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When Leadership Leads to Loathing: The Effect of Culturally (In)Congruent Leadership on Employee Contempt and Voluntary Work Behaviors

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When Leadership Leads to Loathing: The Effect of Culturally (In)Congruent Leadership on Employee Contempt and Voluntary Work Behaviors

Abstract

This article suggests that contempt – a proclivity towards loathing others – as an emotional response, can arise as a consequence of culturally incongruent leadership, i.e. leader behaviors and actions that do not comply with follower-held, culturally derived expectations and values. Outcomes of contempt were also studied by hypothesizing that contempt, when experienced in response to a situation of culturally incongruent leadership, can cause followers to reduce their display of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) while engaging in deviant behaviors. The model was tested in a sample of 348 follower-level employees using structural equation modeling. Empirical results largely support theoretical hypotheses. Culturally congruent leadership was negatively related to contempt, while contempt was positively related to deviant behaviors and negatively related to OCB. The results contribute to the understudied field of contempt research, and suggest that leaders faced with cultural diversity may be well advised to adapt their behaviors to the local cultural values to stimulate follower OCB rather than deviance.

Introduction

Emotions are everywhere in organizations – in leader-follower relationships, in teams, and between colleagues (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Over the past 20 years, organizational scholars have increasingly recognized the importance of understanding how emotions affect organizational behaviors (Ashkanasy et al., 2017). Positive emotions – such as joy and gratitude – are generally viewed as having positive effects on performance at both individual, group, and organizational levels, while negative emotions – such as anger, fear and shame – are largely associated with negative behaviors (Barsade & Gilson, 2007). Thus, understanding and managing the events where emotions may arise is relevant to effective organizational functioning.

This article focuses on one such event – culturally congruent leadership (CCL). Research that views leadership through the lens of culture has resulted in detailed knowledge about the characteristics of leadership styles in different countries (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). The underlying logic of this research stream is that leading in accordance with important follower-held and culturally derived values is effective, and this is what we refer to as CCL. An example: On the basis of cultural idiosyncrasies, the typical leadership style in Germany is quite different from the typical leadership style in Italy. If a German leader wants to be effective in Italy, he/she will likely have to adapt behaviors and actions to the local expectations to leaders, thus displaying culturally congruent leadership. This view on leadership suggests an adjustment from the one-size-fits-all, universal solutions that have

dominated the leadership literature (e.g., R. House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002; Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006). The CCL literature builds on research on value congruence, which provides empirical and theoretical links to a range of positive outcomes (e.g., O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005). However, relatively little, if any, research has documented *emotional* outcomes of CCL. Thus, little is known about the emotional experience of CCL at the level of individual employees: What does the employee feel when faced with a leader who acts in a way that conflicts with culturally derived values that the employee holds dear – and what does he/she feel if the leader's behaviors mirror important values? And of equal importance: What behaviors will the employee display in such situations?

In the present article, we deal with this question by focusing on the discrete, negative emotion *contempt*. This emotion remains under-studied within emotion research, with very few articles to date examining its effects on leadership processes or organizational behavior. Noting the lack of research on contempt, Pelzer (2005, p. 1219) compares the study on this emotion as taking “a glimpse into the bottomless pit of human emotion.” However, keeping in mind the view on negative emotions as adverse for effective organizational functioning, a better understanding of the behavioral implications of contempt is arguably important. On this background, the present article argues that contempt is a likely outcome of culturally incongruent leadership. We build and test a model, illustrated in *Figure 1*, depicting a direct relationship between contempt and two types of voluntary organizational behavior: Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and employee deviance. Our results indicate that cultural congruence in leadership may ultimately cause followers to ramp up their display of OCB while holding back on their display of deviant behaviors. Thus, the proposed model makes several theoretical and practical contributions. First, it adds to the contempt literature by exploring some behavioral consequences of this emotion. Second, it contributes to theory on emotions in organizations by examining how events of culturally congruent or incongruent leadership can trigger contempt and subsequent voluntary organizational behaviors of different valences. In doing so, it answers recent calls for more research on the link between negative emotions, employee proactivity, and destructive outcomes (Lebel, 2017). This has important practical implications for leaders faced with cultural diversity among their subordinates, as failure to lead in accordance with their values ultimately may lead to deviance. Third, the article adds to the literature on culturally congruent leadership by exploring the emotional side of such leadership.

Contempt, Culturally Congruent Leadership, and Voluntary Work Behaviors: A Short Review of the Extant Literature

Emotions in the Workplace

The “affective revolution” in organizational behavior, a term coined by Barsade et al. (2003:3), has arguably permeated also the study of leadership. Theories like transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, and leader-member exchange recognize the impact of emotions on the leadership process (Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010). This mirrors a broader tendency where interest in preferred leadership styles has shifted away from the traditional view on the leader as an almost heroic figure concerned with hierarchy, toward a leader increasingly focused on relational sensitivity (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Glasø & Einarsen, 2006). Emotions are increasingly viewed as functional and adaptively useful (Frijda, 2000; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012). For example, the concept of emotional intelligence has gained enormous researcher attention since the 1990s. Although debated, the idea that some people have the skill or ability to understand and manage own and others' emotions and can use this for adaptive purposes (e.g., Goleman, 1995; Joseph & Newman, 2010; Locke, 2005; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer,

Salovey, & Caruso, 2008), at the very least indicates the role emotions may play in well-functioning leader-follower relationships. Infusing the entire organization from top to bottom, emotions may prove to be vital to effective leadership and organizational functioning (Ashkanasy, 2003). For example, the emotion happiness has been linked to various measures of good organizational functioning, including work performance, creativity, turnover intentions, supervisor evaluations, prosocial behaviors, and job satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005), and employee productivity (Oswald, Proto & Sgroi, 2015).

While emotions in the workplace is no longer an emerging research field, it is still characterized by a relative lack of agreement on how emotions should be defined and differentiated from other affective constructs such as moods, affect, and affect-laden constructs like job satisfaction (Briner & Kiefer, 2005). Gooty et al. (2010:980) note that "In sum, emotions are transient, intense reactions to an event, person or entity," thereby setting emotions apart from these other constructs that tend to be of a longer-lasting nature. Emotions are believed to involve several different components (Briner & Kiefer, 2005; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and this provides some insight into how emotions are elicited and why. Emotions have a cognitive component (e.g., Lazarus, 1991a; Roseman & Evdokas, 2004; Scherer, 2001), which means they result from cognitive appraisals of person-environment relationships. Emotions are generated if this relationship has significance for personal well-being, here viewed as the attainment of personal values or goals. If the relationship is characterized by goal or value incongruence between the person and the environment, negative emotions will arise. Congruence, on the other hand, will result in positive emotions. Thus, it is impossible to understand emotions without simultaneously understanding what is personally important (Lazarus, 1991a, 1991b). "We don't become emotional about unimportant things, but about values and goals to which we have made a strong commitment" (Lazarus, 1991b, p. 819). Most emotion researchers appear to make the assumption that discrete emotions have specific action tendencies (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and these tendencies enable the person to adapt to changes in the environment (Briner & Kiefer, 2005; Levenson, 1999). In this way, emotions serve to shift behaviors so the individual can adjust to the new situation (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Emotions lead to different bodily changes and as such have a distinct physiological component (Briner & Kiefer, 2005; Frijda, 1993; Scherer, 2001). Emotions also have an important communicative and social function as they enable us to let others know how we are feeling and how they should respond (Briner & Kiefer, 2005).

Researchers have long tried to categorize emotions in an attempt to guide future research efforts, which has led to lists of basic or primary, discrete emotions as well as lists of emotion categories or families (e.g., Ekman, 1992; Glasø & Einarsen, 2006; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and to the competing view of considering emotions as varying along a dimension of intensity (Lazarus, 1991b). There is no shortage in the literature of different conceptualizations; the problem is rather one of structure overload, as different researchers have created their own categorization systems based on their individual research needs (Lazarus, 1991a). Russel (2009, p. 1280) calls this "mini-theories" of emotions and suggest that this may very well be a viable alternative to one, overarching theory of emotion as these mini-theories taken together may supply different, but complementary pieces of the larger puzzle. Still, disagreement remains regarding the structure of emotions, with some contributions advocating dimensional models and others focusing on discrete models (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). For example, anger, disgust, and contempt are negative emotions believed to be associated with judgments of the actions and dispositions of others, and can be imagined to be either synonyms, partially distinct, or fully distinct from each other (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). Indeed, much research has

been undertaken to determine if basic, underlying emotions can be identified, although agreement still is lacking in terms of a final list of such emotions (e.g., Ekman, 1992; Ortony & Turner, 1990).

The affective revolution has not yet permeated the field of cross-cultural leadership research. Comparative research on leadership in cross-national settings has devoted little attention to the issue of how followers *feel* during leadership encounters that involve leaders with leadership styles that conflict with central follower-held values. Looking to the leadership literature, several scholars have pointed at the benefits of congruence between leader values and follower values in terms of eliciting supportive and positive follower emotions and behaviors (e.g., Ashkanasy & O'Connor, 1997; Brown & Trevino, 2009; Foss, Minbaeva, Pedersen, & Reinholt, 2009; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989). For example, leader-follower value congruence is associated with improved communication, predictability, attraction, and trust (Edwards & Cable, 2009). It follows from this that leaders *should* care about their followers' value systems, but given research noting that leadership is not universal but implies different behaviors and expectations in different cultures (Gerstner & Day, 1994; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; R. House et al., 2002; R. J. House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; R. T. House & Javidan, 2004), this may be easier said than done. Followers respond differently to leadership styles depending on whether or not these styles match culturally contingent follower values (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1999). It can be derived from this that culturally incongruent leadership may trigger follower emotions that are unpleasant for the follower and unproductive for the organization. However, little, if any, research has explored which emotions are likely to arise from such leadership, or potential outcomes of these emotions such as supportive and destructive behaviors. This is the focus of the following explication.

Contempt

While emotion is maturing as a research field, this development can't be said to apply to the discrete emotion contempt. Pelzer (2005) noted in a review that contempt seems to be very much present in organizational practice yet ignored by research. But interest in contempt appears to be growing, and researchers have approached the topic from the angle of hostility in social interactions (Fischer & Roseman, 2007), as a moral emotion (Haidt, 2003; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011; Mason, 2003; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999), as an amplifier in moral judgments (Avramova & Inbar, 2013; Horberg, Oveis, & Keltner, 2011; Laham, Chopra, Lalljee, & Parkinson, 2010), and as an influence in emergent leadership categorization (Melwani, Mueller, & Overbeck, 2012). The majority of contempt research has been carried out within psychology, where contempt is often envisioned as a basic emotion, indeed going back to the work of Charles Darwin who viewed contempt as a universal, primary emotion shared by all societies (Pelzer, 2005). Similar views have been asserted by more recent research (e.g. Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1977), and the apparent universality of contempt hints at the relevance of conducting broader and deeper examinations of this emotion than what has been carried out to date.

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines contempt as "A strong feeling of disliking and having no respect for someone or something." Contempt is often studied alongside another negative emotion, anger, as both emotions are common outcomes of negative social interactions and reflect a negative evaluation of the other party's intentions (e.g., Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). While believed to arise from similar situations, the two emotions are different along important dimensions (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). They have different social functions as they lead to different behavioral reactions. Anger promotes approach tendencies (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011) and hostile, antagonistic behaviors such as attack, while contempt is associated with less confrontational avoidance

behaviors such as social exclusion (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Anger is typically a response to immediate social threats, while an important function of contempt is to reduce future exposure to harm by “marking” and avoiding individuals who based on past experience might be a threat (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). Additionally, contempt is unique because of its diagnostic value: it signals the privileged social standing of the holder relative to the target of the emotion (Melwani et al., 2012) and can as such trigger prejudice against people and groups believed to be inferior or incompetent (Izard, 1977; Pelzer, 2005). Once it has been elicited it causes antisocial behaviors such as exclusion, rejection and even derogation of the target (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Izard, 1977; Melwani et al., 2012). Anger and contempt are also different in terms of their relative duration. Anger is typically a short-term, intense emotion (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). From an evolutionary perspective, this is perhaps because any long-term experience of this emotion would lead to a physical state not conducive to survival (Levenson, 1999). Going back to research positing contempt as the main emotional culprit in marriage disintegration (e.g., Gottman, 1993), this emotion is typically viewed as predominantly antisocial and dysfunctional in terms of its effects, although recent research suggests positive effects in leadership categorization (Melwani et al., 2012; Melwani & Barsade, 2011). Within interpersonal relationships, however, contempt is decidedly negative. Being a long-lasting emotion, contempt causes negative and permanent changes in beliefs about the person and in the treatment of that person. Over time, these changes tend to solidify and prevent further attempts at changing the person or reconciling with him/her, which eventually puts the relationship at risk (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Contempt can also be described by its direction. Contempt targeted at a superior, upward contempt, is triggered when the subordinate perceives that the superior doesn't live by the standards or values that he sets by virtue of his elevated position. Downward contempt, on the other hand, is experienced by the superior toward the subordinate by virtue of the latter's lower ranking and power (Pelzer, 2005).

Voluntary Work Behavior and Emotions

Organizational research has in recent years shifted from understanding employee performance through role and task related behaviors, to increasingly focusing on the added value of voluntary work behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2002). These behaviors range from positive, supportive organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) to negative, deviant workplace behaviors, and much research point at their importance to organizational functioning. In pure monetary terms, the cost of one single form of workplace deviance — employee theft — has been estimated to US\$ 200 billion per year in the United States alone (Greenberg, 1997), giving an indication of the implications of such behavior. Workplace deviance appears to be more common than what one would perhaps expect, with one estimate suggesting that 33% to 75% of all employees have displayed behaviors such as voluntary absenteeism, sabotage, and theft (Harper, 1990). OCB, on the other hand, is associated with organizational productivity through e.g., cooperation, flexibility, innovation, and initiative (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Spector & Fox, 2002). Positive, voluntary work behaviors have been researched extensively over the past few decades as e.g., OCB (Organ, 1988), extra-role behaviors (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), contextual performance (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994), and prosocial behavior (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Common for these approaches is that they focus on behaviors that are voluntary and not part of formal role requirements or tasks (Spector & Fox, 2002), and they are not vital to the job but still important to organizational functioning (Lee & Allen, 2002) as they support either people or the organization (Spector & Fox, 2002). Different researchers have focused on different subcategories or dimensions of OCB, and Organ's (1988) makes a useful distinction in separating between altruistic behaviors on the one hand and

compliance on the other. Thus, OCB encompasses acts that go beyond formal role duties, such as helping coworkers who need it, working overtime to accomplish an important task, or attending functions that are not required, as opposed to acts that merely comply with one's role requirements. OCB's negative and less researched counterpart, destructive or deviant work behavior, has emerged from "dark side" organizational behavior research (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), and encompasses several different deviance constructs such as workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Bennett, 1995), counterproductive work behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2002), employee deviance (Bolin & Heatherly, 2001), and social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). While voluntary, these types of behaviors are considered a threat to organizational functioning as they violate important organizational norms, including formal and informal rules and policies (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). In terms of potential for harm, such behaviors range from avoiding work or being tardy and deliberately doing tasks incorrectly, to a higher level of aggression and behaviors such as sabotage, theft, and verbal and physical hostility (Spector & Fox, 2002).

Studies suggest that affective factors may be central to OCB and employee deviance (Lee & Allen, 2002). Emotions reorganize work behavior by shifting it away from the current situation to better respond to the eliciting emotional event, potentially leading to decreased job performance in the case of poor fit between behaviors required to do the job and behaviors generated by the emotion. This pattern is likely to be more pronounced for negative emotions than for positive emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Events are appraised, emotions are triggered on the basis of this appraisal, and these emotions will in turn play into a person's choice between different OCBs and deviant behaviors: Negative emotions are associated with deviant behaviors, while positive behaviors are believed to facilitate OCB (Spector & Fox, 2002). It is a "well-established social psychological finding" (Lee & Allen, 2002, p. 132) that people in positive moods are more likely to help others than people in negative moods. Thus, it is altogether likely that a person in the throes of a negative emotion will display negative voluntary behaviors, such as taking longer breaks than allowed or taking office supplies for personal use, while a person experiencing a positive emotion will engage in positive voluntary behaviors such as giving a helping hand to colleagues who need it.

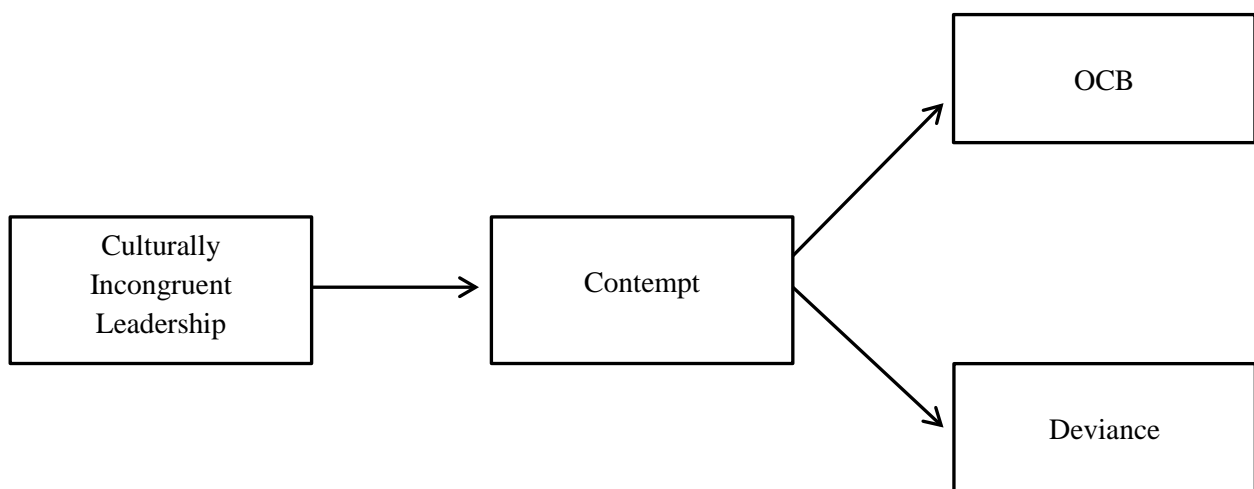
Theory Development and Hypotheses: Explanations of Effects of Culturally Congruent Leadership on Contempt, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Deviant Behavior

Our theoretical model of contempt development through culturally incongruent leadership is developed by focusing on contempt as a protective mechanism and as one of very few tools at the follower's disposal for dealing with such value incongruence. We then outline how culturally incongruent leadership may influence organizational citizenship behavior and deviance via contempt as a mediating variable. The model is depicted in *Figure 1*.

To set the stage for our hypotheses development, let us first take a closer look at what happens in a case of culturally incongruent leadership. What is this experience like for a follower, and what choices does he/she have when it comes to responding to this incongruence? In a culturally incongruent leadership encounter, the leader displays leadership behaviors that are in conflict with important, culturally derived follower-held values. This can be perceived as unfair, threatening, wrong, and demotivating. It is known in the cross-cultural leadership literature that followers respond differently to leadership styles depending on whether or not these styles match culturally contingent follower values (e.g., Den Hartog et al., 1999). In other words, when there is a mismatch between leadership styles and follower values, followers typically respond negatively. The follower's

repertoire of behaviors in terms of remedying the situation or removing himself/herself from the value incongruent leader-follower encounter, however, is limited given the nature of the leader-follower relationship. This relationship is characterized by power and status differences: The leader is at a higher hierarchical level than the follower and has access to rewards and sanctions. In the event that the follower perceives exiting the organization as an impossible or undesirable choice, he/she is left with a limited number of behavioral choices: The follower can channel energy and attention to into non-work interests at the expense of work duties (neglect), or attempt to improve the situation by being vocal about concerns (voice) (Withey & Cooper, 1989). This means that the follower will in many (perhaps most) cases have no other choice than to comply with the leader's expectations and demands, even if they conflict with important cultural values. The decision to conform to values different than one's own may be based on practical concerns related to one's future in the organization such as promotions (Hewlin, 2003). It may also be influenced by individual factors (e.g. type of skills, family situation) that make it difficult or undesirable to leave the organization in response to value discrepancies (Withey & Cooper, 1989). Lazarus (1991 b: 831) uses a tree metaphor to illustrate people's coping strategies: The small branches on the tree consist of small coping steps and the larger branches are the bigger, overarching goals, for example holding a certain position or being in a certain profession. In order to achieve this goal, it may be necessary to take small coping steps – dealing with an unpleasant boss instead of leaving the organization, for example. The decision to conform does therefore not necessarily mean that the follower agrees or identifies with the values in question, and this leaves the door open to alternative ways of dealing with the value discrepancy.

Figure 1. Theoretical model explaining the effects of culturally incongruent leadership on contempt, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and deviance.



Contempt as a Protective Mechanism in Reaction to Culturally Incongruent Leadership

To our knowledge, no studies have focused on culturally incongruent (or congruent) leadership as an event that has affective significance in terms of generating emotional reactions, which is a central notion in several theories on emotions (e.g., Lazarus, 1991a; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). It follows from this that studies of contempt within the context of culturally incongruent (or congruent) leadership are lacking. It can, however, be gleaned from other literatures that this particular emotion is a likely response to this particular event. Different research streams have indicated positive follower responses such as positive emotions and supportive behaviors to value congruent leadership, and negative

emotions, cognitions, and attitudes in situations in which the leader does not act in accordance with follower values (Brown & Trevino, 2009; Fiebig & Kramer, 1998; Gooty et al., 2010), and it is known from psychological research that people experience negative emotions such as fear and anxiety when they perceive a discrepancy between who they really are and who they think they should be (Higgins, 1989; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Research on emotions as the result of cognitive appraisals of person-environment relationships (Lazarus, 1991a, 1991b) provides additional support for the negative emotion-culturally incongruent leadership link. According to this perspective, emotions are generated if the person-environment relationship has significance for personal well-being, here viewed as the attainment of personal values or goals. If the relationship is characterized by goal or value incongruence between the person and the environment, negative emotions will arise. Congruence, on the other hand, will result in positive emotions. Thus, culturally incongruent leadership can be expected to elicit negative follower responses, and given the nature of the leader-follower relationship, followers have few options for dealing with the incongruence.

Based on this, it seems reasonable that followers trapped in culturally incongruent leadership encounters may experience negative emotions such as contempt: these may constitute one of very few tools at the follower's disposal for dealing with such situations. According to the classic perspective on the functionality of emotions, emotions have a function by increasing people's probability of survival by helping them solve and overcome problems (e.g., Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Lazarus, 1991a; Levenson, 1999). In this perspective, emotions are important for "(...) pulling us toward certain people, objects, actions and ideas, and pushing us away from others" (Levenson, 1999:481). In line with this, research focusing on the social function of contempt indicates that this emotion can serve as a protective mechanism of individuals in situations where they perceive themselves or their ingroup of being at risk of hostility or attack by another party (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Pelzer, 2002, 2005). Here, contempt is envisioned as an appropriate response to social threats that are not imminent, but that should be avoided based on past experiences with the other party and a perception that he/she might have negative intentions. It may therefore take several negative, and often angry, interactions with a party for contempt to arise, and the emotion then serves to identify the party so that he/she can be avoided in the future to reduce the risk of additional harm or discomfort (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Frijda et al., 1989; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). This avoidance tends to take the form of social distancing from the threatening individual or attempting to exclude him/her from one's social network (Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994), and entails that the person will not try to change or influence the threatening individual to deal with the potential exposure to harm, but rather perceive it as impossible to change the undesirable behavior (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). In other words, when people believe they are faced with a social threat of a long-term and unchangeable nature, the feeling of contempt can serve as an important protective mechanism. We believe the situation of culturally incongruent leadership can be characterized by exactly such a threat.

Research on value congruence also suggests that culturally incongruent leadership may be a potential source of contempt. Here, the similarity-attraction paradigm introduced by Byrne (1971) is central, which claims that similarity (e.g., in values) triggers liking and attraction and makes people want to socialize and spend time together again and again (Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1991; Van Vianen, De Pater, Kristof-Brown, & Johnson, 2004). Conversely, we argue that incongruence between important follower and leader values may be perceived by the follower as threatening as such incongruence can make communication difficult, reduce predictability of leader behaviors, make it more difficult to

trust, and also reduce the liking of the leader (Edwards & Cable, 2009). In short, value incongruence may trigger a “negative appraisal of the other person” (Fischer & Roseman, 2007, p. 103) which in turn triggers contempt. The unequal distribution of power inherent in the leader-follower relationship may reduce the follower’s freedom of movement when it comes to taking steps to deal with the incongruence so that the follower sees it as impossible to deal with the situation by attempting to get the leader to change his behavior.

In short, we suggest that the culturally incongruent leadership encounter may trigger contempt in followers as a protective mechanism to remove the follower from the situation of value discrepancy to the largest extent possible and thus reduce his or her exposure to discomfort or harm.

Consequently, we set forth the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Culturally congruent leadership is negatively related to follower contempt to the leader.

The Effects of Contempt on Voluntary Behaviors (OCB and Employee Deviance)

After arguing that culturally incongruent leadership may trigger contempt in the follower, we now shift our focus to behavioral effects of this emotion. In other words, what behaviors is a follower who feels contempt toward his leader, likely to display?

Behavioral effects of contempt have in general received very little researcher attention (Haidt, 2003). We do know that this emotion is relatively “cool” in comparison with anger, meaning that it doesn’t tend to elicit attack behaviors or other behaviors associated with emotions that are experienced as more intense or hot (Izard, 1977). As we noted in the previous section, contempt is believed to trigger social distancing and exclusion of the party looked upon with contempt (e.g., Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011; Roseman et al., 1994). At a more general level, negative emotions lead to behaviors of a negative cadence (e.g. Lazarus, 1991a). Within an organizational setting this opens up for a possible connection between contempt on the one hand and employee deviance on the other hand. We will in the following explicate this relationship by drawing on social exchange theory, which is much used within different strands of leadership research and for understanding workplace behavior in general (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). For example, research on ethical leadership leans heavily on social exchange theory, and we borrow also from this literature as we believe its focus on fit between leader values and behavior as a driver of positive outcomes like OCB (e.g., Brown & Mitchell, 2010) has important similarities to culturally congruent leadership.

Within ethical leadership, the moral manager is central. This is a leader who both “walks the talk” and “talks the walk” and thus acts in accordance with important moral standards and serves as a role model in the workplace. Leaders of this caliber are believed to trigger beneficial behavior and reduce destructive behavior in the workplace (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Unethical leadership, on the other hand, is associated with negative follower emotions such as anger and disgust, which in turn is argued to lead to unethical follower behaviors, such as retaliation and deviance (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). The apparent congruence between leader espoused values and leader actual values is believed to play an important role in triggering beneficial behaviors, and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is often used to explain this relationship (e.g., Brown et al., 2005, Brown & Trevino, 2006, Mayer et al., 2009). A central concept upon which social exchange theory rests is the principle of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960):

An action by one person leads to a response by another person, and people feel obligated to reciprocate good, beneficial behaviors with similar behaviors and vice versa for negative behaviors.

Within ethical leadership research, this is used to explain why followers respond with organizational citizenship behaviors to leaders who they perceive as ethical, i.e., leaders who both communicate certain values and also live up to the same values through the behaviors they display.

While we by no means are suggesting that culturally incongruent leadership is unethical, we simply believe that a similar mechanism may explain the relationship between contempt, organizational citizenship behaviors and employee deviance respectively. Applying the principle of reciprocity to a contempt-evoking situation of culturally incongruent leadership behaviors suggests that the follower will return these behaviors with destructive, retaliatory behaviors such as employee deviance. In this situation, there is no perception of debt to the leader that the follower must repay through positive, beneficial citizenship behaviors. Quite contrary, the feeling of contempt entails that the follower sees herself as superior to the leader, which implies an imbalance to the leader-follower relationship that the follower can correct only by engaging in deviant behaviors. In this way, the employee's deviant behavior reciprocates what she perceives to be deviance on part of the leader resulting from leadership behaviors that do not harmonize with important cultural values.

Research on organizational revenge provides an alternative approach to understanding the effects of contempt on employee deviance. The culturally incongruent leadership encounter can be viewed as a revenge episode where contempt has been elicited and revenge is sought through the display of deviant behaviors. Violations of formal organizational rules and social norms can motivate people to "get even" (Bies et al., 1997). Such violations tend to drive emotions, which, in turn, spark retaliatory behavior. Engaging in such behaviors can provide an outlet for the emotional energy that the perceived violation of norms or rules builds in the individual. Additionally, "evening the score" in this manner might have another functional purpose by making the individual feel better (Spector & Fox, 2002). In line with this, we suggest that culturally incongruent leadership can be viewed as a revenge episode where the follower, upon experiencing contempt as an emotional reaction to the culturally incongruent leadership, decides to "get even" with the leader by displaying deviant behaviors.

In cases of culturally congruent leadership encounters, the picture of emotions and behaviors is quite the opposite. Culturally congruent leadership implies that the leader leads in accordance with important follower-held, culturally derived values and goals, and this congruence is expected to trigger positive emotions (Lazarus, 1991). There is believed to be a positive, direct relationship between positive emotions and OCB (Spector & Fox, 2002). This link is strengthened by the finding that people who are experiencing positive moods tend to behave in ways that support these moods, for example, by exhibiting altruistic behaviors (Isen, 1984). Looking at this from a social exchange perspective, the principle of reciprocity suggests that a follower who believes her leader acts in accordance with important values will experience positive emotions and want to "repay" the leader by engaging in OCB. In a similar vein, Organ (1988, 1990) suggested that perceptions of fairness are important to employees' decisions to display OCB. It is easier for an employee to alter voluntary work behaviors than role-required behaviors in order to reciprocate good, fair leader behaviors, and it is thus possible for followers to actively use or withhold OCB in order to "even the score" with the leader.

This leads us to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Contempt is positively related to deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Contempt is negatively related to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Method

Sample

Data used to test our hypotheses were collected from a sample of 348 follower-level employees in seven Norwegian organizations from both public and private sectors. An electronic questionnaire was administered via email to potential respondents. These were identified by their supervisors and given information about the study and encouragement to participate via e-mail messages and/or intranet announcements. Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality was communicated through a message in the questionnaire. The survey was distributed to 637 respondents, resulting in a response rate of 55%.

Measures

Culturally congruent leadership. A unique measure of culturally congruent leadership within the Norwegian cultural context was developed for the study. Established leadership theories have been argued to have an inherent cultural bias (e.g., Chin, 2010), and one consequence of this may be that the associated measures of leadership styles are incapable of capturing cultural peculiarities. Use of such measures may then overlook culturally derived, unique aspects of leadership. Coupled with the fact that Norwegian leadership has received relatively little empirical research attention (Norway was not included in the GLOBE study), we believed using an established measure might conceal important features of such leadership and subsequently hamper insight into its effects. Thus, an inductive study was undertaken to develop the measure, which was proposed to consist of 6 behavioral leadership dimensions (see Sund & Lines (2014) for a detailed explication of the method and results) that capture the adaptation of leadership style to the unique Norwegian cultural context. The dimensions were named Little Distance (LiDi), Involvement (Inv), Trial and error (TE), Paternalism (Pat), Recruitment (Rec), and Sense of Community (SOC). To translate these dimensions into the present questionnaire, both authors discussed their meaning and how this meaning could be translated into items measured as Likert-type questions. Arriving at five to 15 questions per dimension, we used a sample of Norwegian undergraduate business students (n=132) to test the measure. Principal component analysis (PCA) revealed six dimensions (eigenvalue > 1), as expected. Several of the items cross loaded with more than one component or had low loading on the relevant component, and were removed. Two items from the Involvement component were transferred to a new, separate dimension called Performance orientation (PO) following the realization that these items in fact tapped a focus on performance and achievement, and the dimension received an additional three items from the GLOBE study's measure of performance orientation (Javidan, 2004). Thus, the final scale contained seven dimensions, with the number of items per sub-scale in parentheses: LiDi(4), Inv(3), TE(8), Pat(4), Rec(4), SOC(3), PO(5). The survey was then administered to our final sample, as described above. PCA of the data recovered six dimensions. Two of the three SOC items had cross-loadings while the remaining item loaded on the Pat component. Believing this could be theoretically justified, we decided to keep this item there. A clear factor structure was not recovered for the Rec dimension. This left us with five dimensions: LiDi, Inv, TE, PAT, and PO. All sub-scales showed satisfactory internal consistency ($.82 < \alpha < .91$, see Table 1 for further details).

Contempt. Contempt was measured by a single item measure. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Very often," respondents were asked to rate how often they experienced contempt toward their leader during the course of a regular work week.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). OCB was measured using the two of the four dimensions (civic virtue and altruism) of the scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990). A sample item from this scale is "I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but are

considered important.” PCA recovered two dimensions as expected, both with a Cronbach’s alpha of .80.

Deviant behaviors. Deviant behaviors were measured using the organizational deviance portion of the deviant behavior scale developed by Bennett & Robinson (2000). The other portion of the scale measures interpersonal deviance, which we considered to be of less theoretical relevance within the study context. We perceived organizational deviance to be a more likely outcome of contempt triggered by leadership style, and opted to include only this sub-scale. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they had displayed certain behaviors over the course of the past year, and a sample item included “Put little effort into your work.”

PCA recovered three dimensions (eigenvalue >1), different from the one-dimensional solution that was expected from Bennett & Robinson (2000). The first dimension was the only dimension with acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha=0.70$. This dimension consists of four items (“Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working,” “Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace,” “Intentionally worked slower than you could have worked,” “Put little effort into your work”) that conceptually are similar as they focus on an individual’s regulation of the effort level in the work situation. We believe that this aspect may be more relevant within the Norwegian cultural context than more “dramatic” deviance such as “Taken property from work without permission” and “Dragged out work in order to get overtime,” which were items included in the other dimensions. Considering construct validity to be preserved, the first dimension was kept for further analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

Variable	α	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. LiDi	.84	3,97	,961	1								
2. Inv	.84	3,83	,968	.542**	1							
3. TE	.91	3,74	,854	.443**	.606**	1						
4. Pat	.89	3,35	,968	.477**	.494**	.504**	1					
5. PO	.82	3,54	,892	.268**	.435**	.453**	.468**	1				
6. Contempt		1,43	,7429	-.437**	-.324**	-.248**	-.313**	-.195**	1			
7. OCB Civic Virtue	.79	4,02	,675	.214**	.242**	.149**	.148**	.196**	-.150**	1		
8. OCB Altruism	.79	4,26	,537	.192**	.142**	.246**	.265**	.174**	-.153**	.478**	1	
9. Deviance	.070	1,80	,459	-.139**	-.157**	-.120*	-.132*	-.238**	.153**	-.229**	-.259**	1

**p < 0.01 ; *p < 0.05; N=367

Results

Table 1 provides the zero-order correlations and descriptive statistics for the study variables. Examination of the table shows moderately high correlations between the five dimensions of our culturally congruent leadership measure. This indicates that although the dimensions are empirically related, they do seem to capture different dimensions of the leader’s adaptation to the cultural setting. All five dimensions have significant, negative correlations with contempt. LiDi, Inv, and Pat have moderately high, negative, and significant ($p<0.01$) correlations with contempt, while TE and PO have small, negative, and significant ($p<0.01$) correlations with contempt. All in all, this provides support for Hypothesis 1, which predicted a negative relationship between culturally congruent

leadership and follower contempt to the leader. Contempt has a negative and significant ($p < 0.01$) direct effect on both OCB dimensions, and a positive and significant ($p < 0.01$) direct effect on deviance, although the correlations are small. This provides initial support for Hypothesis 2 and 3, which predicted that contempt would be negatively related to OCB and positively related to deviance.

Based on the exploratory factor analysis reported above, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the dependent variables in the latent variable structural equations program, Amos. The results are presented in *Figure 2*, and indicate that model fit was satisfactory (CMIN/DF = 1.101, GFI = .974, CFI = .996, RMSEA = .017). To provide additional tests of our hypotheses, we then proceeded with a structural model (*Figure 3*). The latent variables (ovals) are derived from the CFA analysis, while the measured variables (rectangles) are composites derived from the PCA reported above, as well as the one-item measure of contempt. The various fit statistics that we utilized to evaluate the adequacy of the model are shown in the upper right-hand corner of the figure, and indicate that the model overall provides a decent fit to the data (CMIN/DF = 2.046, GFI = .923, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .055).

Our main focus here was to examine the impact of culturally congruent leadership on contempt, and the impact of contempt on OCB and deviance. A closer inspection of the various paths indicates that culturally congruent leadership is negatively related to contempt. This provides support for Hypothesis 1. The different leadership dimensions appear to have rather different impacts, with LiDi having the largest effect and also representing the only significant path ($p < 0.01$). Examination of the paths from contempt to the dependent variables supports Hypotheses 2 and 3 by indicating that contempt has a negative effect on both OCB dimensions and a positive effect on deviance. All three paths are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Dependent Variables

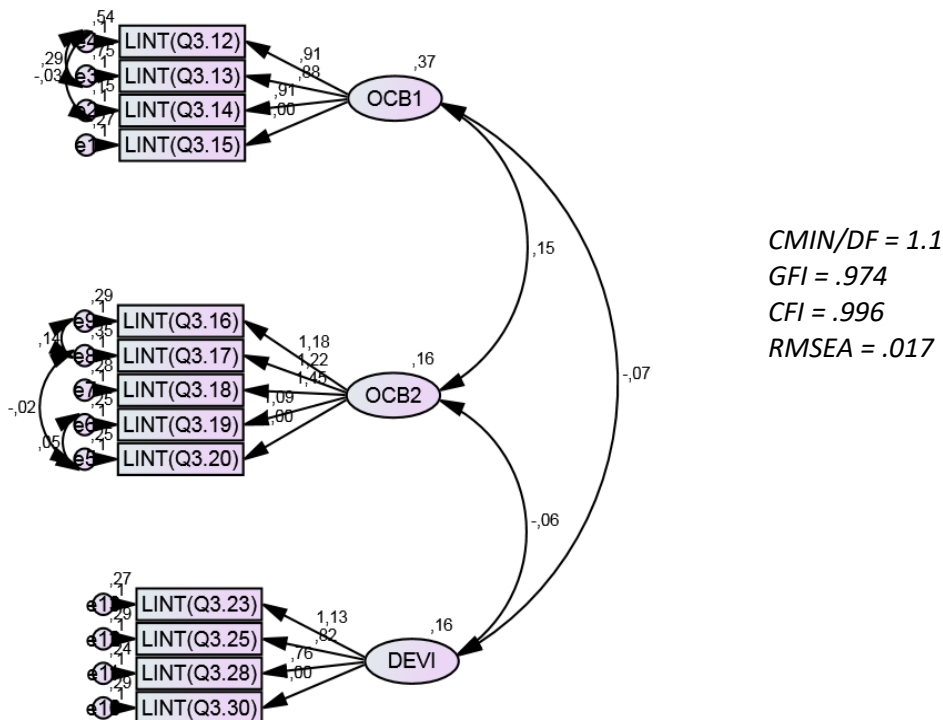
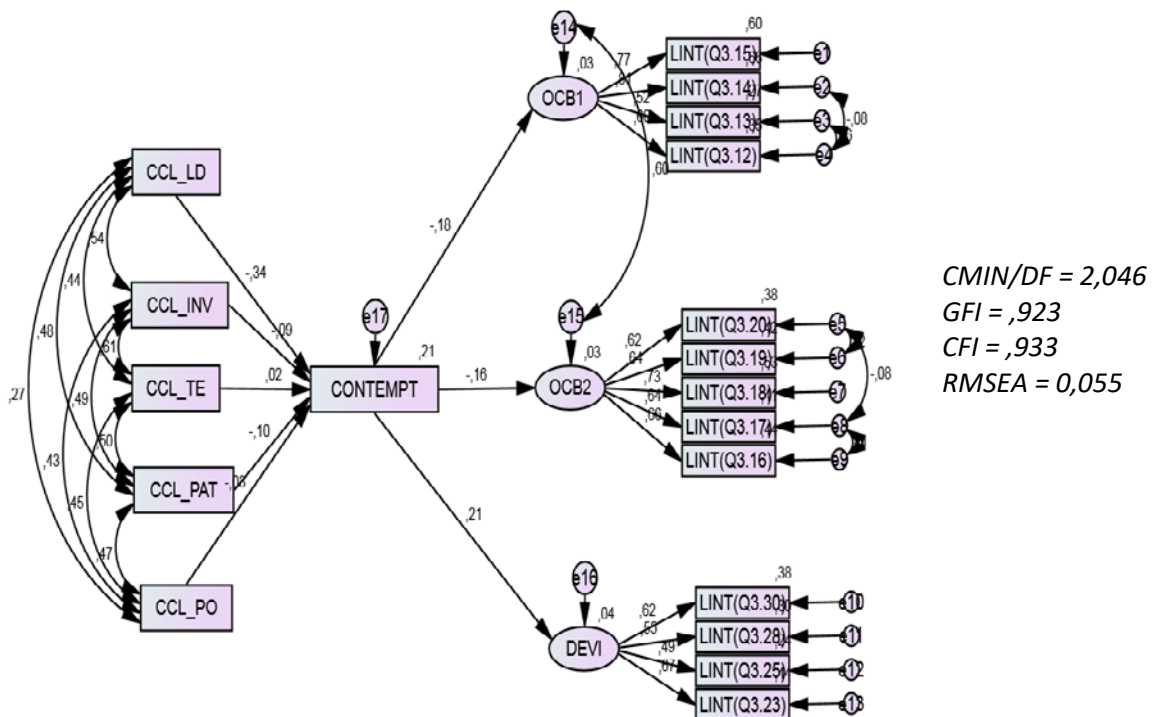


Figure 3: Effect of Culturally Congruent Leadership on Contempt, OCB, and Deviance



Discussion

Our focus in the present article was on examining follower-level emotions and their outcomes arising from culturally congruent and incongruent leadership encounters, and we did this by focusing on contempt, organizational citizenship behaviors, and deviant behaviors. We hypothesized that situations of culturally incongruent leadership, i.e. situations in which leaders do not behave in accordance with important, culturally derived and follower-held values, would trigger the emotion contempt in followers as a reaction to the perceived value incongruence. We subsequently posited that employee deviance would arise as a way of dealing with the arguably unpleasant feeling of contempt, while the propensity to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors would be reduced. Our findings provide support for both of these hypotheses: OCB had a negative, significant relationship to contempt, while deviance had a positive, significant relationship. These results suggest that contempt can arise as a consequence of culturally incongruent leadership, and that followers' possible repertoire of behavioral responses to this emotion includes deviant behaviors on the one hand, and withholding of organizational citizenship behaviors on the other hand. Thus, when followers are faced with situations where their leaders don't engage in the behaviors and actions that they desire and expect, they have the choice of either cutting back on helpful, positive behaviors or ramping up their display of deviant behaviors. This is in line with theory on how emotions influence behaviors. Events like the culturally congruent or incongruent leadership encounter are appraised and compared to the attainment of personal goals, values or desires (Lazarus, 1991a, 1991b). Given differences in power inherent in the leader-follower relationship, followers must be expected to not have much leeway when it comes to dealing with a leader who acts in an undesirable way. Being a less intense and longer-lasting emotion than e.g. anger, contempt is then a likely emotional response to undesirable leader-follower exchanges. Emotions subsequently influence the choice between different behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2002) — between the display of deviance versus the reduction of OCB in this case. In a scenario where the leader *does* display culturally adapted leadership, on the other hand, followers

will experience less contempt and will respond by engaging in OCB rather than by displaying deviant behaviors.

Our case was one of culturally congruent leadership within the Norwegian cultural context. We used a leadership scale specifically designed for this cultural context to measure culturally congruent leadership behaviors, and discovered that only one of the culturally congruent leadership dimensions (Little Distance) had a significant effect on the development of contempt. The Little Distance dimension implies that leaders actively pursue a close and personal relationship with their followers, treat everyone the same, and use this personal affinity to exert their influence. The relevance of Little Distance for the development of contempt makes theoretical sense. A situation of culturally incongruent leadership would in this case imply that leaders encourage more distance between themselves and followers, both physically in the workplace and by emphasizing power and status differences. This can be likened to a leader “push” away from followers and their perspectives, which subsequently may trigger contempt as a protective mechanism (e.g., Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Pelzer, 2005) that shields followers from unpleasantness.

The empirical link between culturally congruent leadership, contempt, deviance, and OCB is interesting given the long-lasting nature of contempt that can jeopardize the entire relationship in which it plays out (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). The culturally congruent – or incongruent – leadership encounter must be expected to change over time in cases where leaders and followers come from different cultural backgrounds and leaders must learn about the new culture in order to adapt their behaviors accordingly. If follower-level contempt is triggered at the outset of such a relationship because of perceived value incongruence, then this may taint the relationship and stop it from moving in a more fruitful direction as the leader learns about the new culture and changes his/her behaviors. Thus, leaders are well advised to be cognizant of the possible need for speed when displaying culturally congruent leadership.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study is cross-sectional and relies on self-report responses. Followers reported on their perception of their leader’s behavior, as well as their perception of contempt and their display of supportive and destructive behaviors in the workplace. The potential for common source bias is consequently a study limitation. Social desirability bias may also be present and lead to over-reporting of organizational citizenship behaviors and under-reporting of deviance and contempt. Future research should include leader ratings. This might provide a more realistic picture of culturally adapted leadership, but also of behaviors and emotions that are typically considered undesirable. A longitudinal design could provide interesting and important insight particularly into contempt. Compared to other negative emotions such as anger, contempt is a long-term emotion. As such, it might have effects on behavioral outcomes that play out differently over time. For example, it is possible that the full effect of contempt on deviant behaviors materializes over some time.

The measure of culturally congruent leadership was developed particularly for the cultural context in which the study was carried out (Norway), in line with calls for a more emic approach to leadership research. Future research might benefit from an emic approach not only to measures of leadership, but also to measures of leadership responses such as deviant behaviors at the follower level. The deviance scale utilized in the present study was developed using an American sample, and it can be argued that some of the items may be less relevant to a Norwegian cultural context characterized by e.g. relatively low power distance, individualism, and masculinity (Hofstede, 2001). Norwegian employees generally expect a democratic work environment where they are empowered and allowed to participate (Trygstad & Hagen, 2007). It is possible that deviance within a cultural context

of this type may take on different characteristics than deviance in a culture where employees have less room to participate and, and that some of the items in the deviance scale might be perceived as less applicable. Thus, the development of culturally unique measures of organizational behaviors may be an interesting pursuit for future studies.

Contempt remains an emotion that has received relatively little researcher attention, but the results from the present study suggest that this emotion may be related to intricate relationships of behaviors as coping mechanisms. Future research might undertake qualitative studies of an inductive nature to better get below the surface of how different behaviors might be either employed or held back as a response to contempt. It would be interesting to learn more about how followers actually calibrate their behavioral responses, i.e., when deviance is displayed versus when OCB is reduced. Studying this in different cultural settings might also provide insight into how culture can function as a moderator on the display of behaviors. For example, some cultures may allow for a more liberal and open display of contempt, while other cultures may be less tolerant of emotional expressions. This would perhaps be reflected in people's propensity to deal with contempt through constructive behaviors versus dealing with it "on the sly" through deviant behaviors.

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