one has within the workplace, research should focus on explaining why some employees have a higher sense of personal responsibility and test the stability of that trait. The call for future research invites greater attention and dialogue to the self-cognitions that drive one to ascribe responsibility back to the self.

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the only wise God our Savior, who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards my chair and mentor throughout this entire process—Dr. Bocarnea. Your dedication to see this project succeed makes me so incredibly thankful. I appreciate all of our discussions and learning surrounding this work. I look forward to future research projects and papers. I give a special thank you to my committee member and professor, Dr. Fields. Your insights and knowledge were instrumental to my understanding of multivariate data analysis. I appreciate you challenging me to explore greater depths of statistical knowledge. I would like to also thank my committee member Dr. Winston whose support and guidance were influential throughout this process, notably by asking me “Why?” I appreciate the qualitative perspectives you brought to my understanding of personal responsibility.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

President Obama (2009) charged an entire nation in his inaugural address with a command: “What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility” (p. 1). Have you ever considered what drives one to feel a sense of responsibility? Why do some readily accept responsibility while others deny it? What exactly is meant by taking responsibility? Responsibility is used so frequently in everyday language that its meaning is often convoluted by the variety of contexts in which the word is used. Hamilton (1978) remarked, “Responsibility is a core concept of social life. Like other core concepts, it is difficult to define adequately and even trickier to study appropriately” (p. 326). Christopher and Schlenker (2005) noted, “The potential ambiguity in what responsibility means perhaps explains why Rokeach (1973) reported that of 36 values examined, only responsibility demonstrated a test-retest reliability of less than .50” (p. 1502). As a result, the management literature is sparse in its dealing with personal responsibility. However, it is imperative that this core concept of social life be defined and studied appropriately to deepen the understanding of personal responsibility’s impact on the workplace.

The organizational management literature has devoted considerable attention to the concept of corporate social responsibility. A ProQuest search on the term *corporate social responsibility* yielded over 50,000 results published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals in the past 15 years. McWilliams (2001) noted that corporate social responsibility is the actions that promote social good above and beyond the interests of the firm and that which are mandatory by law. However, personal responsibility in organizations has seemingly failed to receive the same amount of consideration. Recently, the popular press has been noting the role of personal responsibility in the workplace. Lowery (2013) wrote, “Micromanagers are out, personal responsibility is in” (p. 1). In a speech to the Australian Parliament, Joe Hockey stated, “The age of entitlement is over. The age of personal responsibility has begun” (Hartcher, 2014, p. 1). In the best-selling management book, *Drive*, Pink (2009) explained the importance of personal responsibility and its impact on motivations at work. Consider a recent interaction at an all-employee Town Hall at Merck headquarters in which the CEO was asked by an employee, “If

there is one behavior you would like employees to focus on this upcoming year, what would that be?" The CEO answered, "That's easy. It's personal responsibility" (K. Fazio, personal communication, February 2, 2014). As the popular press and leadership at organizations assert the importance of personal responsibility, it is necessary for researchers to define the meaning and relational causes and consequences of personal responsibility in the workplace.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The *Academy of Management Journal* editors recently published an article entitled "Rethinking Management Scholarship." There has been a growing sense among management scholars that somewhere along the journey the research community has lost sight of the practicality of the work. The publication's new editor lamented, "Yet, without expectation, each article lays claim to a strong theoretical contribution, often time oblivious to the context or the phenomenon being explained" (George, 2014, p. 1). This Academy of Management article called upon the top researchers in the field to experiment at the fringes, research topics that are relevant to managers, and sample employees in the field, noting the importance of context. George (2014) challenged one to consider that "understanding the scale and scope of the problem and asking the right question takes primacy over the deftness of theoretical manipulation" (p. 2). Therefore, it can be concluded that management scholars need to look back inside organizations, examine literature from a variety of bodies, and probe the right questions facing managers in organizations today. The current research seeks to start with questions derived from observing employees and managers firsthand in the field to understand what is relevant to organizations both today and tomorrow.

As a practitioner in the field, I have noted that one of the commonly asked questions in management meetings is, What drives employees to feel a sense of responsibility towards the health of the organization? With the tenure of employees decreasing, the rise of the millennial generation in the workforce, and employee engagement at all-time lows, how does one motivate employees to take personal responsibility within the workforce? Suggested answers include tying portions of

compensation to organizational-level outcomes, providing more flexibility in the job, or creating a rewarding work environment with numerous employee perks. However, before managers can begin to assess how to motivate employees to take responsibility, researchers must first seek to understand the cognitive belief systems that drive employees to either accept or deny responsibility in the first place. To do this, the psychological literature must be explored. Also, is it right to assume that a sense of responsibility will lead to behaviors that promote the health of the organization? The strength between one's sense of responsibility and intent to perform prosocial organizational behaviors needs to be further examined.

Much of the literature's attention as it relates to motivation has focused on one's agency and self-efficacy to perform the task. If one believes he or she is able to do something, is free to choose to engage in the work, and has the resources to successfully finish the task, then one assumes the task will be completed. However, Charness (2000) found that a belief that one is able to do something does not necessarily imply that one feels personally responsible to actually do it or that one should have done it. Charness concluded, "The issue of responsibility can be an important determinant in an individual's choice of actions" (p. 381). Employees may be fully able to perform organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB); however, if they lack the sense of responsibility, the likelihood to perform the extrarole behavior is much less. The problem is that up to this point, researchers have not had a clear understanding of how one's sense of responsibility impacts behavior. This may in part be due to the lack of definition surrounding the construct of responsibility in the workplace. Therefore, part of the current research seeks to define what is meant by one feeling a sense of personal responsibility.

Schwartz (1968) defined personal responsibility as an internalized structure, an individual tendency, and a cognitive appraisal to ascribe the consequences of one's behavior to self. Schwartz and Howard (1980) elaborated that the "attribution of responsibility to self influences the decision-making process that precedes overt action" (p. 446). Schlenker (1997) conceptualized personal responsibility as "the psychological adhesives that attaches an individual to a set of prescriptions for conduct and to events that are governed by these prescriptions" (Christopher &

Schlenker, 2005, p. 1503). Weiner (1995) defined responsibility as a cognitive evaluation of whether one caused an event through action or inaction, which motivates one to act in helpful or harmful behaviors as a result of the judgment made. In an empirical study, Schwartz (1968) confirmed that the more people ascribed responsibility to self, rather than away from self, the more likely they were to engage in considerate and helpful behaviors. The cognitive process of assessing whether one is or is not responsible is what Schlenker (1997) described as the beliefs that engage the self-system. Schlenker's work on the self-system derived from Bandura (1997) who believed that the self-concept is a "composite view of oneself that is presumed to be formed through direct experiences and evaluations adopted from significant others" (p. 10). These beliefs, according to Bandura, are learned, organized, and dynamic and can illuminate how one views oneself and one's outlook on life. Therefore, one can think of personal responsibility as the cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions towards self and as the cognitive antecedent to engaging in helpful behaviors.

The practical point remains that organizations are faced with complexities that require all employees across the organization to display behaviors that go above and beyond their job. It is no longer a business-as-usual environment with increasing competition, technological advances, and shorter organizational lifecycles. The future success of organizations lies within a sense of personal responsibility across all employee levels. The current research seeks to address and understand the cognitive factors that drive employees to feel a sense of personal responsibility within an organizational context and answer the question, If one accepts personal responsibility will one be more likely to display OCB?

### **Significance of the Study**

The organizational management literature has unequally devoted its attention and study to corporate social responsibility, leaving a conspicuous gap in our understanding of individual personal responsibility within an organizational context. Therefore, the current research seeks to first define the construct of



personal responsibility in the workplace. Within this research, personal responsibility is defined as a cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions towards self, rather than ascribing the consequences of actions outward. This research also provides a foundational framework for further testing of variables and eventually group-level analysis to understand how responsibility impacts everyday work motivations, behaviors, and relationships.

However, as noted previously, one of the compelling questions that must be addressed in all management research is, What value does this understanding bring to organizations? What significance will this research bring to both the literature and arguably, more importantly, to managers? Understanding the driving forces of responsibility will help managers understand why some employees engage in OCB while others do not. With this expanded understanding of the role of responsibility, managers can help employees foster a greater sense of personal responsibility in the workplace, benefiting both organizations as well as employees.

Why is responsibility so important? The personal implications of responsibility are immense. Weiner (1995) concluded that the failure to feel a sense of responsibility robs individuals of many of the benefits associated with achievements. Weiner found that the more responsible one felt for the outcome, the more satisfaction one felt after successfully completing the task. Employees who feel a sense of responsibility are more likely to experience greater satisfaction when the organization succeeds. In essence, responsibility may be the linchpin to creating win-win situations, benefiting both the individual as well as the organization. However, the reality is that many employees may or may not feel responsible for displaying discretionary effort within the workplace. The current research helps explain the individual differences between those who ascribe the consequences of one's actions back to the self, compared to those who do not within an organizational context.

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

The research question under investigation follows:

RQ: What are the cognitive antecedents of personal responsibility and its consequences within the workplace?

Responsibility within this research is defined as a cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions towards self.

An extensive literature review was conducted to determine the potential cognitive predictors of one feeling a sense of personal responsibility in the workplace. The psychology literature has focused considerable attention on one's sense of responsibility. Three self-concept beliefs were identified from this literature and believed to predict personal responsibility: one's locus of control, self-efficacy, and risk acceptance. These cognitive beliefs tend to remain stable regardless of context. In essence, these beliefs form an employee's general outlook on life.

After reviewing the management literature, three organizational contextual beliefs were also found to predict feeling a sense of personal responsibility: job autonomy, psychological ownership, and role clarity. These beliefs may vary from job to job and therefore should be seen as contextual predictors of personal responsibility within an organizational context.

The following hypotheses guide this research:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Self-concept beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Contextual job beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Personal responsibility is positively related to one's willingness to help.
- H<sub>4</sub><sup>a</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between self-concept beliefs and willingness to help.
- H<sub>4</sub><sup>b</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between contextual job beliefs and willingness to help.

## Conceptual Framework

The foundation for this study builds on the theory of reason action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and on the intrapersonal theory of motivation (Weiner, 1995). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) created a model that predicts one's behavior by one's intent to complete the action, which is caused by one's beliefs mediated by attitudes (see Figure 1). The behaviors and consequences then shape the beliefs one has, creating a continuous formation of beliefs regarding behaviors. The model has received considerable attention in a wide range of literatures for predicting human behavior. Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw (1988) completed a meta-analysis on the theory of reasoned action, concluding "strong overall evidence for the predictive utility of the model was found" (p. 325).

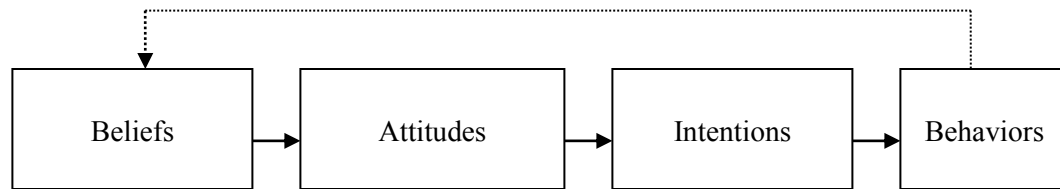


Figure 1: Theory of reasoned action. From *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research* (p. 15), by M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen, 1975, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

According to Weiner (1995), motivational theory states that actions can be predicted by understanding the thinking one has towards the behaviors, which is mediated by one's feelings (see Figure 2). Employees' thoughts towards their level of responsibility will cause them to either accept or deny their feeling of responsibility and therefore predict how helpful or detrimental their actions are towards the organization and others. How one thinks about the action will determine whether one will or will not engage in the action.

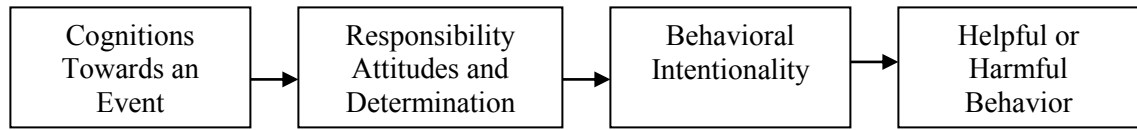


Figure 2: Intrapersonal theory of motivation. From *Judgments of Responsibility: A Foundation for a Theory of Social Conduct* (p. 22), by B. Weiner, 1995, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

These two frameworks ground the current research in understanding the mediation of personal responsibility between one's cognitions and intentions to display helpful behaviors as defined by OCB. These models also provide a framework for understanding the complexity that exists when trying to understand predictors of behaviors.

An extensive literature review of the psychology and management literature was undertaken to determine potential antecedents of personal responsibility. Three self-concept beliefs were found to correlate with personal responsibility along with three contextual job beliefs. Self-concept beliefs are those cognitions that guide one's outlook on life and one's view of themselves. These include locus of control, self-efficacy, and risk acceptance. A construct that has often been studied within the psychology literature in relation to one's felt sense of responsibility is locus of control. Previous studies have found that one's sense of responsibility was higher when one believed to have an internal locus of control (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984). Grounded in the work of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) behavioral prediction models as well as Bandura's (1977) work on social cognitive theory is the notion of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy beliefs are found to predict one's attitude towards one's intent to perform a behavior. Another variable associated with one's sense of personal responsibility is one's willingness to accept risk. Within the psychological literature, Rohrmann (1998) confirmed that one is less likely to feel a sense of responsibility if there is perceived high risk. Taking responsibility can be harmful, depending upon the consequences of outcomes; therefore, some are much less likely to accept risk and thus deny their sense of responsibility.

Within the management literature, one's sense of autonomy to perform a task was positively associated with one's sense of responsibility (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Hackman and Oldham's (1980) job characteristic model proposes that autonomy directly leads to one experiencing responsibility for outcomes of the work. Schwartz (1968) noted that personal responsibility must be a choice—that one has the freedom to choose. Therefore, one's autonomy within one's job is believed to predict personal responsibility. Another strong cognitive belief found to potentially predict one's sense of responsibility is psychological ownership. Some researchers have believed responsibility to be the same construct as psychological ownership. Pierce and Jussila (2011) differed: "As for those who define psychological ownership in terms of 'responsibility' Peirce et al. (2001) theorize that psychological ownership and experienced responsibility are two distinct states" (p. 18). Lastly, role clarity is hypothesized to influence one's sense of personal responsibility. Bartunek (1986) found role clarity to be the strongest correlate to personal responsibility in the workplace. Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, and Doherty (1994) also noted that the strength of one's personal responsibility is contingent on the clarity of one's role to the event and prescriptions. Therefore, the proposed cognitive belief variables under investigation in the current study include self-concept manifested by locus of control, self-efficacy, and risk acceptance as well as contextual job beliefs as manifested by autonomy, psychological ownership, and role clarity, which are hypothesized to be positively related to one's acceptance of responsibility (see Figure 3).

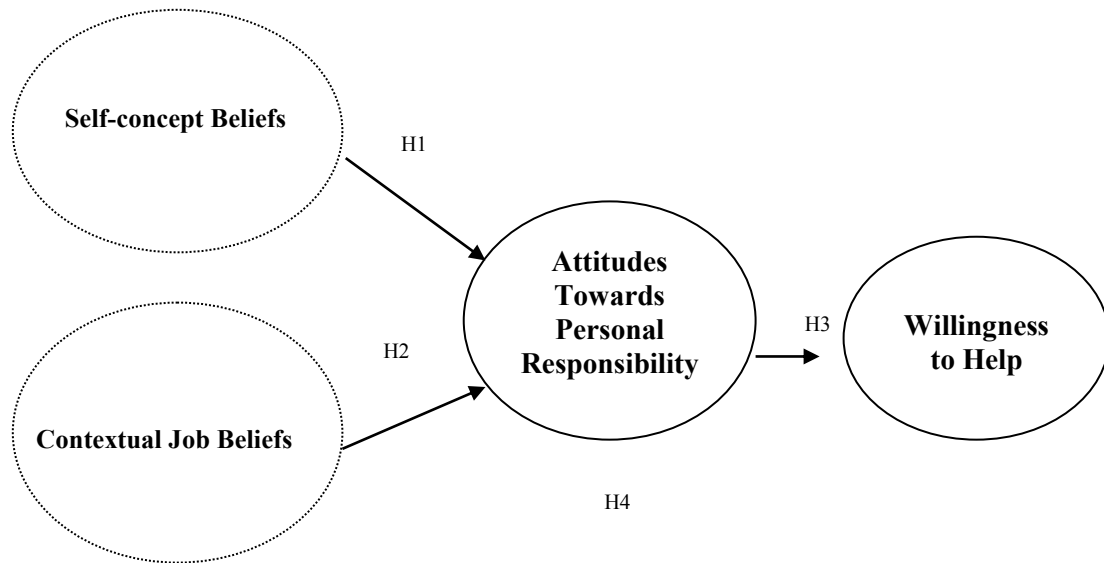


Figure 3: Proposed personal responsibility antecedents and consequences model with proposed hypotheses. It is hypothesized that (a) both self-concept beliefs and contextual job beliefs are positively related to one's attribution of responsibility to the self, (b) personal responsibility is positively related to one's willingness to help, and (c) personal responsibility mediates the relationship between beliefs and willingness to help.

The model also proposes that one's attribution of responsibility to self is positively related to OCB intentions. Weiner's (1995) work on the judgments of responsibility led him to conclude that individuals' attitude towards their sense of responsibility—or what he referred to as their judgment of responsibility—predicts their behavior. For example, if individuals believe to be responsible for the consequences of their behavior, then they will be more likely to engage in helpful behaviors. However, Weiner found that if individuals do not believe to be responsible, then they are more likely to engage in harmful behaviors. Therefore, individuals' cognitive and affective acceptance of responsibility is predicted to mediate the relationship between beliefs and OCB intentions, because while individuals may believe they have the agency, control, and resources to act in a helpful manner, it is hypothesized that individuals only do so when they believe to

be personally responsible. Therefore, the more individuals believe to be personally responsible for their actions, the more likely they are to engage in helpful behaviors.

## **Methodology**

### Research Design

Given the nature of the research question and hypotheses under consideration, quantitative research is most appropriate to uncover the relationships within the proposed model. A descriptive research design is used with subjects being measured once within their environment without intervention through the use of a validated self-reporting questionnaire. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used as the primary data analysis tool.

### Sampling Method

Sample size is an essential component within SEM. Raykou and Widaman (1995) noted four factors that influence sample size determination: (a) model misspecification (a larger sample size allows for detecting specification error), (b) model size (recommend a minimum of five samples per parameter), (c) departures from normality (a minimum of 15 samples per parameter if data are not normal), and (d) estimation procedure (a minimum of 200 respondents for the maximum likelihood estimation). A general minimum recommended sample size of 200 participants is needed to make adequate statistical inferences and conclusions in SEM, according to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) who recommended increasing the size if the model is overly complex or the data exhibit nonnormal attributes. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) noted that a moderate sample size of 200 is optimal in SEM. Researchers have warned against using too large a sample size (400+), as the larger sample size causes nearly any difference to be perceived resulting in poor goodness-of-fit measures (e.g., Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Hair, Black, et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

The current study investigates eight parameters; therefore, a moderate sample size of 200 is supported. The population under investigation for the study is full-time employees working in the financial services industry. The Hartford is a

Fortune 500 company within the financial services industry with three primary product offerings: insurance, group benefits, and mutual funds. The researcher was granted access to sample 1,000 of The Hartford's employees. A sampling frame of both mutual funds, group benefits, and insurance employees at The Hartford was used, representing all business functions including marketing, information technology, finance, sales, operations, and human resources. All 500 employees working within the mutual fund business line were sent the survey, along with 500 randomly selected employees working within the insurance and group benefits organization.

### Instrumentation

A self-reporting questionnaire was constructed using existing validated instruments to measure all desired variables. The questionnaire consisted of 80 questions and was inputted into an electronic web-based survey program. It is estimated that the survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

*Spector (1988) Work Locus of Control Scale (short-form)*. This eight-item scale measures whether one believes to have an internal locus of control or external locus of control. This is a widely used scale within the organizational psychology literature to measure locus of control. A Likert scale is used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items include "Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck," "People who perform their jobs well generally get rewarded," and "If you know what you want out of a job, you can find a job that give it to you."

*Hackman and Oldham (1980) Job Autonomy Scale*. This three-item scale assesses the extent of an employee's sense of autonomy within their job. A Likert scale is used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items include "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job" and "I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job."

*Chen, Gully, and Eden (2001) New General Self-Efficacy Measure*. This eight-item questionnaire measures one's general sense of self-efficacy. A Likert scale is used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items include "When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them," "I



believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind,” and “Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.”

*Rohrmann (1999) Risk Orientation Questionnaire.* This 12-item scale measures one’s acceptance of risk. A Likert scale is used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items include “I’m quite cautious when I make plans and when I act on them,” “I follow the motto ‘nothing ventured, nothing gained,’” and “I express my opinion even if most people have opposite views.”

*Dyne and Pierce (2004) Psychological Ownership Scale.* This seven-item questionnaire measures the extent to which individuals believe their organization is theirs. It is characterized by the belief and sense that it is my organization. A Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* is used. Sample items include “This is my organization,” “I sense that this organization is our company,” and “It is hard for me to think about this organization as mine.”

*Cammann, Fichmann, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983) Experienced Role Clarity.* This three-item scale taken from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Package assesses the extent to which role clarity exists within one’s current job. A Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* is used. Sample items include “Most of the time I know what I have to do on my job,” “Most of the time, people make it clear what others expect of me,” and “On my job I know exactly what is expected of me.”

*Schwartz (1968) Responsibility Denial Questionnaire.* This 27-item questionnaire measures one’s attitude towards responsibility. The scale assesses whether one accepts or denies responsibility. A Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* is used. Sample items include “I wouldn’t feel that I had to do my part in a group project if everyone else was lazy,” “When a person is nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat him well,” and “When a man is completely involved in valuable work, you can’t blame him if he is insensitive to those around him.”

*Williams and Wong (1999) Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Intention Scale.* This 11-item questionnaire is broken into four subscales that measure one’s

consideration, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship. The scales assesses one's intent to perform a particular behavior. Sample items include "A colleague has to meet a few deadlines with the same period of time and needs help with his/her workload. Your workload is lighter. How likely are you to help him/her?" and "The company's newsletter has just arrived. How likely are to take a copy to read up on the latest developments in the company?"

#### Data Collection Method

The survey is piloted to a group of 25 individuals to ensure proper functioning of the web-based instrument. Once validated through the pilot study, the survey is sent to employees working at The Hartford via email. The sampling frame consisted of all 500 employees working within the mutual funds division along with 500 employees randomly selected within the insurance business line. Given the length of the survey, response and completion rates are expected to range between 20-25%. This required a total of 1,000 surveys to be sent in order to meet the required statistical sample size that is desired.

#### Proposed Data Analyses

In order to confirm or reject the hypotheses within the research, multiple data analyses must be performed. To begin, reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha of the items used within the survey. A correlation and descriptive statistical analysis is also conducted to determine the relationships within the dataset. The primary data analysis was SEM analysis, which was conducted using SPSS AMOS. A two-step procedure is used to find the right model specification and then to cross-validate it. Given the limitations of the study, I use half the sample to find the right specified model and the other half of the sample to determine the cross-validation index. This allows the researcher to predict a path analysis for the variables within the proposed model and better understand the relationships that exist among the variables in the model. SEM is a very robust multivariate analysis technique that includes aspects of regression analysis, factor analysis, and simultaneous equation modeling. Therefore, the nature of the inquiry of the research deems SEM as the most appropriate and vigorous data analysis to uncover the role of responsibility in the workplace.

## Limitations

One of the limitations facing the study concerns the nature of self-reporting questionnaires. While self-reporting data have its advantages, one of the limitations is the possibility of respondent bias. Also, this is a cross-sectional research design that measures one point in time. While SEM allows for causal assumptions, the ability to make causal inferences is limited and made with caution. Another limitation is having one set of data to both determine the model and cross-validate it. Future research would be needed and recommended with a new sample to cross-validate the model with a separate set of data.

## Definition of Terms

*Autonomy* is the belief one has the ability to undertake a task with independence and intentionality.

*Behavioral intentionality* is one's resolve to perform a specific action.

*Cognition* is one's thoughts and sentiments about an entity or event.

*Intrapersonal theory of motivation* is a motivational theory that describes one's actions predicted by one thoughts and feelings towards that action.

*Locus of control* is the belief that a specific outcome is or is not dependent on one's own actions.

*Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)* is behavior that is helpful to the organization and requires discretionary effort.

*Psychological ownership* is the possessive beliefs and feelings towards an organization.

*Personal responsibility* is the cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions towards self.

*Risk acceptance* a cognitive orientation that taking risks are acceptable.

*Role clarity* is the clearness of expectations set for the employee within a position.

*Self-concept* is a collection of beliefs regarding oneself.

*Self-efficacy* is a belief of one's ability to succeed at an activity.

*Theory of reasoned action* is a behavioral prediction model deriving from one's beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentionality.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on personal responsibility, its antecedents, and its consequences. The first section reviews the conceptual framework that guides the framing of the proposed model and research questions. The second section examines the theory of personal responsibility and provides a robust definition for the construct. The third section of the literature review explores the antecedents that influence personal responsibility from both an individual difference and contextual standpoint. Lastly, the literature review considers the consequence of personal responsibility in the workplace as defined by organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) intentionality.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Theory of Reasoned Action

The question under investigation considers the extent to which one's sense of personal responsibility can be predicted by cognitive beliefs as well as the extent to which personal responsibility can predict OCB intentionality. The guiding framework for this study is Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action predicts individuals' behavior by their intent to complete the action, which is caused by one's beliefs mediated by attitudes. The theory was "born largely out of frustration with traditional attitude-behavior research, much of which found weak correlations between attitude measures and performance of volitional behaviors" (Hale, Householder, & Greene, 2002, p. 259). The theory of reasoned action examines the relational links between cognitive, attitude, intentions, and behavioral events (see Figure 4). The theory of reasoned action model has received considerable attention in a wide range of literatures for predicting human behavior. Sheppard et al. (1988) completed a meta-analysis on the theory of reasoned action, concluding "strong overall evidence for the predictive utility of the model" (p. 325). The current study exclusively analyzes the relationships that exist from a motivational perspective between the links of beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Further research is

recommended to consider how the motivational links will influence and ultimately predict behavior.

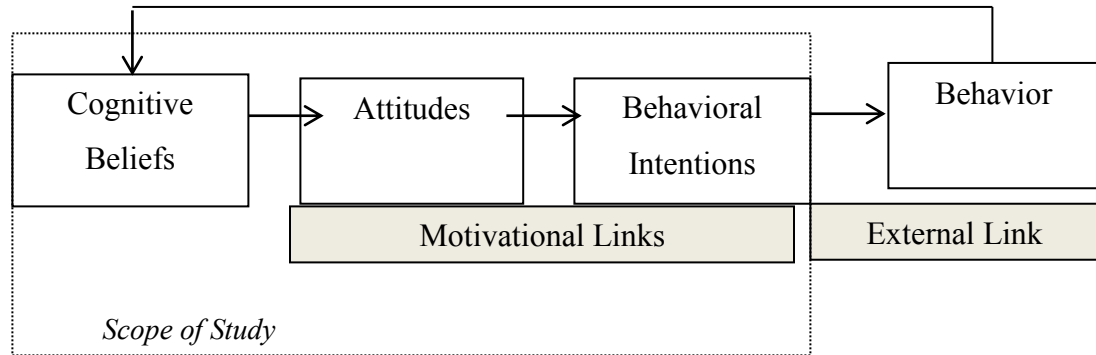


Figure 4: Scope of present study using the theory of reasoned action framework. From *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior* (p. 5), by I. Ajzen and M. Fishbein, 1980, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. From *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research* (p. 15), by M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen, 1975, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Behavioral intentionality is usually measured by one's indication or willingness to engage in a behavior. The theory of reasoned action model follows the causal relationships from attitude through intentions to definite behavior. Kim and Hunter (1993) noted this model "suggests that understanding behavioral intention is necessary for predicting behaviors from attitudes . . . According to the mediating view of behavioral intentionality attitudes influence behaviors primarily through the influence of behavioral intentionality" (p. 332). Previous studies have confirmed that behavioral intentions are proximal antecedents of overt actions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Kim & Hunter, 1993; Manstead, Proffitt, & Smart, 1983). Heider (1958) discussed that the level of intentionality is an important determinant in personal responsibility, as an actor can only be held responsible for those actions he or she intended to commit. Heider noted, "Intention is the central

factor in personal causality . . . only what *p* intended is perceived as having a source in him” (pp. 112-113). Therefore, intentionality must be considered when assessing personal responsibility.

Given that the purpose of the current study is to understand the antecedents and consequences of personal responsibility, the model focuses on how attitudes impact behavioral intentions. This rationale is based on Kim and Hunter (1993) who found stronger correlations between attitudes and behavioral intention compared to attitudes and behavior. Also, the attitude–intention relationship is assessing the internal motivational factors, which capture how hard people are willing to engage in a behavior and is thus less susceptible to uncontrollable external factors (Ajzen, 1988). The attitude–behavioral intention link assesses the cognitive motivational events that help explain the why behind the action; whereas, the behavioral intention–behavior, while highly correlated may be influenced by external factors outside an agent’s control, which is outside the scope or purpose of this study. This study seeks to fully understand the cognitive events pertaining to personal responsibility. However, future research can consider the external moderating factors that may influence the behavioral intention–behavior link within the proposed model.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) postulated, “All behavior involves a choice, be it a choice between performing or not performing a given action or a choice among several qualitatively or quantitatively different action alternatives” (p. 41). Before individuals choose to engage in a particular action, such as OCB, they first evaluate their beliefs towards the action as well as their attitudinal posture towards the behavior, which leads to their intention to engage or not engage. Bandura (1993) noted, “Most courses of action are initially shaped in thought” (p. 118). Malle (1999) confirmed the importance of behavioral intentionality and responsibility, noting that whether behavior is intentional or unintentional predicts the type of rationalization, which then predicts the judgment of responsibility towards or away from the self. When studying personal responsibility, it is of the utmost importance to determine whether one intends to act rather than studying the behavior itself as the behavior may or may not be intentional. Therefore, the theory of reasoned

action provides a framework for evaluating whether one will or will not engage in OCB based on one's beliefs and attitudes towards personal responsibility. Personal responsibility is a choice one has to make to either accept or deny responsibility towards the self; therefore, intentionality to act is considered the direct consequence within the proposed research model.

### Motivational Theory

Motivation is the why behind the action and the force guiding a person to complete a behavior. Motivation is what causes one to take action, which can derive from biological, social, emotional, or cognitive needs. While there are a number of motivational theories that explain behavior, the scope of this study considers the cognitive need to understand the causality of an event. Within this research scope, epistemic motivations are discussed. Dunning (2015) explained,

People desire to live in a world that they can understand, explain and predict, which means they are pressed to build beliefs that dispel chaos and uncertainty and thus seek out meaning and coherence from the maelstrom of events they experience. (pp. 778-779)

Epistemic motives lead people towards a bias of meaning, which favors the recognition of patterns and the explanation of events. Humphrey (1976) noted that this bias towards meaning includes agency and intention. Often, people believe that actions are caused or intended by someone or something. Guthrie (1993) used the example of a thunderstorm being viewed as punishment from an angry deity. Within people, there is a bias towards thinking that events do not accidentally occur without an intention or cause behind it. Not only is there is a bias towards meaning, but the extent to which people are willing to search for it is also quite intensive (Dunning, 2015). In the face of contemplating meaninglessness, people are willing to go to extensive measures to derive meaning. Therefore, when understanding the notion of personal responsibility, a person's need for determining meaning, intentions, and agency behind an action are all seen as motivational characteristics for one assuming or denying his or her sense of personal responsibility in the workplace. Another bias that surfaces during epistemic motives is that of consistency. Dunning stated, "The conclusions they reach must adhere to beliefs they already possess" (p. 779). One's acceptance of personal responsibility is more



likely to occur when one's beliefs are that of an internal locus of control and high self-efficacy. Therefore, one's self-concept beliefs are seen as the antecedent to personal responsibility.

*Attribution theory.* Attribution theory assumes that employees have an inherent need to understand their successes and failures. Heider (1958) concluded that any event, consequence, or action requires one to search for causes. Heider used the example of discovering sand on his office desk one day. Immediately, questions were raised such as, "Why is there sand here? Where did this come from?" (Weiner, 2008, p. 154). Any reasons or explanations for an event or behavior Heider referred to as examples of causal ascriptions.

Two different types of attribution have been identified within the social psychology literature as either situational or dispositional (Jones & Davis, 1965). Dispositional attribution is the tendency to attribute behavior back to innate personality traits. For example, if someone cut you off in traffic, then you would attribute the person cutting you off as being rude and that the innate personality trait led to this behavior. However, situational attribution attributes the behavior to contextual factors. In the above example with the person cutting you off in traffic, instead of attributing the behavior to his or her personality, you would attribute it to the context. You may think that the person was simply trying to avoid an oncoming car that caused him or her to cut you off. These two different types of attribution contribute to the fundamental attribution error. This is the phenomenon that people will attribute their own failures to situational factors and others' failures to innate characteristics. For example, if someone is having trouble finding a job, then he or she would likely attribute it to the tough hiring market. However, if someone else was having trouble finding work, the person would likely attribute that to laziness or another negative personality trait. "The postulation of actor/observer discrepancies and the hypothesis of dispositional biases stem from a consideration of explanations for virtually any event" (Weiner, 2008, p. 154). One of the central tenets of attribution is the notion of internal versus external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Those who have an individual tendency towards internal locus of control are more likely to attribute actions back to their self. Therefore, the current research

supposes that an agent with certain self-concept beliefs such as an internal locus of control, a positive risk orientation, and high self-efficacy will be more likely to attribute the consequences of his or her behavior back to self. However, those with the opposite beliefs are much more likely to attribute their behavioral consequences outward.

*Intrapersonal theory of motivation.* Social psychologist Weiner (2000) proposed two attribution motivational theories to predict behavior—intrapersonal theory and interpersonal theory of motivation. Intrapersonal theory of motivation assesses one's self-directed thoughts and emotions, whereas interpersonal theory examines other-directed thoughts and emotions. For the purpose of the current research, only intrapersonal theory of motivation is addressed. Intrapersonal theory derives from attribution theory, which Fiske and Taylor (1991) described as the cognitive process for analyzing information to conclude causation for an event or outcome. For example, if someone observes an employee engaging in unethical behavior, one may conclude that is because the employee is a bad person or he or she was unaware of the policy. Attribution theory also helps explain why one may or may not believe to be personally responsible for the outcome of his or her actions. Weiner (1992) used the metaphor of a scientist to describe the process one undertakes to determine whether or not he or she believes to be personally responsible for an action or outcome. This determination will then predict whether or not the person is likely to engage in helpful behaviors. Like a scientist, one will seek out the environment and information to internally assess "Why did this happen? What caused this outcome? What was my role in this?" After this cognitive assessment has been made, one will then form a motivation or intention to engage in helpful or harmful behaviors. For example, an employee fails at an assigned task. The employee can either attribute the responsibility of the failure to self or to something else, such as the task itself or even to another employee. Weiner's (2000) intrapersonal motivational theory states that if one ascribes the responsibility to self, then one is more likely to engage in helpful behaviors; however, if one ascribes responsibility to others, then one is less motivated to engage in helpful behaviors. Therefore, in the given example, if an employee takes

personal responsibility for the failure, then he or she likely to try the task again until it is successfully completed. However, if he or she believes someone or something else is responsible, then the likelihood to complete the task is much less. Weiner (1995) found that the antecedents to one's judgment of responsibility include locus of control and self-efficacy. One with an internal locus of control and high self-efficacy is more likely to attribute responsibility for an action to self rather than outside of self. Figure 5 depicts the cognitive process one undertakes in this model when determining whether or not one will assign responsibility for the outcomes to self. This cognitive assessment then determines the extent to which one will engage in helpful behaviors.

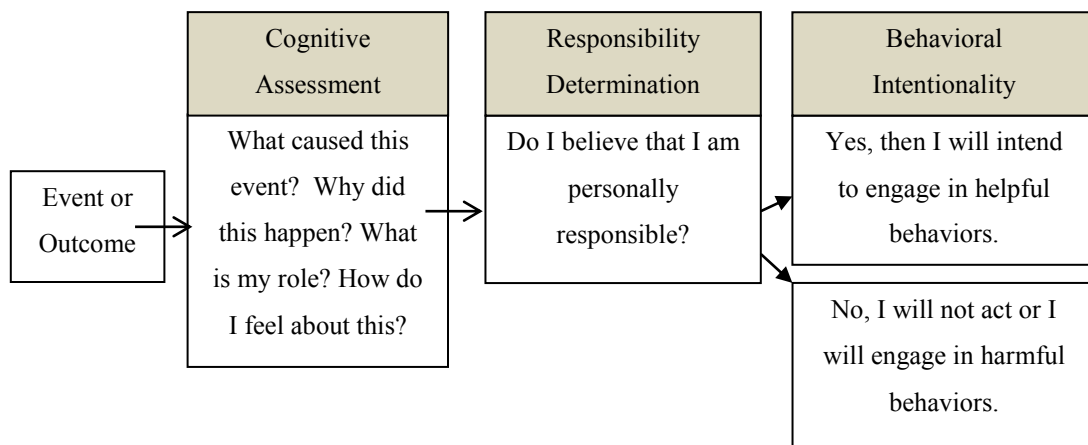


Figure 5: Responsibility ascription process using the intrapersonal theory of motivation. From *Judgments of Responsibility: A Foundation for a Theory of Social Conduct* (p. 22), by B. Weiner, 1995, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

### Cognitive Psychology

Bandura (1977) heavily influenced our understanding of actions and motivations by examining agents through a cognitive psychology lens moving beyond the commonly held behaviorism understanding of actions with theories such as self-concept and triadic reciprocal causation. Cognitive psychology studies

the mental processes, such as perceptions, beliefs, memory and thinking. Bandura's work in self-concept and triadic reciprocal causation helped shape the understanding of the underlying beliefs that form a sense of personal responsibility within the current study.

*Agency.* At the heart of his work, Bandura (1997) believed in the need for personal agency by noting that "agent causation involves the ability to behave differently from what environmental forces dictate rather than inevitably yield to them" (p. 7). Human agency is the capacity for one to make a choice or to act voluntarily under one's own volition. Many factors can either inhibit or enhance one's sense of agency. Consider the Milgram (1963) experiments, which examined the tension between obedience to authority and one's personal sense of right and wrong. Milgram desired to know how far people were willing to go under the authority and instruction of another if it involved harming another individual. The experiment involved one in authority, the experimenter, telling the participant to administer electric shock every time a learner answered a question incorrectly. As the experiment results showed, many justified their actions of harming another individual as a result of their lack of agency over the directive. Within a workplace, one can understand that if employees do not have a sense of agency, then they are less likely to attribute responsibility back to the self but instead are likely to direct responsibility towards their manager or whatever person or force is taking away their sense of agency. Personal responsibility is then viewed as a choice individuals make contingent on their sense of agency to act. The current work examines how the beliefs one forms and holds influence one's agency to attribute responsibility to the self.

*Self-concept.* Self-concept is an essential component within the proposed model as individuals' beliefs regarding their self are hypothesized to predict their acceptance of personal responsibility. Self-concept beliefs are seen as the antecedents to one assigning responsibility to self. Bandura (1997) defined self-concept as "a composite view of oneself that is presumed to be formed through direct experiences and evaluations adopted from significant others" (p. 10). Gerrig and Zimbardo (2002) defined self-concept as an internal model that evaluates

oneself in order to identify self-schemas. These self-schemas form the beliefs that one has within a particular dimension that contribute to one's self-concept. For example, the statement "I am in control of my destiny" describes a self-concept belief revealing one's sense of internal locus of control. Or take for example the belief in one's efficacy to perform a task. The statement "I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind" is an efficacy belief that encompasses one's self-concept. Schlenker (1997) used the term self-system to describe the cognitive beliefs that shape one's sense of self that ultimately determines if one engages in personal responsibility. Bandura believed that self-concept beliefs are learned, dynamic, and organized and ultimately influence the self: "The cognitive activities constitute the processes of self-influence that are brought to bear on the course of actions to take" (p. 7). The way that one processes information about the self is predicted to influence one's attribution of responsibility towards or away from the self. In the current study, locus of control, self-efficacy, and risk orientation are examined as self-concept beliefs that influence one's sense of personal responsibility.

*Triadic reciprocal causation.* "In social cognitive theory, human agency operates within an interdependent causal structure involving triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1997, p. 6). Within the triadic reciprocal causation model, the cognitive beliefs one forms are influenced by one's environment and behaviors. It is the continuous interactions that occur between environment, person, and behavior that influence one's beliefs and actions. However, these three facets do not necessarily influence an agent equally. At any point in time, one of the factors may have greater strength and influence over another. Over time, with various experiences and encounters one reassesses the belief systems that comprise one's self-concept.

For example, one may have a high tolerance of risk and engage in activities that are risky. However, if over time the outcomes of the risky activities cause more harm than good, one may slowly believe that risk causes harm rather than good and therefore have a lower risk tolerance. Consequently, one's assessment of self may be influenced by other contextual factors residing outside the self within the

environment. It is important when studying the person to consider the context and environment that may influence his or her belief systems. The environmental factors that may influence one's personal responsibility beliefs include job role clarity, autonomy within one's role, and psychological ownership towards the organization. For example, an employee within Organization A may experience a lot of autonomy and role clarity and have feelings of ownership towards the organization. It is proposed that these contextual factors would lead to feelings of personal responsibility. However, that same employee moves to Organization B and experiences a quite different environment with little clarity and no autonomy. This same employee who felt a sense of personal responsibility within Organization A is less likely to experience that same sense of responsibility in Organization B as a result of the environment. Therefore, the proposed personal responsibility model includes both self-concept beliefs as well as contextual job beliefs as they are likely to influence a sense of personal responsibility. Self-concept beliefs form the way in which one understands self within an environment and the environment in return may influence one's beliefs. The current research proposes that the degree to which one views one's self within an organizational context will determine the extent to which one accepts personal responsibility.

As a result of our understanding of the theoretical framework, the basic causal model depicted in Figure 6 guides the hypotheses within the study. This is a recursive path model as the causation flow is unidirectional. The path model shows the relationships between the variables with lines. The lines with one arrow point to the proposed cause-and-effect relationships, whereas the lines with arrows at each end imply a covariant relationship between the two. The following hypotheses are represented within the model:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Self-concept beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Contextual job beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Personal responsibility is positively related to one's willingness to help.

- H<sub>4</sub><sup>a</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between self-concept beliefs and willingness to help.
- H<sub>4</sub><sup>b</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between contextual job beliefs and willingness to help.

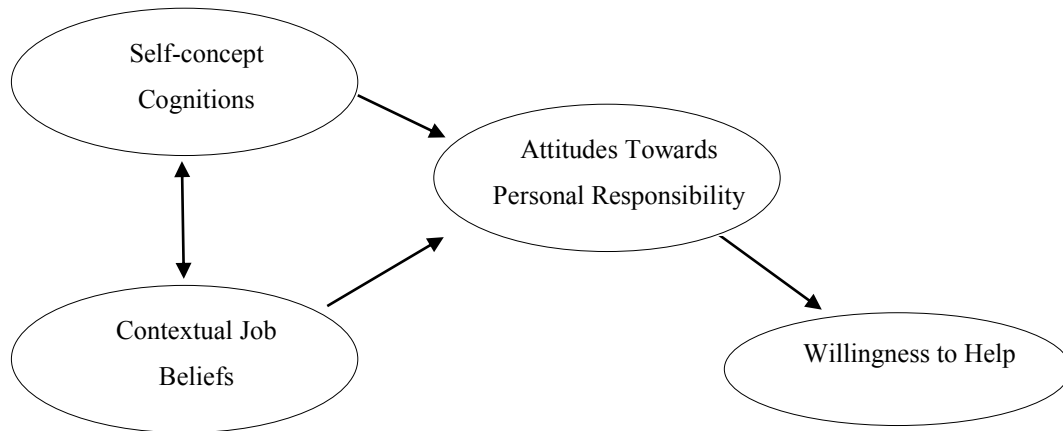


Figure 6: A basic causal model representing the motivational path analysis depicting whether one intends to engage in helpful behavior based on one's attitudes towards personal responsibility.

### Personal Responsibility

Personal responsibility became a prominent topic of conversation within the social psychology literature after the findings of the Milgram (1963) experiments. Milgram (1974) explained the behavior of his participants by arguing that people behave in one of two states—an autonomous or agentic state. An autonomous state is when an actor believes to be free to act as he or she wishes and, therefore, upon acting in an autonomous state the actor believes to be responsible for the outcomes. However, an agentic state is when others are directing one's actions and, therefore, the agent no longer believes to be personally responsible for the outcome of his or her actions. Within the agentic state, a person justifies not being responsible as he

or she believes that he or she is acting under another's volition and assign responsibility to another. Milgram concluded that a person's perception of being personally responsible for an outcome was a significant determinant of helpful behavior. Personal responsibility is therefore of paramount consideration when considering the intentionality to engage in OCB.

However, responsibility is used so frequently in everyday language that its meaning is often convoluted by the variety of contexts in which the word is used. Hamilton (1978) noted, "Responsibility is a core concept of social life. Like other core concepts, it is difficult to define adequately and even trickier to study appropriately" (p. 326). Christopher and Schlenker (2005) wrote, "The potential ambiguity in what responsibility means perhaps explains why Rokeach (1973) reported that of 36 values examined; only responsibility demonstrated a test-retest reliability of less than .50" (p. 1502). Also, as Schlenker et al. (1994) indicated, the topic of responsibility has historically been discussed in regards to justice, ethics, and social regulation of behavior. Therefore, the construct of personal responsibility remains ambiguous in definition and application within the organizational management literature and has received little empirical attention as a result. The purpose of the current research is to provide greater clarity surrounding the construct of personal responsibility as well as provide a consistent definition in which a body of literature can build upon.

Schwartz (1968), best known for his work on values within the management literature, began his research career by studying the ascription of responsibility as a predictor of behavior. Schwartz defined personal responsibility as an internalized structure, an individual tendency, and a cognitive appraisal to ascribe the consequences of one's behavior to self.

Schwartz and Howard (1980) further defined ascription of responsibility as an actor's attribution of responsibility to the self during the decision-making process, which affects the actor's overt action. Schwartz (1968) confirmed that the more people ascribed responsibility to self, rather than away from self, the more likely they were to engage in considerate and helpful behaviors. Schwartz (1974) ultimately concluded that personal responsibility is an individual difference



whereby individuals either tend to accept or deny the responsibility of their actions to self. With this understanding in mind, one may conclude that an employee's sense of personal responsibility does not necessarily depend on the organization itself and may be seen as a relatively stable characteristic and predictor of behavior. However, further empirical research is needed to clarify this assumption of personal responsibility. The current research seeks to better understand how stable self-concept beliefs as well as contextual job beliefs influence one's acceptance of responsibility to the self. Contextual job factors should be considered, as personal responsibility is expected to be impacted by situational factors on the job (Bartunek, 1986; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Milgram, 1974; Silver & Geller, 1978). The question is, To what extent do situational factors influence one's personal responsibility? Further research is recommended to determine the stability of personal responsibility as an individual difference as well as continue to clarify the influence of situational factors.

Another contributor to our understanding of the construct of personal responsibility is the work of Schlenker et al. (1994). Schlenker (1997) defined personal responsibility as "the psychological adhesives that attaches an individual to a set of prescriptions for conduct and to events that are governed by these prescriptions" (Christopher & Schlenker, 2005, p. 1503). Accordingly, "Responsibility provides a basis for judgment and sanctioning" (Schlenker et al., 1994, p. 634).

Schlenker et al. (1994) conceptualized personal responsibility as a triangle model (see Figure 7), which is based on the thesis "that responsibility is a necessary component of the process of holding people accountable for their conduct" (p. 634). Schlenker et al. proposed three cognitive links are required to determine personal responsibility: a set of prescriptions that guide behavior, an event that is being evaluated, and the relevancy of the identity of the actor. The strength of the linkages determines the level of responsibility one attributes to the self. Schlenker et al. described the way in which information travels between the links in the triangle as a psychological highway. The more connected the beliefs between the three links are, the more likely one is to attribute responsibility to the self.

Schlenker et al. noted, “Responsibility thereby transfers information, in the form of a categorization and evaluation, from an event to an actor who is under the charge of a set of prescriptions” (p. 636). As a result of this information highway, personal responsibility engages the self-concept, which influences one’s attribution of responsibility towards or away from the self. For example, consider a new employee working in an organization. This employee may choose not to ascribe responsibility to the self as he or she may not believe to have the efficacy yet to perform well or may not have clearly defined role prescriptions. As a result, the strength between the three links may be relatively weak.

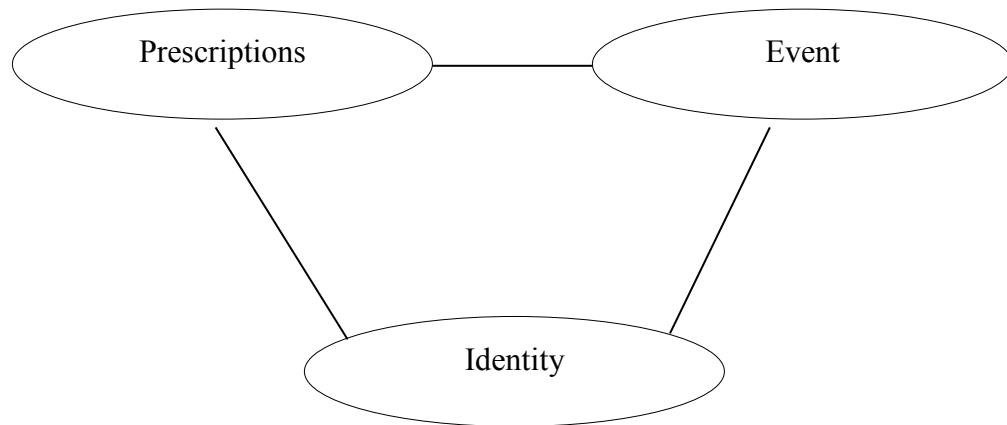


Figure 7: The personal responsibility triangle—the extent to which one ascribes personal responsibility is determined by the strength of the cognitive links between prescriptions, identity, and event. From “The Triangle Model of Responsibility,” by B. R. Schlenker, T. W. Britt, J. Pennington, R. Murphy, and K. Doherty, 1994, *Psychological Review*, 101(4), p. 635.

In this study, personal responsibility is defined as the cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one’s actions towards self and as the cognitive antecedent to engaging in helpful behaviors. The attribution of responsibility as either towards or away from the self is best understood as two ends of a continuum—not an either/or typology. Those who accept personal

responsibility tend to attribute the outcomes and consequences of their actions towards self, while those who deny personal responsibility tend to attribute the outcomes of their actions onto others or external circumstances. Therefore, personal responsibility can be seen in varying degrees from person to person depending on the strength of their held responsibility beliefs.

### **Self-Concept Beliefs**

#### *Locus of Control*

Locus of control is defined as the extent to which one believes to be in control of events that impact one's life (Rotter, 1954). Bandura (1977) referred to control as "as person's estimate that a given behavior will leave to certain outcomes" (p. 193). As a result, the construct of locus of control has a strong cognitive focus (Lefcourt, 1992). Rotter (1954) conceptualized one's locus of control as either internal—the beliefs that attribute control to the self—or external—the beliefs that events are control by environmental factors that cannot be influenced. Since locus of control examines the belief that a specific outcome is or is not dependent on one's own actions, locus of control and one's attribution of responsibility have been found to correlate in previous empirical studies (e.g., Davis & Davis, 1972; Phares, Ritchie, & Davis, 1968). The findings of these studies show that those with an external locus of control were more likely to attribute responsibility away from the self for outcomes, and those with an internal locus of control were more likely to take personal responsibility for outcomes. This aligns with Brickman et al. (1982) who argued that personal responsibility can only be felt when the agent believes to have the control necessary to effectively influence the outcome. Therefore, it is hypothesized that one will only attribute responsibility to self when there is a perceived sense of control to influence outcomes of behavior as manifested in the belief of internal locus of control.

Britt (1999) described locus of control as it relates to responsibility by the identity–event link within the triangle model of responsibility, noting that the strength of this link is determined by the extent to which one is able to exhibit personal control over the event. Skinner (1996) noted that one's locus of control is

in part determined by the ability to foresee the outcomes of the event as well as purposely producing the desired consequences of the event. The stronger the link between one's identity and event, the higher internal locus of control one believes to have. The more likely one believes to have control over the outcome, the more likely one is to be responsible for the outcome as Skinner found, "When people perceive that they have a high degree of control, they exert effort, try hard, initiate action and persist in the face of failures and setbacks" (p. 550). When considering Weiner's (1995) intrapersonal theory of motivation, part of the process of attributing responsibility back to the self involved determining whether or not one had or could have control over the outcome. The cognitive process determined the actor's role and causation of the event, which aligns with the triangle model of responsibility when assessing the ability to control an outcome.

If one believes to be unable to control the outcome or influence the event then one is likely to attribute responsibility outward. For example, consider an employee who believes that he or she was able to land a job simply because of luck, while another employee believes he or she landed a job out of hard work and persistence. The one who believes it is a matter of luck has a strong external locus of control, while the other employee has an internal locus of control. The employee with the external locus of control will attribute the outcomes of his or her work to external factors, such as luck, while the internal locus of control employee will attribute the outcomes of his or her work back to self. As a result of this difference in locus of control, the two employees are also likely to exhibit a difference in their sense of responsibility, with one attributing outward and the other inward.

### Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as the belief that one is able to complete an activity as a result of one's sense of agency and control to influence the outcome. The construct is based on the notion that most human behavior is purposeful and regulated by forethought representing known goals (Bandura, 1993). Pasteur (as cited in Peterson, 1954) noted, "Chance favors only the prepared mind" (p. 473). Self-efficacy is a core belief that is foundational to understanding

individual motivation, performance achievements, and emotional well-being (Bandura, 1994).

The extent to which individuals believe they are able to influence the outcome guides their cognitions, motivations, and decision to engage or not engage in a behavior. Bandura (1991) noted,

People's beliefs in their efficacy influence the choices they make, their aspirations, how much effort they mobilize in a given endeavor, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties and setbacks, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding. (p. 257)

Self-efficacy is therefore hypothesized to be an important determinant of one's acceptance of personal responsibility. If one has a high sense of self-efficacy, it is proposed that one will ascribe responsibility to the self, however if one has a low self-efficacy one is likely to displace the sense of responsibility onto another. Bandura noted four ways one develops a strong sense of self-efficacy: mastery, social modeling, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states. Mastery occurs as people achieve goals, even in the midst of failures and setbacks. The more one succeeds at a task, the more likely one is to engage again in that task, believing one is able to accomplish it. Social modeling refers to the extent to which the agent views a similar person like himself or herself as being successful. Social persuasion is the extent to which others persuade the agent to succeed. The more others believe in the successful completion of a task by the agent, the more likely the agent will see himself or herself as able to succeed. Another way identified by Bandura for building self-efficacy is self-awareness of one's physical and emotional states. The more aware one is of one's state, the more likely one is able to control one's behavior.

Lalwani and Duval (2000) argued, "The extent to which the person evaluates himself or herself as having the resources necessary to carry out the obligations implied upon attribution or responsibility to self also influences the attributional locus" (p. 2235). For example, if an employee does not believe he or she has the skillset needed to successfully complete a task, then he or she is likely to experience a low sense of self-efficacy, which is predicted to lead to a low sense of personal responsibility. However, an employee who is highly self-efficacious in

the face of failure will likely attribute that as a result of insufficient effort or knowledge and skillsets that are obtainable (Bandura, 1993). In other words, one who has a high sense of self-efficacy is likely to attribute outcomes, whether good or bad, back to self. An employee who has a low sense of self-efficacy is more likely to attribute the outcomes of his or her actions outward as he or she believes to have less control to influence the outcome.

### Risk Acceptance

Risk orientation is a cognition that is hypothesized to influence one's attribution of responsibility towards the self. Risk orientation describes one's attitudes towards risk when making decisions (Rohrman, 1998). Bandura (1997) noted, "In transactions involving the exercise of personal competencies, estimations of risk require a relational judgment of the match between perceived coping capabilities and environmental challenges" (p. 148). Before engaging in a behavior, one determines one's willingness to accept the risk of the consequences associated with the behavior and one's ability to cope with the outcome. Brinkmann (2013) noted within a theoretical piece that "risk-taking triggers responsibility issues and taking responsibility means risking being asked critical questions" (p. 567). Brinkmann called on researchers to consider the interdependencies between the constructs of responsibility and risks. If one is likely to accept risks associated with a given outcome when making decisions, it is hypothesized that one will also feel a sense of personally responsibility during the decision-making process.

Brinkmann (2013) defined four types of risk and responsibility awareness when one considers the relationship and outcomes of risk and responsibility (see Figure 8). When both responsibility and risk acceptance are high, courage exists for one to take personal responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. It is also important to note that Brinkmann considered both risk and responsibility as individual traits that one has a tendency towards either accepting or avoiding. For this reason, risk acceptance is also considered a self-concept belief within the current study as it is less likely to be influenced by contextual factors. Brinkmann concluded with asking researchers to consider an empirical study to see if and how risk and responsibility are correlated. The current research seeks to understand the

relationship that exists between the two. This study hypothesizes that those who have a high acceptance of risk are also likely to experience a high sense of personal responsibility. According to Brinkmann (2013), those individuals who display courage are more willing to attribute the outcomes of their actions back to the self.

	Responsibility Avoidance	Responsibility Acceptance
Risk Acceptance	Carelessness	Courage (Personal Responsibility)
Risk Avoidance	Cowardice	Cautiousness

Figure 8: The four types of relationships between risk and responsibility. From “Combining Risk and Responsibility Perspectives: First Steps,” by J. Brinkmann, 2103, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112, p. 581.

### Contextual Job Beliefs

#### Autonomy

Hackman, Oldham, Janson, and Purdy (1975) further developed our understanding on job enrichment by constructing the job characteristics model (see Figure 9). Hackman, Oldham, et al. proposed that personal responsibility is a critical psychological state that predicts both personal and work outcomes deriving from one’s autonomy on the job. Autonomy is defined within the model as “the degree to which the job gives the worker freedom, independence and discretion in scheduling work and determining how he will carry it out” (Hackman, Oldham, et al., 1975, p. 59). The theory states that those who have high autonomy within their job are more likely to be personally responsible for both positive and negative outcomes. The rationale is that “to the extent that their (employee) autonomy is high, then, how the work goes will be felt to depend more on the individual’s own efforts and initiatives—rather than on detailed instructions from the boss”

(Hackman, Oldham, et al., 1975, p. 59). In essence, the more one believes the work is directed by oneself, the more likely one is to attribute responsibility back towards the self.

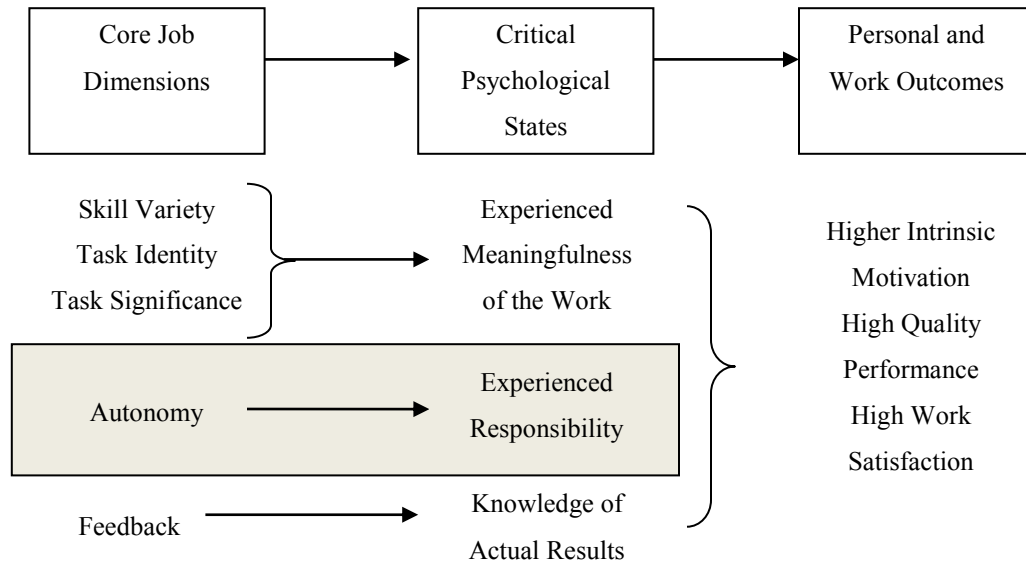


Figure 9: The job characteristics model, where autonomy is predicted to produce a sense of responsibility within an employee. From “A New Strategy for Job Enrichment,” by J. R. Hackman, G. Oldham, R. Janson, and K. Purdy, 1975, *California Management Review*, 17, p. 58.

This finding was further validated in a field experiment whereby nursing home residents were either given autonomy or strictly told how to complete a task (Langer & Rodin, 1975). Those residents who were given autonomy to complete the task in whatever manner best suited them were significantly more likely to experience personal responsibility and ultimately became more active and happier residences. Langer and Rodin (1975) concluded that autonomy was a deciding factor to whether one felt personally responsible for the outcomes of one’s behaviors. Autonomy then is hypothesized to be a manifest antecedent to personal responsibility represented by contextual job beliefs.



### Psychological Ownership

Dyne and Pierce (2004) defined psychological ownership as “the experienced phenomenon in which an employee develops possessive feelings for the target” (p. 439). Those who experience a high sense of psychological ownership often use the terms *my* and *mine* when explaining an object. Beaglehole (1932) and Furby (1978) noted that a feeling of ownership initiates a sense of responsibility and is seen as a motivational factor to experiencing a sense of responsibility. The reasoning is that if one feels a sense of ownership towards an object then one will also experience a sense of responsibility as one believes the object is his or hers. For example, as an employee, if I have a high sense of psychological ownership towards my organization, I am also likely to experience a strong sense of personal responsibility over my work within the organization. One tends to develop a greater sense of personal responsibility over those things in which one has feelings of ownership.

As a result of the likely correlation between the two constructs, some researchers have defined psychological ownership and responsibility to be the same construct (e.g., O’Reilly, 2002; Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997). However, Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks (2001) argued that these are two distinct states. While one may feel ownership towards an object, one may not attribute responsibility back towards the self. For example, as a parent of an adult child, I feel that he or she is *my* child, but I do not attribute personal responsibility for his or her actions back to me. The sense of psychological ownership and personal responsibility are in fact two distinct states. Pierce and Jussila (2011) acknowledged, “There may well be a reciprocal relationship between the two constructs, such that responsibility impacts psychological ownership, which in turn influences a sense of responsibility” (p. 18). Therefore, the current research seeks to better understand the relationship that exists between the two constructs. It is hypothesized that a strong sense of psychological ownership will lead to a higher sense of personal responsibility. It is also noted that psychological ownership is a contextual belief that may vary from organization to organization.

### Role Clarity

As noted in Schlenker et al.'s (1994) personal responsibility triangle, the strength for which I believe to be personally responsible depends on the clarity between my role, the event, and prescriptions. Role clarity is seen most notably between the identity and prescriptions link. The strength of these links depends on the clarity of my role and its expectations. For example, Within an organization, are the different expectations that a manager versus an individual contributor carry clear? Role clarity is considered a contextual job belief as it can change depending on the organization and job. Some organizations and teams are simply better at setting role expectations than others. One of the common problems organizations face with matrix structures is the lack of role clarity—Who is ultimately responsible for the project?

Many large organizations, such as The Hartford, establish groups called shared services. These work groups are functional teams that multiple business lines could access for project work. However, those employees working within shared services often faced ambiguity as expectations varied by business line. If the project failed, was it a result of the business line or shared service? It was found that these shared service groups could be successful only when role clarity, expectations, and accountability were set from the start of the project. Without a clear set of prescriptions, an actor is less likely to take personal responsibility for the outcomes.

Darley and Latane (1968) found that the diffusion of responsibility is likely to occur in settings whereby responsibility is not clearly defined. For example, many times in group settings where roles are not clearly identified, people are less likely to attribute responsibility for the outcomes back to self. Instead, in the midst of role ambiguity, responsibility is often diffused or attributed to someone or something else rather than self. In Bartunek's (1986) empirical study on the impact of job characteristics and a sense of personal responsibility, role clarity was found to be the most important determinant of personal responsibility ( $p < .001$ ;  $r = .33$  in women,  $r = .38$  in men). Hamilton (1978) noted that one of the important factors when attributing responsibility is the clarity of what one should do or should have

done as defined by the role. Role is important as it sets the expectations for behavior. Hart (1968) coined this *role responsibility*:

Whenever a person occupies a distinctive place or office in a social organization, to which specific duties are attached to provide for the welfare of others or to advance in some ways the aims or purpose of the organization, he is properly said to be responsible for the performance of these duties, or for doing what is necessary to fulfill them. (p. 212)

The more one understands one's role as an employee within the organization, the more likely one is to attribute responsibility for one's actions back to self. Consider the following example for how role clarity may impact an employee's sense of personal responsibility. An employee was recently handed an assignment that was outside of his or her general scope of work without a clear set of expectations on what the deliverable should be. This can be common when companies are downsizing or restructuring. Projects are often handed to employees who are left within the company with little explanation on how it was done or what a new leadership team expects. It is unclear to the employee how this work project aligns with his or her current role and how he or she should go about completing the task. The employee is unable to determine who else should be involved and resolves that the project outcome is not likely to be successful. As a result of the underlying lack of role and expectation clarity, the employee does not attribute the outcome of the assignment back to self but rather outward. It is hypothesized that the greater role clarity one has within one's job, the greater one's sense of personal responsibility.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavioral Intentionality**

As noted throughout this literature review, personal responsibility is hypothesized to lead to one intending on completing helpful behaviors. This is supported by Weiner (1995) who found that the antecedent to engaging in helpful behavior was one's acceptance of personal responsibility. Helpful behaviors in the workforce can be explained by OCB. OCB intentionality is used to assess the likelihood of an employee displaying helpful behaviors in the workplace. Organ (1988) defined OCB as

. . . an individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or 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 the omission is not generally understood as punishable. (p. 4)

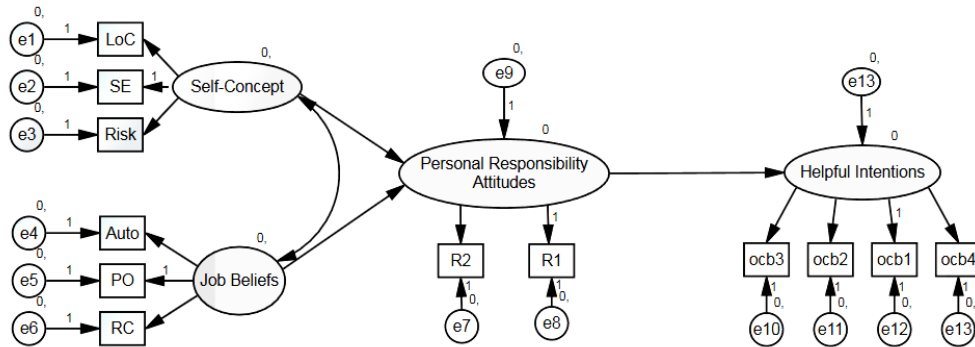
Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) identified 30 different facets of OCB. As a result, a variety of taxonomies have been used to classify the assortment of behaviors associated with OCB. Williams and Wong (1999) identified four factors associated with OCB intentionality: consideration, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship. These are the constructive behaviors that employees perform that go above and beyond their job role, such as assisting a coworker, assimilating a new member to the team, and volunteering for tasks (Organ, 1988). Consideration is the behavior of an employee who is cooperative and noncontroversial. This behavior builds relationships and interpersonal harmony within the workplace. Civic virtue describes the willing participation of an employee in work functions, meetings, and events. This employee is actively interested and engaged in the life of the organization. Conscientiousness refers to an employee who genuinely abides by the organization's standards, procedures, and regulations. This employee is often described as compliant. Sportsmanship behavior specifically describes one who is willing to accept difficulties and differences within the workplace. This includes refraining from unnecessary objections and criticisms.

These individual-level intentions assess the prosocial behavior that is likely to derive from one's attribution of responsibility to the self. An employee's likelihood to engage in OCB can be assessed by his or her sense of personal responsibility. It is hypothesized that if an employee has a low sense of personal responsibility, he or she is less likely to engage in OCB. Bandura (1991) noted, "Displacement of responsibility not only weakens restraints over one's own deleterious actions but diminishes social concern over the well-being of those mistreated by others" (p. 281). Charness (2000) found, "Shifting responsibility for an outcome to an external authority dampens internal impulses toward honesty,

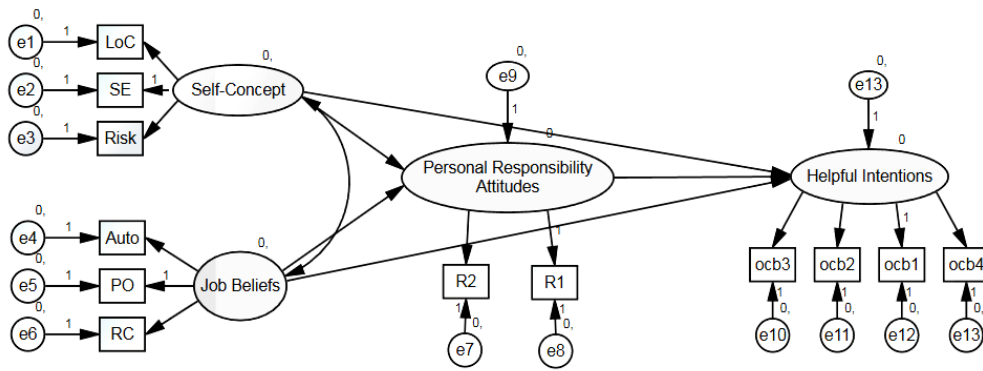
loyalty or generosity. Efficiency and performance may consequently be adversely affected” (p. 375). For example, an employee who attributes the consequences of his or her behaviors outside of self is more likely to engage in harmful behaviors at work. This can be explained by the mediation of personal responsibility between one’s beliefs and intention to engage in helpful behaviors. Personal responsibility is the motivational linchpin that connects one’s cognitions and behavioral intentionality. Personal responsibility is the explanation behind why some employees intend to help the organization while others do not.

Based on the review of the literature, it is proposed that the best model fit will reflect personal responsibility positively relating to OCB intentionality as well as mediate the relationship between one’s cognitive beliefs and intentions. Figure 10 depicts the casual and covariant relationships that are proposed to exist between the variables that are considered the antecedents and consequence of personal responsibility based on the review of the literature. Three models are tested: (a) a fully mediated model, (b) a partial mediation model, and (c) a direct effects model with no mediation. These path models use both manifest and latent constructs. The use of latent variables within the path model is justified by “improving statistical estimation, better representing theoretical concepts and accounting for measurement error” (Hair, Anderson, et al., 1998, p. 585). The latent variables are represented with circles, while the manifest variables are depicted with squares. The lines with arrows are used to show the cause-and-effect relationships, along with double-headed lines to represent the covariant relationships.

Model 1: *A Priori* Full Mediation Model



Model 2: Partial Mediation Model



Model 3: Direct Effects Model

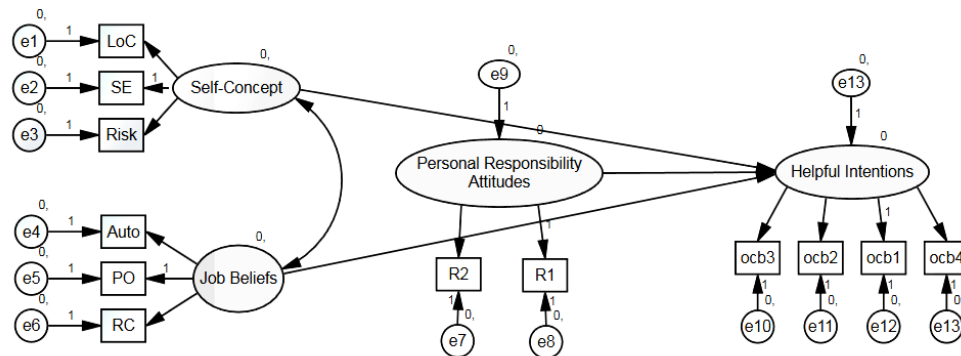


Figure 10: Causal model for personal responsibility mediating the relationship between beliefs and intentions with both latent and manifest variables present. Three different models are tested for best fit: (a) the *a priori* model, which is the full mediation model; (b) the partial mediation model; and (c) the direct effects model.

## Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter examines the quantitative approach taken to address the hypotheses proposed within the study. This chapter covers the following topics: research method and design, sampling, operational measures tested, measurements used to collect data, the data collection, and the statistical treatment used to analyze the data.

### Research Method and Design

A quantitative research design is the most appropriate design for addressing the research question and corresponding hypotheses. The purpose of this study is to examine and construct theory about personal responsibility, namely the causal antecedents and consequences of the occurrence of personal responsibility. A descriptive cross-sectional research design is used with subjects being measured once within their environment without intervention through the use of a validated self-reporting questionnaire. This is a nonexperimental study.

Non-experimental research is systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention, from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables. (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 348)

The purpose of this type of research is to examine potential cause-and-effect relationships among the variables under investigation, while statistically controlling for certain variables in order to partial out their influence on the dependent variable so that only the influence of the independent variables is assessed. Creswell (2003) noted that survey-based research allows the researcher to generalize the results of the study about a certain characteristic, attitude, or behavior from a sample to a larger population. As common with quantitative research, philosophical assumptions are made, which underlie the current work. An ontological point of view is assumed as is the case with most quantitative designs, with reality being objective and singular (Creswell, 2003). The notion of causality is central to the proposed model; therefore, structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to assess

the reality of the phenomenon by using a path analytical model. The model is then tested statistically to determine how likely the intended rules were. Three tenets must exist when studying causality: (a) the relationship condition (the cause-and-effect variables must be associated), (b) the temporal antecedence condition (the cause occurs prior to the effect), and (c) the nonspuriousness condition (the observed relationship is not due to a confounding extraneous variable; Bocarnea, 2001). To establish the paths within the model, theoretical justifications are needed to form the hypothesized relationships. Based on robust theoretical rationale explained within the literature review, the proposed causal path modeling can be made as noted in Figure 10. All variables are assessed on the individual unit of analysis.

A quantitative, nonexperimental design using confirmatory SEM is used to determine if the proposed personal responsibility model is valid. Hair, Black, et al. (2010) noted that SEM is “the best multivariate procedure for testing both the construct validity and theoretical relationships among a set of concepts represented by multiple measured variables” (p. 609). A validated SEM allows the illumination of the relationships that exist between one’s beliefs, attitudes, and intentions surrounding personal responsibility, allowing a theoretical gap to be filled with greater insights to be made on why some employees are motivated to engage in helpful behaviors based on their sense of personal responsibility. SEM is a statistical modeling procedure intended to model the relationships that exists between latent and/or manifest variables. Latent variables are those factors that are not directly observed or measured, whereas manifest variables are measured directly. In the current study, the latent variables are unpinned by the theory of reasoned action, which includes personal responsibility attitudes, self-concept beliefs, contextual job beliefs, and intention to engage in helpful behavior. The manifest variables are responsibility denial, work locus of control, risk orientation, self-efficacy, job autonomy, psychological ownership, and experienced role clarity.

The outcome of this analysis is a casual model representing theoretical relationships based on a path analysis. A path analysis is an appropriate choice as it counterbalances the overall weakness of nonexperimental cross-sectional research.



Path analysis (a) develops a causal model based on theory; (b) enables theory building; (c) differentiates between direct, indirect, and misleading effects; and (d) allows the examination of multiple interrelated dependence relationships variables (Hair, Black, et al., 2010). The basic causal model proposed is noted in Figure 6.

### **Sampling**

Sample size is an essential component within SEM. Raykou and Widaman (1995) noted four factors that influence sample size determination: (a) model misspecification (a larger sample size allows for detecting specification error), (b) model size (recommend a minimum of five samples per parameter), (c) departures from normality (a minimum of 15 samples per parameter if data is not normal), and (d) estimation procedure (a minimum of 200 respondents for the maximum likelihood estimation). A general minimum recommended sample size of 200 participants is needed to make adequate statistical inferences and conclusions in SEM, based on Hair, Black, et al. (2010) who recommended increasing the size if the model is overly complex or the data exhibits nonnormal attributes. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) noted that a moderate sample size of 200 is optimal in SEM. Researchers have warned against using too large a sample size (400+) as the larger sample size causes nearly any difference to be perceived, resulting in poor goodness-of-fit measures (e.g., Hair, Anderson, et al., 1998; Hair, Black, et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Ding, Velicer, and Harlow (1995) noted that the minimum satisfactory sample size is 100-150 subjects when computing SEM. While researchers have varied in their sample size recommendation, the current study investigates eight parameters; therefore, a moderate sample size of 200 is supported.

The population under investigation for the study is full-time employees working in the financial services industry. The Hartford is a publically traded Fortune 500 company in the financial services industry with three primary product offerings: insurance, group benefits, and mutual funds. The Hartford employs over 18,000 employees; in 2013, it recorded \$26.2 billion in revenue. I was granted access to sample 1,000 of its employees. A sampling frame of mutual funds,

insurance, and group benefits employees at The Hartford was used, representing all business functions, including marketing, finance, sales, information technology, operations, and human resources. All 500 employees working within the mutual fund business line were sent the survey, along with 500 randomly selected employees working within the insurance and group benefits organization. Employees within this sampling frame are dispersed throughout the United States and represent a broad geographical sampling. Table 1 depicts the sample's demographic characteristics. The demographics are a typical representation of employees working at The Hartford skewing towards a higher educated (70% holding a bachelor's degree) and paid (81% receiving annual income of \$60,000 or higher) workforce within the financial services industry.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Variable	Frequencies	%
Gender		
Male	97	49.5
Female	99	50.5
(Missing = 4)		
Education		
High school graduate	6	3.0
Some college	13	6.5
2-year college degree	7	3.5
Bachelor's degree	139	69.9
Master's degree	29	14.5
Professional Degree (JD, MD)	6	3.0
Annual income		
\$30,000-\$39,999	2	1.0
\$40,000-\$49,999	12	6.1
\$50,000-\$59,999	23	11.7

Variable	Frequencies	%
\$60,000-\$69,999	46	23.5
\$70,000-\$79,999	31	15.8
\$80,000-\$89,999	20	10.2
\$90,000 or more	62	31.6
(Missing = 4)		
Age		
21-34	115	58.4
35-45	50	25.4
46-60	30	15.2
60+	2	1.0
(Missing = 3)		

### Operational Measures and Instrumentation

Following are the variables analyzed within the recursive path-analytical model: (a) *self-concept cognitions*, defined by one's locus of control, self-efficacy, and risk orientation beliefs; (b) *contextual job beliefs*, defined as the extent of autonomy, psychological ownership, and role clarity one experiences within one's job; (c) *attitudes towards personal responsibility*, defined as one's tendency to either attribute responsibility away (deny) or towards the self; and (d) *willingness to act*, defined as one's intentions to perform organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). One's attitudes towards personal responsibility are hypothesized to mediate the relationship between one's cognitions and intention to act. A covariant relationship is expected to exist between self-concept and contextual job beliefs. The intention to engage in helpful behaviors is seen as the dependent variable. The measurement model is depicted in Figure 10.

A self-reporting questionnaire was constructed using existing validated instruments to measure all desired variables. Table 2 summarizes the variables included within the instruments as well as the names and references used for the

scales. The questionnaire consisted of 80 questions (see Appendix A) and was inputted into the electronic web-based survey program Qualtrics. It was estimated that the survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Table 2: Variable Classes and Their Measurement

Latent construct	Observed variable	Source of scale
I. Personal Responsibility Attitudes	1. Responsibility denial	Schwartz (1968)
II. Antecedents of Personal Responsibility		
A. Self-concept beliefs	1. Work locus of control	Spector (1988)
	2. Risk orientation	Rohrman (1999)
	3. General self-efficacy	Chen et al. (2001)
B. Contextual job beliefs	1. Job autonomy	Hackman & Oldham (1980)
	2. Psychological ownership	Dyne & Pierce (2004)
	3. Experienced role clarity	Cammann et al. (1983)
III. Consequences of Personal Responsibility		
Helpful behavioral intentions	1. OCB intention	Williams & Wong (1999)

### Work Locus of Control

An employee's cognitive beliefs regarding locus of control were assessed using the Work Locus of Control Scale (Spector, 1988). The short form eight-item scale measures whether one believes to have an internal locus of control or external locus of control within a work context. This is a widely used scale within the organizational psychology literature to measure locus of control. Spector (1988)

found that the Work Locus of Control Scale may predict work behavior more accurately than the general locus of control scales. For the current study, the scale was scored in the direction of internal locus of control. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items included “Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck,” “People who perform their jobs well generally get rewarded,” and “If you know what you want out of a job, you can find a job that give it to you.”

#### Job Autonomy

To assess an employee’s cognitive contextual beliefs regarding his or her level of autonomy on the job, the Hackman and Oldham (1980) Job Autonomy Scale was used. This three-item scale assesses the extent to which an employee senses freedom and independence to perform his or her job. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items included “I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job” and “I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.”

#### Self-Efficacy

To assess an employee’s beliefs regarding his or her self-efficacy, the New General Self-Efficacy Measure (Chen et al., 2001) was used. The general self-efficacy scale was used as it measures “individuals’ perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations” (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998, p. 170). Considering that this study sought to examine the stable self-concept belief of efficacy, it made the most sense to measure this belief from a situation-independent competence viewpoint. As a result, this eight-item questionnaire measures one’s general sense of self-efficacy regardless of context. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items included “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them,” “I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind,” and “Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.”

#### Risk Orientation

To measure an employee’s risk acceptance or aversion, the Rohrmann (1999) Risk Orientation Questionnaire was used. This 12-item scale measures one’s

acceptance of risk. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*. Sample items included “I’m quite cautious when I make plans and when I act on them,, “I follow the motto ‘nothing ventured, nothing gained,” and “I express my opinion even if most people have opposite views.”

#### Psychological Ownership

The Dyne and Pierce (2004) Psychological Ownership Scale was used to measure the contextual belief of psychological organization towards the organization. This seven-item questionnaire measures the extent to which one believes one’s organization is his or hers. It is characterized by the belief and sense that it is my organization. A Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* was used. Sample items included “This is my organization,” “I sense that this organization is our company,” and “It is hard for me to think about this organization as mine.”

#### Role Clarity

Cammann et al. (1983) Experienced Role Clarity Scale was used to measure employees’ beliefs regarding their understanding of the tasks required within their role. This three-item scale, taken from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Package, assesses the extent to which role clarity exists within one’s current job. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* was used. Sample items included “Most of the time I know what I have to do on my job,” “Most of the time, people make it clear what others expect of me,” and “On my job I know exactly what is expected of me.”

#### Personal Responsibility

Personal responsibility was measured using the Schwartz (1968) Responsibility Denial Questionnaire. This 27-item questionnaire measures one’s attitude towards responsibility. The scale assesses whether one accepts or denies responsibility. The scale considers personal responsibility to be an individual tendency in which one either attributes or denies responsibility back to the self. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree* was used. Sample items included “I wouldn’t feel that I had to do my part in a group project if everyone else was lazy,” “When a person is nasty to me, I feel very little

responsibility to treat him well,” and “When a man is completely involved in valuable work, you can’t blame him if he is insensitive to those around him.”

### Helpful Behavioral Intention

To assess the extent to which one intends to engage in helpful behaviors at work, the Williams and Wong (1999) Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Intention Scale was used. This 11-item questionnaire is broken into four subscales that measure one’s consideration, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship. The scales assesses one’s intent to perform a particular behavior. Sample items included “A colleague has to meet a few deadlines with the same period of time and needs help with his/her workload. Your workload is lighter. How likely are you to help him/her?” and “The company’s newsletter has just arrived. How likely are to take a copy to read up on the latest developments in the company?”

### **Data Collection**

The Hartford was chosen as the field location to conduct the collection of data. The organization gave me permission to send surveys through email to its employees. All survey responses remained anonymous. The survey was first piloted the third week of September to a group of 25 individuals to ensure proper functioning of the web-based instrument. Once validated through the pilot study, the survey was sent by email to selected employees working at The Hartford. The participants had up to 3 weeks to complete the survey. The sampling frame consisted of all 500 employees working within the mutual funds division along with 500 employees randomly selected within the insurance and group benefits business line. Given the length of the survey, response and completion rates were expected to range between 20-25%. This required a total of 1,000 surveys to be sent in order to meet the required statistical sample size that was desired.

### **Statistical Analyses**

In order to confirm or reject the hypotheses within the research, multiple data analyses must be performed. To begin, reliability is assessed using Cronbach’s alpha of the items used within the survey. A correlation and descriptive statistical

analysis is conducted to determine the relationships within the dataset. The primary data analysis is SEM analysis, which is conducted using SPSS AMOS software Version 22. SEM includes a two-step procedure (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The first step involves performing a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to develop a nonstandard measurement model that is able to fit to the data. The second step is modifying the measurement model through SEM in order to represent the theoretical model. This theoretical model is then tested and revised until a statistically acceptable model is derived.

Based on the limitations of the study, I used half of the sample to find the right specified model and the other half to determine the cross-validation index. This allowed me to predict a path analysis for the variables within the proposed model and better understand the relationships that exist among the variables in the model. SEM is a very robust multivariate analysis technique that includes aspects of regression analysis, factor analysis, and simultaneous equation modeling. Therefore, the nature of the inquiry of the research deems SEM as the most appropriate and vigorous data analysis to uncover the role of responsibility in the workplace.

Descriptive and multivariate analyses were used to develop the model. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, cross-tabulations, measures of central tendencies, and dispersions. The multivariate analysis included CFA and path analysis using SPSS AMOS. Descriptive analyses were executed on all variables within the study. The descriptive analyses also allowed me to ensure that assumptions were met to include all variables within the multivariate analyses. Hair, Black, et al. (2010) noted that data should be normally distributed and absent of multicollinearity. Lastly, descriptive analyses helped the research identify anomalies within the data, including outliers and missing data.

The multivariate data analyses sought to identify and measure the model. The SPSS AMOS outputs were deduced for (a) evaluating the fit between the model and data, (b) examining the reliability and validity of the latent constructs and manifest indicators, (c) determining parsimony of the model, (d) deciding the necessity of model improvement through model respecification, and (e) conveying



path coefficient and statistical significance to draw conclusions on hypotheses and causal model.

Decision rules are needed to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs and indicators within the model. Hatcher (1994) provided the following characteristics to indicate the *ideal fit* for a model:

- a) The p value for the model chi-square test should be nonsignificant ( $p > .05$ )
- b) The chi-square/df should be less than 2.0
- c) The comparative fit index (CFI) should exceed 0.9; the closer to 1.0 the better
- d) The critical value (t statistic) for each factor loading should exceed 1.96
- e) The R-squared value for the latent endogenous variables should be relatively large. (p. 393)

Given that Hatcher believed that these characteristics were difficult to achieve with field data and that the model chi-square test was considered “unreasonable strict” (p. 394) and is particularly sensitive to sample size, the following additional statistical tests were considered within the decision rules of determining ideal fit.

The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is a commonly used measure to determine the amount of variances and covariances mutually accounted for by the model (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1987). The GFI is an appropriate choice within this research analysis to measure model fit as it is less sensitive to sample size. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating a perfect model fit. Previous researchers have argued that values greater than .90 indicated good fit, whereas current researchers believe that .95 should be used (Hair, Black, et al., 2010). Within this research, a GFI value of  $> .95$  is considered a good model fit.

An additional measure that was used to assess model fit is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). This statistical test better represents a population, rather than just the sample under investigation, by “explicitly trying to correct for both model complexity and sample size by including each in its computation” (Hair, Black, et al., 2010, p. 649). Researchers have tended to advise that a good model fit is represented by a value of .08 or lower. The RMSEA was

also used as part of the decision rules to determine model fit by considering values under .08 as acceptable.

Lastly, parsimony fit statistics were taken into consideration when determining a good model fit. The parsimony fit considers the complexity of the model and determines if there is a simpler or better fit than the one proposed. The two measures considered within the decision rules are adjusted GFI (AGFI) and parsimony normed fit index (PNFI). These indices are best used when comparing one model to another. Therefore, the model with the highest PNFI is considered to be better supported. See Table 3 for a summary of the decision rules.

Table 3: Decision Rules for Determining Model Fit

Statistical test	Preferred value representing good model fit
$\chi^2$	Insignificant $p$ value
Chi-square/ $df$	< 2.0
CFI	> .90
$t$ statistic	> 1.96, at a significant $p$ value
GFI	> .95
RMSEA	< .08
AGFI/PNFI	Used to compare models—higher the better

## Chapter 4 – Results

Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step procedure was used within the study. The first step was to complete a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to develop the nonstandard measurement model that fit the data. The second step was to modify the measurement model through structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses and theoretical model proposed. Three models were proposed and tested to determine the best model fit: (a) a fully mediated model, (b) a partial mediation model, and (c) a direct effects model.

### Measurement Model

To determine the measurement model that would be used to test the various structural models, a preliminary reliability analysis was conducted along with a CFA.

#### Preliminary Analysis

Cronbach's alpha reliability analyses were performed on all the scales that were used within this study to determine if there were any potential weaknesses before conducting the CFA to test the measurement model. These results are shown in Table 4. The initial reliability coefficients were acceptable for risk, personal responsibility, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) intentions ( $> .65$ ) and very good for locus of control, self-efficacy, autonomy, psychological ownership, and role clarity ( $> .80$ ). Therefore, all scales were deemed reliable for the CFA with no modifications needed.

Table 4: Alpha Coefficients for Scales

Scale	Alpha coefficient
Locus of Control	.83
Self-efficacy	.91
Risk	.72
Autonomy	.93
Psychological Ownership	.93
Role Clarity	.84
Personal Responsibility	.76
OCB Intentions	.69

Additionally, the means, standard deviations, and correlations among covariate, independent, and dependent variables were computed. These are reported in Table 5. One of the highest statistically significant correlations exists between personal responsibility and OCB intentions ( $r = .434, p < .001$ ). The SEM is necessary to determine the causality of the relationship between these two variables.

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Covariate, Independent, and Dependent Variables

#	Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Locus of control	4.54	.65	1.00	.23**	.48**	.34**	.40**	.32**	.22**	.24**
2	Risk	3.93	.56	.23**	1.00	.36**	.03	.04	-.05	.05	.25**
3	Self-efficacy	5.00	.59	.48**	.36**	1.00	.26**	.31**	.32**	.18*	.37**
4	Autonomy	4.51	1.06	.34**	.03	.26**	1.00	.49**	.31**	-.04	.13
5	Psychological ownership	3.40	1.07	.40**	.04	.31**	.49**	1.00	.26**	.23**	.27**
6	Role clarity	4.76	.84	.32**	-.05	.32**	.31**	.26**	1.00	.21**	.23**
7	Personal responsibility	4.29	.45	.22**	.05	.18*	-.04	.23**	.21**	1.00	.43**
8	OCB intent	4.47	.54	.24**	.25**	.37**	.13	.27**	.23**	.43**	1.00

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The first step in completing SEM is to determine the measurement model by way of CFA. CFA allows the researcher to determine how well the latent variables are being represented by the manifest indicator variables as well as the covariances between the structural variables. The model under investigation within the current study consisted of four latent variables: self-concept beliefs, contextual job beliefs, attitudes towards personal responsibility, and helpful behavioral intentions. Each of these latent variables was captured with two or more manifest indicators. It is common to conduct a CFA separately for exogenous and endogenous variables to determine a common factor structure. The exogenous variables within this study are self-concept beliefs and contextual job beliefs. The endogenous variables are attitudes towards personal responsibility and intention to engage in helpful behaviors.

*Initial model.* Using CFA, the initial measurement model allowed the structural variables to covary with each other (see Figure 11). A separate CFA was conducted for exogenous and endogenous variables.

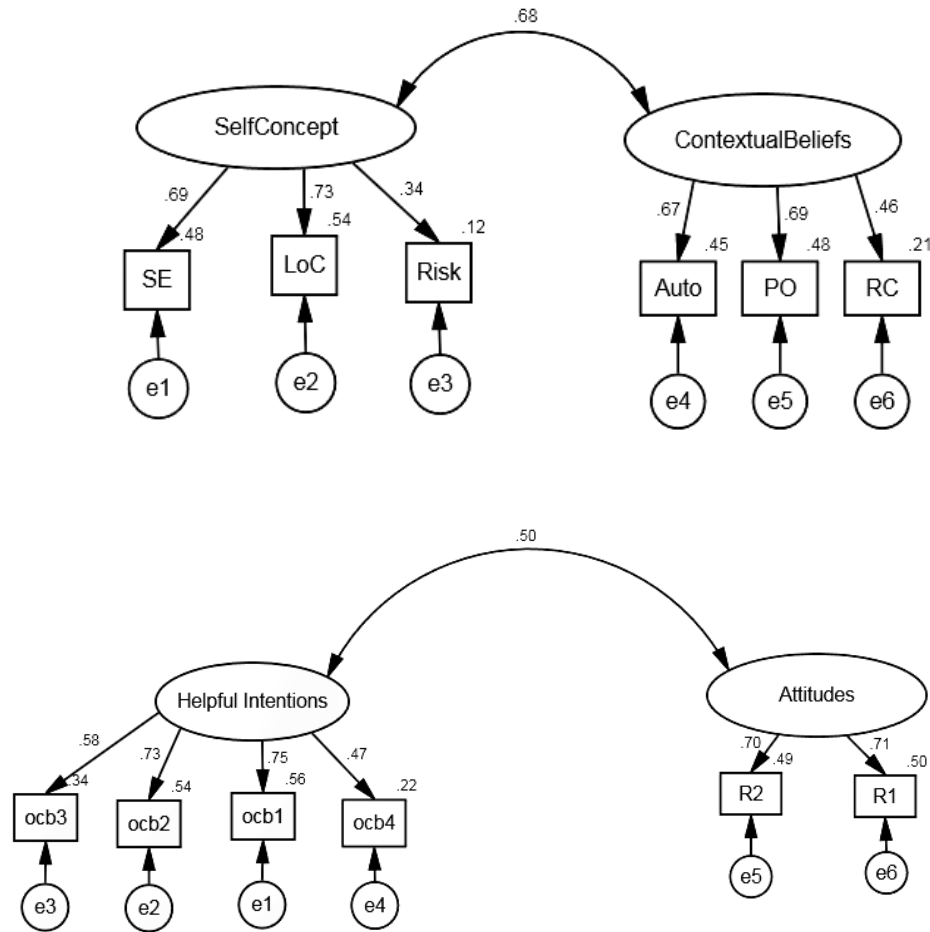


Figure 11: Initial path analysis model with latent variables for the standard measurement model. Residuals of manifest endogenous variables are shown with a small circle.

The initial measurement model was estimated using the maximum likelihood technique within SPSS AMOS. The statistics of this first analysis are presented in Table 6. While the chi-square statistic is statistically significant, given its sensitivity to sample size and departures from normality, it is possible to reject a well-fitting model; therefore, other statistics were examined to determine the goodness of fit of the model. The endogenous measurement model resulted back in good fit, while the exogenous variable measurement model goodness-of-fit

statistics suggested a better model fit. Additional analysis was conducted to determine a better measurement model for the exogenous variables, while the endogenous measurement model was deemed acceptable.

Table 6: CFA Initial Model Goodness-of-Fit Statistics

Chi-square ( $x^2$ )	Exogenous variables	Endogenous variables
Chi-square	30.73 ( $p = .000$ )	17.32 ( $p = .027$ )
<i>df</i>	8	8
CMIN/DF	3.84	2.17
Absolute fit measures		
GFI	.96	–
RMSEA	.12	.08
90% CI for RMSEA	(.08, .17)	(.03, .13)
RMR	.04	–
Incremental fit indices		
NFI	.87	.93
CFI	.89	.96
RFI	.75	.82
Parsimony fit indices		
AGFI	.88	–
Parsimony NFI	.36	.35

*Note.* GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; RMR = root mean square residual; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RFI = relative fit index; AGFI = adjusted Goodness of Fit Index.

The next statistical analysis examined the standardized residuals to determine if that is a potential source for the less than desired fit indices discussed above. “Residuals are the individual differences between observed covariance terms and the fitted (estimated) covariance terms” (Hair, Black, et al., 2010, p.



689). Residual terms can be either positive or negative, and values less than 2.5 typically do not suggest a problem. Residuals for the initial model are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Standardized Residuals for Initial Measurement Model

Indicator	RC	Risk	Auto	PO	SE	LoC
Role clarity	.00					
Risk	-2.27	.00				
Autonomy	.09	-1.72	.00			
Psych Own	-.75	-1.69	.31	.00		
Self-efficacy	1.40	1.71	-.76	-.20	.00	
Locus of control	1.23	-.27	.05	.66	-.31	.00

After determining that all standardized residuals were lower than 2.5, a factor loading was computed to determine how well the indicators represented the latent constructs. Factor loadings that are statistically significant provide directional guidance in determining the convergent validity of the measurement model. The unstandardized factor loading estimates are displayed in Table 8, while the standardized loadings are presented in Table 9 along with the reliability and validity calculations.

Table 8: CFA Initial Model Factor Loading Estimates and *t* Values

Indicator	Construct	Estimated loading	SE	<i>t</i> value
LoC	SC	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
Risk	SC	.40	.10	3.91
Self-Efficacy	SC	.85	.140	6.11
Psychological ownership	JB	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
Autonomy	JB	.96	.16	6.02
Role clarity	JB	.52	.11	4.93
R1 accept	Attitudes	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
R2 deny	Attitudes	1.29	.31	4.20
OCB1	Helpful	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
OCB2	Helpful	1.45	.19	7.56
OCB3	Helpful	1.35	.20	6.63
OCB4	Helpful	.75	.14	5.46

Note. R1 = Responsibility Scale 1. R2 = Responsibility Scale 2.

<sup>a</sup>Not estimated when loading set to fixed value.

Table 9: CFA Initial Model Standardized Factor Loadings

Indicator	Self-concept beliefs	Conceptual job beliefs	Attitudes	Helpful
Locus of control	.73			
Risk	.34			
Self-efficacy	.69			
Psychological ownership		.69		
Autonomy		.67		
Role clarity		.46		
R1 Accept			.71	
R2 Deny			.70	
OCB1				.75
OCB2				.73
OCB3				.58
OCB4				.47
Average variance extracted	38%	38%	49%	41%
Composite reliability	.63	.64	.66	.73

Note. R1 = Responsibility Scale 1. R2 = Responsibility Scale 2.

Table 10: CFA Initial Model Correlation Matrix

Relationship	Interfactor correlation	Squared correlation
Self-Concept*Job Beliefs	.68	.46
Attitudes*Help	.50	.25

*Revised model.* The initial endogenous CFA model was deemed a reasonable measurement model fit. However, based on the results of the initial CFA exogenous model, the manifest variable of risk was dropped. The theoretical applications of this are discussed in Chapter 5. See Figure 12 for a revised measurement model.

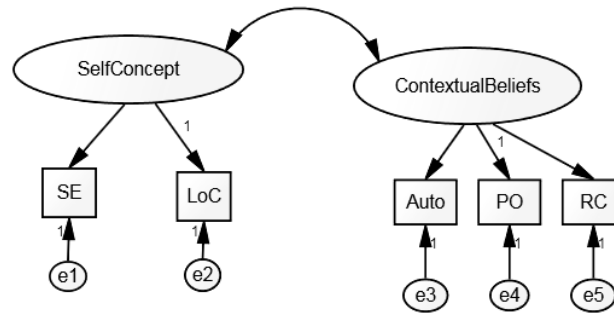


Figure 12: Revised path analysis model with latent variables for the standard measurement model. Residuals of manifest endogenous variables are shown with a small circle.

A CFA analysis was conducted with the revised measurement model. Table 11 presents the revised goodness-of-fit statistics. The revised model shows better fit compared to the initial model tested. The chi-square while still statistically significant decreased in value. The GFI is now above the desired .970. The 90% confidence interval for the RMSEA is between .00 and .139. The RSEMA is well below .80 at .067. Both the CFI as well as the NFI are also now above .90. These goodness-of-fit statistics reflect an acceptable measurement model based on the decision rules presented within the study.

Table 11: CFA Revised Model Goodness-of-Fit Statistics

Chi-square ( $x^2$ )	Exogenous variables
Chi-square	7.53 ( $p = .11$ )
<i>df</i>	4
CMIN/DF	1.88
Absolute fit measures	
GFI	.99
RMSEA	.07
90% CI for RMSEA	(.00, .14)
RMR	.03
Incremental fit indices	
NFI	.96
CFI	.98
RFI	.90
Parsimony fit indices	
AGFI	.95
Parsimony NFI	.38

*Note.* GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; RMR = root mean square residual; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RFI = relative fit index; AGFI = adjusted Goodness of Fit Index.

The factors also continued to show a  $t$  value above 1.96 at a statistically significant level ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 12: CFA Revised Model Factor Loading Estimates and *t* Values

Indicator	Construct	Estimated loading	SE	<i>t</i> value
Self-efficacy	SC	.74	.13	5.62
Locus of control	SC	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
Psychological ownership	JB	1.00	— <sup>a</sup>	— <sup>a</sup>
Autonomy	JB	0.95	.15	6.19
Role clarity	JB	0.53	.11	5.07

<sup>a</sup>Not estimated when loading set to fixed value.

$p < .001$ .

Removing the weak indicator, risk, in the initial measurement model provided greater validity and reliability within the model.

Table 13: CFA Revised Model Standardized Factor Loadings

Indicator	Self-concept beliefs	Conceptual job beliefs
Locus of control	.77	
Self-efficacy	.63	
Psychological ownership		.69
Autonomy		.66
Role clarity		.47
Average variance extracted	49%	38%
Composite reliability	.66	.64

Table 14: CFA Revised Model Correlation Matrix

Relationship	Interfactor correlation	Squared correlation
Self-Concept*Job Beliefs	.73	.53

### Structural Model

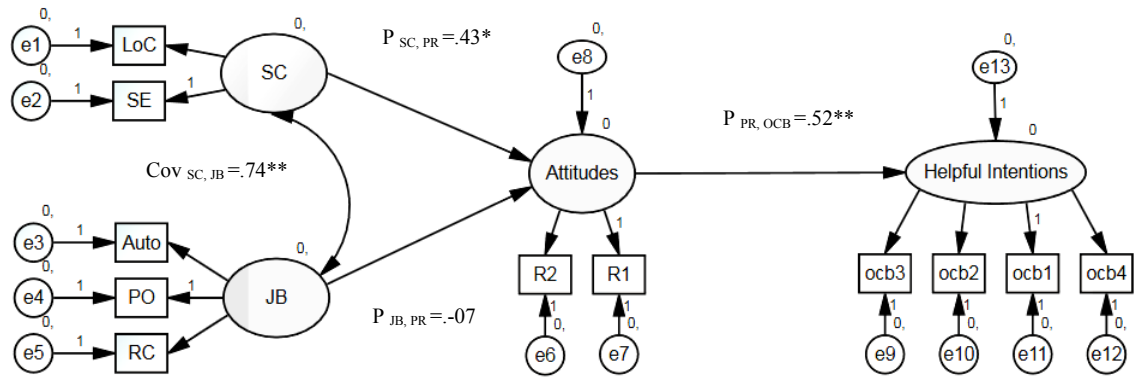
After determining the acceptable measurement model, SEM was used to test the hypotheses proposed within this study. Three models were tested comprising of a full mediation model, partial mediation, and direct effects model to determine the best fit. The goodness-of-fit indices are displayed within Table 15. The full mediation model resulted in the best model fit and was used to test the hypotheses proposed within the study. Figure 11 depicts the SEM that resulted in the best model fit as well as the hypotheses supported within the study's findings.

Hypotheses 1 and 3 are supported while Hypothesis 2 is not.

Table 15: Structural Model Overall Goodness-of-Fit Indices

Model	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2$	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	PNFI
Model 1: Full Mediation	40	72.76 ( <i>p</i> = .001)	1.82	.06	.86	.93	.52
Model 2: Partial Mediation	38	70.83 ( <i>p</i> = .001)	1.86	.07	.86	.93	.49
Model 3: Direct Effects	40	82.39 ( <i>p</i> = .001)	2.06	.07	.84	.90	.51





Hypothesis	Parameter	Supported?
H1: SC+ → Personal Responsibility	$P_{SC,PR}$	Yes
H2: JB+ → Personal Responsibility	$P_{JB,PR}$	No
H3: PR+ → Helpful	$P_{PR,OCB}$	Yes

Figure 13: Full mediation model used for hypotheses testing.

Table 16: Structural Parameter Estimates for Employee Personal Responsibility Model

Structural relationship	Unstandardized				Standardized
	parameter estimate	SE	t value	p value	parameter estimate
H <sub>1</sub> :SC → Attitudes	.36	.182	1.97	.05	.43
H <sub>2</sub> :JB → Attitudes	-.03	.09	-.34	.73	-.07
H <sub>3</sub> :PR → Helpful	.78	.18	4.34	.00	.52
SC correlated to JB	.21	.04	4.77	.00	.74

Note. SC = self-concept beliefs; JB = contextual job beliefs; PR = personal responsibility.

Hypotheses 4<sup>a</sup> and 4<sup>b</sup> test the mediation of personal responsibility within the model. To further test the mediation of personal responsibility within the model, total effects, indirect effects, and direct effects are assessed. The following mediation hypotheses were proposed within this study:

- H<sub>4</sub><sup>a</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between self-concept beliefs and willingness to help.
- H<sub>4</sub><sup>b</sup>: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between job beliefs and willingness to help.

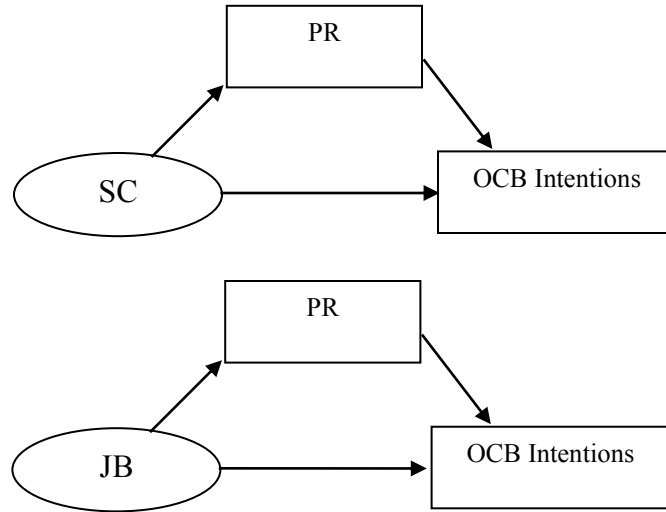


Figure 14: Mediation of personal responsibility proposed between beliefs and helpful behavioral intentions.

Hair, Black, et al. (2010) provided the following steps for testing mediation:

1. Establish that the necessary individual relationships have statistically significant relationships.
  - a. Self-concept (SC) and contextual job beliefs (JB) are related to OCB intentions establishing a direct relationship exists.
  - b. SC and contextual JB are related to personal responsibility (PR) establishing that the mediator is related to the input construct.
  - c. PR is related to OCB intentions establishing that the mediator does have a relationship with the outcome construct.
2. Estimate an initial model with only the direct effect between SC and OCB as well as JB and OCB. Then estimate a second model adding in the mediating variable PR and the two additional path estimates. Then assess the extent of mediation as follows:
  - a. If the relationship between SC and OCB remains significant and unchanged once PR is included in the model as an additional

predictor (SC and PR now predict OCB), then mediation is now supported.

- b. If the path between SC and OCB is reduced but remains significant when PR is included as an additional predictor, then partial mediation is supported.
- c. If the path between SC and OCB is reduced to a point where it is not statistically significant after PR is included as a mediating construct, then full mediation is supported.

Based on the findings of the CFA and SEM, only the mediation between SC and PR is assessed as there was no statistically significant relationship found between JB and helpful intentions. Figure 15 shows the revised model with direct effects added between SC and helpful intentions.

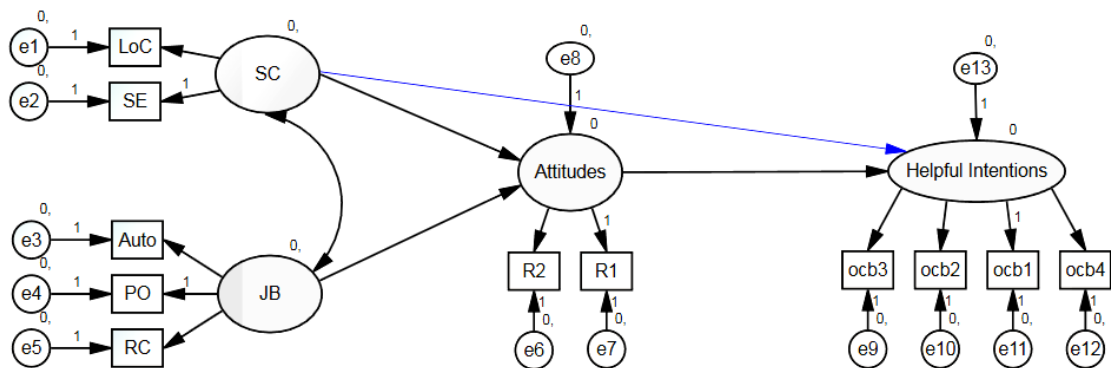


Figure 15: Revised model with direct effect between self-concept and helpful intentions.

As noted in Table 17, the full mediation and revised direct effects model obtained good model fit. However, self-concept does not have a statistically significant impact on helpful intentions. The direct effect is both low (parameter estimate = .15) and statistically not significant ( $p > .05$ ). Further analysis was

conducted to determine the level of direct and indirect effect, though not statistically significant still worthy of investigation. The indirect effects still showed greater influence on helpful intentions from self-concept beliefs than the direct effects. Therefore, full mediation is supported within the study.

Table 17: Testing for Mediation in the Personal Responsibility Model

Model element	Model 1: Full mediation	Revised model with direct effect
Model fit		
Chi-square	72.76	70.86
<i>df</i>	40	39
Probability	.00	.00
RMSEA	.06	.06
CFI	.93	.93
Standardized parameter estimates		
SC PR	.43*	.42*
JB PR	-.07	-.09
SC Helpful	Not estimated	.15
PR Helpful	.52*	.45*

Note. SC = self-concept beliefs; PR = personal responsibility; JB = contextual job beliefs.

Table 18: Assessing Direct and Indirect Effects in a Mediated Model

Effects of SC → Helpful	Model 1 (only indirect effects)	Mediated model (indirect and direct effects)
Total effects	.23	.34
Direct effects	.00	.15
Indirect effects	.23	.19

## Chapter 5 – Discussion

This research study sought out to address the cognitive antecedents of personal responsibility and its consequences within the workplace. Specifically, three different structural equation models were tested to determine the model that best represented the relationships between self-concept and contextual job beliefs with attitudes towards personal responsibility and helpful behavioral intentions. The a priori model was constructed based on Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action framework. This model hypothesized the full mediation of personal responsibility between cognitions and helpful behavioral intentions. Table 15 summarizes the model fit indices indicating as hypothesized, the a priori model, which reflects personal responsibility as a full mediation construct between beliefs and behavioral intentions, deeming it the best model fit. The second finding, which is further discussed, is the significant predictor of personal responsibility to helpful behavioral intentions. This is consistent with Weiner's (1995) intrapersonal theory of motivation, which states that helpful behavioral intentions can be understood and predicted by personal responsibility. Lastly, this study found that personal responsibility is best predicted by stable self-cognitions rather than contextual job beliefs. This is contrary to what was hypothesized according to Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics model, which states that responsibility is a direct outcome of one's sense of autonomy. This study shows that the influence of autonomy on personal responsibility was insignificant and a poor predictor of one's sense of personal responsibility. However, contextual job beliefs did have an indirect impact on personal responsibility based on its covariant relationship with self-concept beliefs. Overall, this study's findings begin the much needed conversation about the influence of personal responsibility within the workplace.

### Supported Relationships

The hypotheses tested within the study generated significant findings that can continue to be tested within future research pertaining to the role of personal responsibility in the workplace.

### Full Mediation of Personal Responsibility

The a priori model suggested that personal responsibility would fully mediate the relationship between one's beliefs and behavioral intentions through one's attitudes towards personal responsibility. To test this hypothesis, two additional models—one reflecting partial mediation and the other only representing direct effects—were constructed to determine if there would be a significant change in model fit compared to the a priori model. The partial mediation Model 2 showed no significant change in model fit. Model 3, the direct effects model, resulted in less desirable fit. This finding supports the work of Weiner (1995) who believed that personal responsibility was the direct antecedent to engaging in helpful behaviors caused by one's belief system. This finding adds additional understanding to the organizational citizenship behavioral (OCB) research. The personal responsibility framework provides a motivational understanding to why some employees may choose to engage in helpful behaviors, while others may not. Personal responsibility may be the linchpin that needs further exploration to understanding employees' prosocial helpful behavioral intentions. As is further discussed, personal responsibility may be a more stable individual characteristic than first assumed. This then begs the question of the stability of one's behavioral intention and the degree to which context influences motivations to engage in helpful behavior. While this was only a point-in-time study within one organization, the findings suggest that the context may be less influential to motivating employees to engage in helpful behaviors than originally thought.

### Personal Responsibility as a Predictor of Helpful Behavioral Intentions

Weiner's (1995) definition of personal responsibility believed that the outcome of one ascribing the consequences of one's actions towards the self would result in engaging in helpful behaviors. While this theory has been tested by Weiner through qualitative reasoning, none have sought to confirm this theory empirically within the workplace. Weiner even stated that much of his work was theoretical and needed further empirical support. Within the organizational behavior literature, personal responsibility has often been tested as an outcome of autonomy, based on the job characteristics model. However, this research has

argued that autonomy poorly represents and undermines the construct of personal responsibility, which should encompass more than just one's perception of one's autonomy within the workplace. Just because one experiences autonomy within a role does not mean that one will attribute the consequences of one's action back to self. Having autonomy simply means that the environmental context will support the ascription of responsibility to the self rather than provide a reason for diffusing responsibility onto another, such as a manager. Drawing heavily from the psychology literature, which suggests that personal responsibility may in fact be an individual characteristic in which one has the tendency to ascribe responsibility back to the self, personal responsibility is defined within the motivational context as an antecedent to engaging in helpful behavior.

The question is now that we know this strong link occurs between these two constructs, why does one ascribing responsibility to the self often result in helping others? This may be explained by the fact that those who are more likely to ascribe responsibility back to the self are less likely to diffuse responsibility when someone such as a coworker needs help. These individuals are more likely to take it on themselves than explain away why it is not their responsibility to engage in helpful behaviors. It may be easier for some to diffuse the responsibility of helping a coworker by believing it is the manager's responsibility or the company's responsibility to ensure a coworker is helped rather than themselves. Those who are high in personal responsibility are more likely to believe it their responsibility to help someone in need and therefore are motivated to engage in helpful behaviors as a result of their attitudes towards personal responsibility. This study shows that there is a strong motivational link between the ascription of responsibility to the self and helping others.

#### *The Direct and Indirect Influence of Antecedent Beliefs*

Surprisingly, Hypotheses 2 and 4<sup>b</sup> were not supported within this study, which believed that contextual job beliefs would significantly predict one's attitudes towards personal responsibility. However, the findings showed little to no statistically significant relationship with both personal responsibility and helpful behavioral intentions. Part of this research also sought to address the stability of



personal responsibility as an individual characteristic that was less predicted by environment. Of course, this research would need to be further explored over a period of time to determine the effects of environment; however, this point-in-time study suggests that the contextual environment does not predict whether one will accept or deny personal responsibility. For example, autonomy beliefs actually had a negative relationship with personal responsibility. This means that there are employees with The Hartford who believe they lack autonomy within their role, yet they still have a tendency to accept responsibility and attribute the consequences of their actions back to self. This is contrary to Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristic model, which proposed that autonomy directly leads to one experiencing responsibility for outcomes of the work. This may in fact not be true. Autonomy may certainly influence one's attitudes towards responsibility but may not be a direct antecedent. Autonomy is contextual depending on the environment and management style; however, one's sense of accepting personal responsibility is a more stable characteristic that is best predicted by self-concept beliefs. This research suggests that further studies consider personal responsibility not as a byproduct of autonomy but rather as an individual trait that is defined as one's tendency to ascribe the consequences of one's action back to the self.

The implication is not to ignore the context but rather create environments that build greater self-efficacy within employees. Henry Ford once stated, "Whether you think that you can or you can't, you're usually right" (LeVan, 2010, p. 1). Bandura (1977) believed the self-concept to be a great predictor of success as those with a high sense of self-efficacy tend to set goals, see the task as something to master, and be less controlled by the environment context. Not surprisingly, these employees are much more likely to persist as well even in spite of hardship. This explains why although employees within the study did not believe to necessarily work within their preferred context, they were still willing to accept personal responsibility and still more willing to intend to help their coworkers. Self-regulatory capability may explain why some individuals are still motivated to engage in helpful behavior even in unfavorable environments.

The motivation to engage in helpful behaviors stems from one's acceptance of personal responsibility. Managers looking to build a greater culture of helpful behaviors should, instead of focusing on the behavior itself, focus on attitudes towards personal responsibility, focusing on employee's self-cognitions, specifically self-efficacy and locus of control. It is important for managers to reinforce one's ability to succeed and have a clearly defined role model from which others can learn. Personal responsibility, while a seemingly stable individual characteristic, may be learned based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991). This study seems to suggest that the person may be the strongest link, but the environment and behavior are not to be ignored for their indirect influence.

This study sought to better define our understanding of the antecedents and consequences of personal responsibility within the workplace. It was hypothesized that both self-concept and contextual job beliefs would be strong predictors of personal responsibility. However, it was found that self-concept was indeed a strong predictor, while contextual job beliefs can best be understood as a weak to moderate indirect predictor of personal responsibility. Table 19 summarizes the findings of this study.

Table 19: Summary of Study Findings

Antecedent	Direct or indirect	Strength	Consequence
Self-concept	Direct	Strong	Personal responsibility
Contextual job beliefs	Indirect	Weak to moderate	Personal responsibility
Personal responsibility	Direct	Strong	Helpful behavioral intentions

## Implications

This present research supports the theory that personal responsibility is an individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions back to the self, deriving from one's self-concept, consequently predicting one's willingness to engage in helpful behaviors. This study found that personal responsibility is a motivating factor that explains one's intention to help another coworker. This finding can in part be explained by the attitude–behavior intention link found within the theory of reasoned action. One's attitude and ultimately ascription of responsibility directly precedes one's intention to engage in helpful behaviors. Personal responsibility, when viewed through a motivational lens, can explain why some employees are more willing to exhibit prosocial behaviors within the workplace compared to others. Part of the problem thus far within the research as it relates to personal responsibility is the meaning behind such a common social construct. As discussed previously, the word is used so frequently within social dialogue that its meaning is often convoluted. However, this research sought to provide a working definition of personal responsibility, laying a foundation for additional empirical work. These present findings support the definition initially proposed within the study, stating personal responsibility as the cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's actions towards the self as well as the cognitive antecedent to engaging in helpful behavior.

As the study's findings implicate, personal responsibility can best be understood in light of control, agency, and persistence. Noted throughout previous studies is the notion of locus of control in relation to one's attribution of personal responsibility. This study's findings continue to support the notion that one's internal locus of control will positively predict the attribution of responsibility back to the self. However, just because one believes to have control does not imply whether one will choose to take responsibility for one's actions. This finding is consistent with that of Weiner's (1995) theory, which states it is entirely possible for different persons to have a high sense of control and yet varying degrees of personal responsibility: "It is important to distinguish between controllable causality and responsibility" (p. 24). So while controllability is certainly a

component of responsibility, it alone does not paint the entirety of personal responsibility. Rather, one must also consider the agency of an actor. As Moretto, Walsh, and Haggard (2011) stated, “Responsibility in turn rests on a concept of voluntary choice: individuals choose and control their own actions” (p. 1848). Agents must choose to ascribe the responsibility back to the self. Responsibility is then a choice one either chooses to accept or deny. As the study’s findings imply, those who have a high sense of self-efficacy, believing they can succeed, are more likely to choose to be personally responsible than those with a low sense of efficacy.

Lastly, responsibility also denotes persistence, meaning its stability as an individual characteristic is more stable than what other researchers have stated (i.e., Bartuenk, 1986; Hackman, Oldham, et al., 1975). The context plays less of a causality role than what was originally predicted within the study. This means that personal responsibility tendencies will persist even with the environmental context is less than desirable. One important consequence of this finding is that changing context will not necessarily motivate one to take responsibility. Rather, personal responsibility tendencies may be harder to change than formerly thought. Therefore, this research suggests that when one considers personal responsibility one must perceive the controllability, agency, and persistency within an actor.

This is not necessarily surprising that one’s sense of personal responsibility would persist even in the midst of a less desired context. Weiner (1979, 1985) found that one accepting personal responsibility leads to positive self-relevant outcomes. For example, those who attributed responsibility back to the self were likely to also experience a state of pride as well as higher self-esteem. Therefore, Weiner (1985) concluded that responsibility may lead to self-relevant psychological benefits not experienced otherwise. Does this then mean that those who were more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors were actually motivated to do so as a result of the positive psychological benefits received, rather than out of empathy or concern for another? Is it possible that personal responsibility predicts one’s intent to engage in helpful behaviors due to positive self-fulfilling reasons? In fact, McClelland’s (1985) learned needs theory states that those who prefer to take

responsibility do so out of a high need for achievement. In other words, the desire to achieve, obtain success, and perform well leads one towards ascribing responsibility back to the self. Therefore, the link between taking personal responsibility and intending to display helpful behaviors may in fact be a result of an achievement need rather than a true feeling of regard for another or the organization. Personal responsibility may in part be explained by one's desire to achieve and obtain success, and helping others may simply be a byproduct of that need. When an employee high in personal responsibility helps another coworker, both the psychological benefits of pride and self-esteem as well as fulfilling his or her need for achievement may help explain why personal responsibility's outcome is often seen in displaying helpful behaviors. Additionally, the employee with a sense of ascribing the consequences of actions back to the self may also be taking partial credit for the outcome of the coworkers' success since he or she was a contributing factor to the work. While, this is simply a theoretical explanation, it is certainly worthy of further exploration into the motivations of personal responsibility and behavioral intentionality.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations facing the study concerns the nature of self-reporting questionnaires. While self-reporting data have its advantages, one of the limitations is the possibility of respondent bias. Also, this is a cross-sectional research design that measured one point in time. To fully unpack the person and contextual influence, it is likely that a longitude study is needed to make causal ascriptions. While structural equation modeling allows for causal assumptions, the ability to make causal inferences is limited and made with caution. The structural equation models are based on correlations identified between the variables; Isaac and Michael (1997) cautioned correlation does not always imply causation. Also, Hair, Black, et al. (2010) recommended a minimum of three manifest variables per latent variable within a structural equation model based on the three-indicator rule. However, a "two-factor rule also states a congeneric factor model with two significant items per factor will be identified as long as each factor also has a

significant relationship with some other factor” (Hair, Black, et al., 2010, p. 682) as was the case in this study. While three indicators are preferred, two indicators are still justifiable to make a strong structural equation model. Additionally, there is always the possibility that other variables are confounding the results presented within the study. Lastly, another limitation is having one set of data to both determine the model and cross-validate it. Future research would be needed and recommended with a new sample to cross-validate the personal responsibility model with a separate set of data.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

This study is simply the beginning of much needed exploration into our understanding of personal responsibility in the workplace. The scope of this research solely focused on the motivational components within the theory of reasoned action, noting only the attitude and behavioral intentional link, which found that only the self-concept beliefs directly predict personal responsibility. The role of personal responsibility within the workplace has yet to be fully discovered. Therefore, future research needs to examine the actual behavioral component as the next consequence of helpful behavior intention. It is predicted that while the context did not directly influence the motivational components of personal responsibility or behavioral intentionality, context may indeed predict or influence the behavior itself. It is predicted that contextual beliefs may have a moderating influence on the behavior itself. The question that needs to be further explored is, How much does context influence a person’s attitudes towards personal responsibility? This research seems to suggest that only a covariant relationship existed within one’s self-concept and contextual job beliefs, resulting in minimal impact of the context to whether one would or would not ascribe responsibility back to the self. In other words, the context did little to motivate an employee to intend to engage in helpful behaviors. This finding opens an entirely new conversation within the applied psychology literature of the role of context in shaping and influencing one’s personal responsibility and prosocial behavior intentionality. Additional research should consider the context as a moderator that

may influence rather than predict one's sense of responsibility within the workplace.

However, future research should also consider the social influence that may impact one who typically ascribes responsibility back to the self to not do so due to the social circumstances. For example, the bystander effect has shown how in large groups of people, one's sense of personal responsibility may decrease as explained by the diffusion of responsibility. Therefore, can one identify a tipping point in which one who has the tendency towards personal responsibility diffuses one's sense of responsibility elsewhere due to a social influence? Or future research should consider the study of personal responsibility within a team setting. Does the size of the team or the social norms within the group influence one to ascribe responsibility differently?

Further research is needed to dive deeper in deciphering the differences between why some are motivated to ascribe the consequences of one's actions to the self while others are not. A longitudinal study is recommended to determine the longer term consequences of one's work environment on attitudes towards personal responsibility. Additionally, one may want to consider how the negative relationship between contextual job beliefs and personal responsibility impacts job satisfaction and performance.

Based on the literature review, it was determined that the latent variable of self-concept could be best operationalized by examining one's self-efficacy, locus of control, and risk tolerance. However, after running a confirmatory factor analysis, it was determined that risk was not the best indicator for measuring self-concept. Therefore, self-concept can best be understood by analyzing one's control beliefs. In essence, self-concept encompasses the totality of one's beliefs towards oneself; therefore, locus of control and self-efficacy may be the best indicators of that and may not include risk as part of the common factor. However, risk may be used in future studies as a separate variable to determine the impact it may or may not have on personal responsibility. Referring to Table 5 one will see that risk did have significant correlations with self-efficacy and locus of control. The nature of these relationships is suggested for future studies.

Lastly, it was proposed that personal responsibility is an individual tendency that persists and may in part be explained by one's desire to achieve success. A future study should focus on individual work values, which may also predict one's sense of responsibility. Further exploration into one's self-concept, including values and motivations, may be necessary to continue to uncover the totality of personal responsibility. Other research may also explore demographic differences, such as gender, to determine its impact on how one attributes responsibility towards or away from the self. Overall, this empirical study provided a framework and definition for additional research to consider other facets of personal responsibility within the workplace.

### **Summary**

The stated purpose of this research was to define and examine the cognitive antecedents and behavioral consequences of personal responsibility within the workplace. The findings indicate that self-concept beliefs, as manifested by locus of control and self-efficacy, were strong predictors of one's ascription of responsibility back to the self. Contextual job beliefs, however, were not found to predict personal responsibility and were rather an indirect influence based on the covariant relationship with self-concept beliefs. As predicted, attitudes towards personal responsibility were a strong predictor of whether one intended to engage in helpful behaviors. Therefore, helpful behavioral intentions were found as a direct consequence of personal responsibility. This study provides an extensive model that evaluates the motivational cognitions and intentions of personal responsibility within the workplace based on the theory of reasoned action framework. This study's findings call into question the job characteristics model as the most appropriate measure of personal responsibility, which states personal responsibility as a byproduct of autonomy. Rather, personal responsibility may be defined as a cognitive process and individual tendency to attribute the consequences of one's action back to the self. Perhaps, rather than focusing on the amount of autonomy one has within the workplace, research should focus on explaining why some employees have a higher sense of personal responsibility as well as test the stability



of that trait. The call for future research invites greater attention and dialogue to the self-cognitions that drive one to ascribe responsibility back to the self.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Spector (1988) Work Locus of Control Scale (short-form)

*The following questions concern your beliefs about jobs in general. They do not refer only to your present job. Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5 from I strongly disagree to I strongly agree.*

1. On most jobs, people can pretty much accomplish whatever they set out to accomplish
2. If you know what you want out of a job, you can find a job that gives it to you
3. Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck
4. Promotions are usually a matter of good fortune
5. Promotions are given to employees who perform well on the job
6. It takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee on most jobs
7. People who perform their jobs well generally get rewarded
8. The main difference between people who make a lot of money and people who make a little money is luck

#### Hackman & Oldham (1980) Job Autonomy Scale

9. I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job
10. I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work
11. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job

#### Chen et al. (2001) The New General Self-Efficacy Measure

12. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself
13. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them
14. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me
15. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind
16. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges
17. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks
18. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well
19. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well

#### Rohrmann (1999) Risk Orientation Questionnaire

20. I'm quite cautious when I make plans and when I act on them
21. I follow the motto, 'nothing ventured, nothing gained'
22. I've not much sympathy for adventures decisions

23. If a task seems interesting I'll choose to do it even if I'm not sure whether I'll manage it
24. I don't like to put something at stake, I would rather be on the safe side
25. Even when I know that my chances are limited I try my luck
26. In my work I only set small goals so that I can achieve them without difficulty
27. I express my opinion even if most people have opposite views
28. My decisions are always made carefully and accurately
29. I would like to act in my boss's job some time so as to demonstrate my competence, despite of the risk of making mistakes
30. I tend to imagine the unfavorable outcomes of my actions
31. Success make me take higher risks

#### Dyne & Pierce (2004) Psychological Ownership Scale

*Think about your current place of employment. Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5 from I strongly disagree to I strongly agree.*

32. This is my organization
33. I sense that this organization is our company
34. I feel a very high degree of personal ownership for this organization
35. I sense that is it my company
36. This is our company
37. Most of the people that work for this organization feel as though they own the company
38. It is hard for me to think about this organization as mine

#### Cammann, Fichmann, Jenkins & Klesh (1983) Experienced Role Clarity Scale

*Think about your current place of employment. Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5 from I strongly disagree to I strongly agree.*

39. Most of the time I know what I have to do on my job
40. Most of the time, people make it clear what others expect of me
41. On my job I know exactly what is expected of me

#### Schwartz (1968) Responsibility Denial Scale

*Each of the items below is a statement of an attitude or opinion some people have. There is no right or wrong responses to these statements. For each item, mark the number which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. If you are not certain, answer agree or disagree according to which comes closer to your opinions.*

42. If a good friend of mine wanted to injure an enemy of his, it would be my duty to try to stop him

43. Failing to return the money when you are given too much change is the same as stealing from a store
44. I wouldn't feel that I had to do my part in a group project if everyone else was lazy
45. If I hurt someone unintentionally, I would feel almost as guilty as I would if I had done the same thing intentionally
46. Gossiping is so common in our society that a person who gossips once in a while can't really be blamed so much
47. When a person is nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat him well
48. I would feel less bothered about leaving litter in a dirty park than in a clean one
49. No matter what a person has done to us, there is no excuse for taking advantage of him
50. When a man is completely involved in valuable work, you can't blame him if he is insensitive to those around him
51. If I damaged someone's car in an accident that was legally his fault, I would still feel somewhat guilty
52. When you consider how hard it is for an honest businessperson to get ahead, it is easier to forgive shrewdness in business
53. When a person is pushed hard enough, there comes a point beyond which anything he does is justifiable
54. Even if something you borrow is defective you should still replace it if it gets broken
55. You can't blame basically good people who are forced by their environment to be inconsiderate of others
56. No matter how much a person is provoked he is always responsible for whatever he does
57. Being upset or preoccupied does not excuse a person for doing anything he would ordinarily avoid
58. As long as a businessperson doesn't break laws, he should feel free to do his/her business as he sees fit
59. Occasionally in life a person finds himself in a situation in which he has absolutely no control over what he does to others
60. I would feel obligated to do a favor for a person who needed it, even though he had not shown gratitude for past favors
61. With the pressure for grades and the widespread cheating in school nowadays, the individual who cheats occasionally is not really as much at fault

62. I wouldn't feel badly about giving offense to someone if my intentions had been good
63. Extenuating circumstances never completely remove a person's responsibility for his or her actions
64. You can't expect a person to act much differently from everyone else
65. It doesn't make much sense to be very concerned about how we act when we are sick and feeling miserable
66. You just can't hold a store clerk responsible for being rude and impolite at the end of a long work day
67. Professional obligations can never justify neglecting the welfare of others
68. If I broke a machine through mishandling, I would feel less guilty if it was already damaged before I used it
69. When you have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everybody's best interests

#### Williams & Wong (1999) Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Intention Scale

##### *Consideration*

70. A colleague has to meet a few deadlines with the same period of time and needs help with his/her workload. Your workload is lighter. How likely are you to help him/her?
71. A colleague has just returned to work after being absent for a few days. Your workload is management. How likely are you to help him/her in any way to clear the work?
72. A colleague seems to be having some work problems. Your workload is rather heavy. How likely are you to volunteer your help?
73. A colleague is waiting for you to finish your part of the work before he/she can start working. How likely are you to make sure you do your work as fast as possible?

##### *Civic Virtue*

74. The company's newsletter has just arrived. How likely are you to take a copy to read up on the latest developments in the company
75. Someone mentions that there is a function which is not compulsory for all employees to attend but it will look better if more employees of the organization are going. How likely are you to go?
76. A colleague has just gotten hold of some organizational memos/announcement which you have not received. He/she offers to let you read them in your spare time. How likely are you to read them?

*Conscientiousness*

77. Your supervisor has just left for a meeting and your colleagues are suggesting to take an extra break. How likely are you to join them?
78. Your boss is not in the office and you can actually return from lunch late without him/her noticing. How likely are you to go back to work on time?

*Sportsmanship*

79. Some co-workers are complaining about some trivial organizational matters with which you agree. How likely are you to join them?
80. A co-worker is complaining about various aspects of the organization. How likely are you to join in to pick on the organization's faults?

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

#### Introduction

This study attempts to collect information about the different beliefs employees hold within the workplace.

#### Procedures

The questionnaire consists of 80 questions and will take approximately 15 minutes or less. Questions are designed to determine what you believe about work and how that impacts your motivations and actions. This questionnaire will be conducted with an online Qualtrics-created survey.

#### Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about what motivates employees within the workplace.

#### Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the primary investigator and assistant researchers listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

#### Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely.

#### Questions about the Research and your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Kelly Monahan, at [kellmon@mail.regent.edu](mailto:kellmon@mail.regent.edu).

## Appendix C

### Regent University Human Subject Research Review Form

Please submit *one electronic* copy of this form and any supporting documents to your dissertation chair or to the SBL IRB representative, Dr. Emily Cabanda at [ecabanda@regent.edu](mailto:ecabanda@regent.edu) .

**1. PROJECT REVIEW**

New Project (The HSRB will assign an ID#)

Revised Project (Enter ID#)

Renewal (Enter ID#)

**2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Kelly A. Monahan

Address: 300 W. Elm St. #2315, Conshohocken, PA 19428; Phone: 585-613-5905

E-Mail: [kellmon@mail.regent.edu](mailto:kellmon@mail.regent.edu); Date: September 10, 2014

**List of all project personnel (including faculty, staff, outside individuals or agencies)**

Dr. Bocarnea, Chair

Drs. Fields and Winston, Committee Members

If you are a **student**, please provide the following additional information:

This research is for  Dissertation  Thesis  Independent Study

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Name: Dr. Bocarnea

**3. TRAINING:** The National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research offers free self-paced online training at [phrp.nihtraining.com](http://phrp.nihtraining.com).

I have completed human subjects research training. Training Date: 9-11-14

**4. PROJECT TITLE:** Personal Responsibility in the Financial Services Industry: Examining the Cognitive Antecedents and Behavioral Consequences of Responsibility in Organizations

**5. IS THIS RESEARCH BEING SUBMITTED AS PART OF A FUNDED**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL?**  Yes  No

If yes, please identify the funding source:

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. ANTICIPATED LENGTH OF HUMAN SUBJECTS CONTACT:**

Beginning Date October 22nd Ending Date November 22<sup>nd</sup>

**7. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS:**

Number: 1,000 Age Range: 22-60 years old

Briefly describe subject population: Full-time working employees at The Hartford within the mutual fund and group benefits line of business. Demographics will consist of both



men and women between 22-60 years old representing a variety of business functions including operations, HR, finance, sales and marketing located throughout the United States.

**8. INDICATE THE REVIEW CATEGORY FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING.**

**X** I am applying for an **exempt review**, based on *one or more* of the following categories (check all that apply):

**Note: Exempt review cannot be claimed for any research involving prisoners and most research involving children.**

Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings and involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods

**X** Involving the use of survey procedures, educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), interview procedures or observation of public behavior, if information from these sources is recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation

**Note: This category cannot be used for research involving children**

Research involving the use of survey procedures, educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, if (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter

Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects

Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of federal department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs

- I am applying for an **expedited review**, based on meeting *all* of the following conditions (check all that apply):

**Note: Expedited review cannot be claimed for research involving prisoners.**

- Research poses no more than minimal risk to subjects (defined as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")
- Research limited to one or more of the following data collection procedures:
- Collection of data through noninvasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice
  - Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes
  - Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes
  - Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

**Note: Some research in this category may be classified as exempt; this listing refers only to research that is not exempt.**

- Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened HSRB as follows: (a) where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or (b) where no subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; or (c) where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

- I am applying for **full board review**.

## 9. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe (or attach) the methodology and objectives of your research (including hypotheses and/or research questions), the data collection procedures, and any features of the research design that involve procedures or special conditions for participants, including the frequency, duration, and location of their participation. The description should be no longer than 3 pages single space. Attach addendums for materials and detailed descriptions of the research if more space is needed. *Please note that complete chapters of thesis/dissertation proposals will not be accepted.*

The objective of this study is to determine the relationships that exist between personal responsibility and its cognitive antecedents and behavioral consequences. The hypotheses under investigation are as follows: H1: Self-concept beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility; H2: Contextual Job beliefs are positively associated to personal responsibility; H3: Personal responsibility is positively related to one's willingness to help. H4: Personal responsibility mediates the relationship between beliefs and willingness to help. The population under investigation for the study is full-time employees working in the financial services industry. The Hartford is a Fortune 500 company within the financial services industry with three primary product offerings insurance, group benefits and mutual funds. The researcher has been granted access to sample 1,000 of its employees. A sampling frame of both mutual funds, group benefits and insurance employees at The Hartford will be used, representing all business functions including marketing, finance, sales, operations and human resources. All 500 employees working within the mutual fund business line will be sent the survey, along with 500 randomly selected employees working within the insurance and group benefits organization. The survey will first be piloted to a group of 25 individuals to ensure proper functioning of the web-based instrument. Once validated through the pilot study, the survey will be sent to employees working at The Hartford via email. The sampling frame will consist of all 500 employees working within the mutual funds division along with 400 employees randomly selected within the insurance business line. Given the length of the survey, response and completion rates are expected to range between 20-25%. This would require a total of 1,000 surveys to be sent in order to meet the required statistical sample size that is desired. The results of this study will be shared with the senior leadership team of Hartford Funds, including the President, CFO and Head of Human Resources.

#### HSRB Project Description Checklist

a) Is your data completely anonymous, where there are no possible identifications of the participants.	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Will you be using existing data or records? If yes, describe in project description (#9 above)	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Will you be using surveys, questionnaires, interviews or focus groups with subjects? If yes, describe in #9 and include copies of all in application.	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Will you be using videotape, audiotape, film? If yes, describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
e) Do you plan to use any of the following populations? Regent students, Regent employees, Non-English speaking, cognitively impaired, patients/clients, prisoners, pregnant women? If yes, describe which ones in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
f) Do you plan to use minors (under 18)? If yes, describe in #9 and	No	Yes

give age ranges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Are sites outside of Regent engaged in the research? If yes, describe in #9 and give consent letter or their IRB information	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Are you collecting sensitive information such as sexual behavior, HIV status, recreational drug use, illegal behaviors, child/elder/physical abuse, immigrations status, etc? If yes, describe in #9.	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
i) Are you using machines, software, internet devices? If so describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
j) Are you collecting any biological specimens? If yes, describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
k) Will any of the following identifying information be collected: names, telephone numbers, social security number, fax numbers, email addresses, medical records numbers, certificate/license numbers, Web universal resource locators (URLs), Internet protocol (IP) address numbers, fingerprint, voice recording, face photographic image, or any other unique identifying number, code or characteristic other than "dummy" identifiers? If yes, describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
l) Will there be data sharing with any entity outside your research team? If so, describe who in #9	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
m) Does any member of the research team or their family members have a personal financial interest in the project (for commercialization of product, process or technology, or stand to gain personal financial income from the project)? If yes, describe in #9.	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
n) As applicable, do you plan to provide a debriefing to your participants? If written, include in application as addendum	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
o) Will there be any inducement to participate, either monetary or nonmonetary? If there is inducement please describe how the amount is not coercive in #9.	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
p) Will there be any costs that subjects will bear (travel expenses, parking fees, professional fees, etc. If no costs other than their time to participate, please indicate)? If yes describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
q) Will subjects be studied on Regent University campus? If yes, please describe where the study will be done in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
r) Will subjects be obtained by internet only? If yes, please describe what internet forums or venues will be used to obtain participants	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

in #9

- |  |   |                                 |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| s) Are you using the Regent University consent form template?<br>Whether using the template or requesting an alternate form, you must include a copy in your submission. | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---|---------------------------------|

## 10. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Describe the sources of potential participants, how they will be selected and recruited, and how and where you will contact them. Describe all relevant characteristics of the participants with regard to age, ethnic background, sex, institutional status (e.g., patients or prisoners), and their general state of mental and physical health.

The sample will selected from full-time employees working at The Hartford. Their general state of mental and physical health is well as The Hartford undergoes an extensive background check and screening prior to offering employment. The researcher has been granted 1,000 email addresses to which the survey will be sent. These employees have the option of participation. These employees were selected based on the business line in which they work. All mutual fund employees will be sent the survey, along with a randomly selected group of employees working within the group benefits division. Within the email the researcher will describe the purpose of the study, describe the anonymity of participation and ask for participants to click on the survey link. The survey is estimated to take 15 minutes to complete. Participants are anticipated to range between 22-60 years old, represent a diverse group of employees including men and women from various ethnic backgrounds. Since this is a field study the demographics should represent the working population of The Hartford.

## 11. INFORMED CONSENT

Describe how you will inform participants of the nature of the study. Attach a copy of your cover letter, script, informed consent form and other information provided to potential participants.

Informed consent will be required once the participant clicks on the survey link. This will essentially be the first question that must be answered before being allowed entry into the survey portal.

**\*\* EXEMPT APPLICATIONS SKIP TO QUESTION 17: ATTACHMENTS \*\***

## 12. WRITTEN CONSENT

- I am requesting permission to **waive written consent**, based on one or more of the following categories (check all that apply):
- The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

- The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

I will be using a **written consent form**. Attach a copy of the written consent form with this application.

**13. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA**

What procedures will be used to safeguard identifiable records of individuals and protect the confidentiality of participants?

**\*\* EXPEDITED APPLICATIONS SKIP TO QUESTION 17: ATTACHMENTS \*\***

**14. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

Describe in detail the immediate or long-range risks, if any, to participants that may arise from the procedures used in this study. Indicate any precautions that will be taken to minimize these risks. Also describe the anticipated benefits to participants and to society from the knowledge that may be reasonably expected to result from this study.

**15. DEBRIEFING STATEMENT**

The two major goals of debriefing are dehoaxing and desensitizing. Participants should be debriefed about any deception that was used in the study. Participants also should be debriefed about their behavioral response(s) to the study. Please describe your debriefing plans and include any statements that you will be providing to the participants.

**16. DISSEMINATION & STORAGE OF RESULTS**

- a) How and where do you plan on disseminating the results of your study?
- b) For electronic data stored on a computer, how will it be stored and secured (password, encryption, other comparable safeguard)?
- c) For hardcopy data, how will it be stored (locked office or suite, locked cabinet, data coded by team with master list secured separately, other)?
- d) What are your plans for disposing of data once the study is ended (give method and time)?

**17. ATTACHMENTS:**

Attach copies of all relevant project materials and documents, including (check all that apply):

- A copy of your training certificate (required for principal investigator)
- Surveys, questionnaires, and/or interview instruments
- Informed consent forms or statements
- Letters of approval from cooperative agencies, schools, or education boards
- Debriefing statements or explanation sheet

**18. AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE:**

By submitting this application, I attest that I am aware of the applicable principles, policies, regulations, and laws governing the protection of human subjects in research and that I will be guided by them in the conduct of this research. I agree to follow the university policy as outlined in the Faculty & Academic Policy Handbook (available online at [http://www.regent.edu/academics/academic\\_affairs/handbook.cfm](http://www.regent.edu/academics/academic_affairs/handbook.cfm)) to ensure that the rights and welfare of human participants in my project are properly protected. I understand that the study will not commence until I have received approval of these procedures from the Human Subjects Review Board. I further understand that if data collection continues for more than one year from the approval date, a renewal application must be submitted.

I understand that failure to comply with Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46, available online at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>) can result in confiscation and possible destruction of data, suspension of all current and future research involving human subjects, or other institutional sanctions, until compliance is assured.

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 Signature of Principal Investigator

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 Date

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 Signature of Co-Investigator (if applicable)

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 Date

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 Signature of Faculty Advisor (if applicable)

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 Date



**To Be Completed By HSRB**

Assigned ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Approve

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommend Revisions \_\_\_\_\_

Reject

\_\_\_\_\_

HSRB Member	Date
HSRB Member (if applicable)	Date
HSRB Member (if applicable)	Date

9/23/2014

Protecting Human Subject Research Participants

