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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Olin Business School

Dissertation Examination Committee:

Kurt T. Dirks, Chair

William P. Bottom

Ashley E. Hardin

Robyn A. LeBoeuf

Hillary A. Sale

Blame and Credit in Organizations:

Theory and Evidence Explaining the Responses of Leaders after Failure and Success

by

Jasmine Morlee Huang

A dissertation presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019

St. Louis, Missouri

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Jasmine M. Huang

Washington University in St. Louis

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, whose thirst for learning inspires my own.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Blame and Credit in Organizations:

Theory and Evidence Explaining the Responses of Leaders after Failure and Success

by

Jasmine Morlee Huang

Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration

Washington University in St. Louis, 2019

Professor Kurt T. Dirks, Chair

The blame and credit literature has operated largely on the assumption that actors want to reduce the blame assigned to them and increase assigned credit (Gioia & Sims, 1985; Greenwald, 1980; Shaver, 1985). As a result, much of the literature has focused on the shifting of blame away from the self and of credit towards the self (e.g., Crant & Bateman, 1993), rather than other behaviors that are less self-serving (e.g., blame-taking, Gunia, 2011). This dissertation explores a variety of blame and credit behaviors and explains why leaders may enact different types of blame and credit behaviors. In Chapter 2, I conducted a Pilot Study of semi-structured interviews with coaches to examine their thought processes leading up to communications of blame and credit. Study 1 painted a more comprehensive picture of the expressions and patterns of blame and credit which arise during post-game press conferences of NFL coaches. In Chapter 3, I drew from and integrated four separate literatures to develop a theoretical model proposing that there are four motives that drive leader blame and credit behaviors, and that contextual factors may influence the relationship between motive and behavior. In Chapter 4, I conducted three studies to test key elements of the theoretical model, combining an online field survey and experimental designs in the laboratory. These studies revealed that leaders with disparate motives may enact

different blame behaviors in light of unsuccessful outcomes in particular. Overall, this dissertation (1) evolves our understanding of the communication and variety of blame and credit in organizations, (2) establishes a theoretical model delineating the motives driving leader blame and credit behaviors, and (3) provides empirical evidence that supports the validity of the theoretical model. This is the first paper of its kind to provide theory and scientific evidence regarding the motives behind blame and credit behaviors of leaders. In doing so, this dissertation brings to the forefront the importance of leaders' blame and credit behaviors in organizations, and both generates and advances the conversation about these behaviors in the workplace.

Chapter 1: Motivation and Central Concepts

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

--Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, speech written in case D-Day invasion failed

June 5, 1944

In February 2014, General Motors (GM) issued a recall of 780,000 Cobalt and Pontiac G5 cars sold between 2005 and 2007. Six days later, with pressure mounting from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, GM expanded the recall to 1.37 million cars. Later, it came to light that GM had been aware of a defect in the cars' ignition switch system but had failed to warn the public of the defect or issue a recall. In fact, GM engineers had first noticed the problem as early as 2001 and again in 2004, yet no changes or recommended solutions were implemented due to budgetary concerns. The result was hundreds of accidents between 2005 and 2010 related to the ignition switch problem, many fatal (Blau, 2016). In total, GM ultimately issued 84 recalls that affected more than 30 million vehicles in the aftermath of the, by that time, widely publicized faulty ignition switch scandal (Blau, 2016; DeBord, 2014).

Ripple effects of the crisis included a \$3 billion cut in GM shareholders' value over a four-week period between March and April of 2014 (Lachappelle & Bost, 2014) and an eventual \$900 million fine paid to federal prosecutors (Ivory & Vlasic, 2015). In light of revelations of the deadly ignition switch problem, the company's CEO, Mary Barra, fired twelve employees, though no executives were implicated and no GM employees were charged with any wrongdoing

(Blau, 2016). Barra stepped forward and publicly took full responsibility for the problems facing the major automaker (Colvin, 2014). Moreover, despite that the defects occurred before Barra became CEO in January of 2014, she “[took the] hit, over and over again” and refused to blame the typical easy targets (i.e., middle management) (DeBord, 2014).

The example of CEO Barra contrasts with the CEOs of major financial firms following the Financial Crisis of 2007-2008. Three years prior to GM’s mass recall, in January 2011, the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (FCIC) found the Financial Crisis to be avoidable but caused by a multitude of factors, including “widespread failures in financial regulation and supervision,” “dramatic failures of corporate governance and risk management at many systemically important financial institutions,” poor preparation by the U.S. government for the crisis, and “a combination of excessive borrowing, risky investments, and lack of transparency” by financial institutions (Financial Inquiry Commission, 2011: *xviii-xxii*). The Commission held public congressional hearings in Washington, D.C., during which executives of four major financial firms, including the Morgan Stanley chairman and CEOs of JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, and Bank of America, were witnesses. The financial executives testified to their companies’ involvement in the financial meltdown, such as Goldman Sachs’ selling of securities containing subprime mortgages and subsequently shorting those investments to hedge their risk (Puzzanghera, 2010), and Morgan Stanley traders betting billions of dollars in the subprime mortgage market, which eventually nearly forced the company into bankruptcy.

Despite evidence connecting actions taken by Wall Street firms and their employees to the massive financial meltdown, however, the executives avoided taking blame for the crisis. They “admitted making mistakes” and explained that they were “among the many players, from major financial firms to average consumers, who took on too much risk during the boom of the

last decade” and said that the “system” and “poor government regulation played a role in the crisis” (Puzzanghera, 2010).

The contrast between the Wall Street executives and CEO Mary Barra prompts the question of what motivates leaders to different types of acknowledgements of accountability following a negative event like a scandal or crisis. In both of these situations, multiple individuals and groups of people at varying levels of each organization made decisions that contributed to the occurrence and magnitude of the outcome. Moreover, the complexity of these events adds to the range of response options that executives in each organization might consider in their public (and private) reactions. Similarly, an equally complex or ambiguous series of decisions can trigger *positive* events, such as successes, after which a leader could communicate accountability in the form of the placement of credit towards or away from him or herself.

1.1 Motivation

Blame is a social explanation for failure, and people naturally assign it following a failure (Shaver, 1985; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). In a normative sense, individuals are blamed because they engage in behaviors that have led to negative consequences, incurring additional blame if they knew the negative event would occur, acted voluntarily in doing so, and/or provided no justification (Shaver, 1985; Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003). In a descriptive sense, blame is often assigned outside of these criteria, in particular when the negative event evokes negative emotions (Alicke, 2000). Thus, the ascription of blame hinges on one’s subjective interpretation of the series of events leading to the negative event or failure. Additionally, because of the ambiguous nature of organizational events (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), an individual’s interpretation of the event may differ from another’s. Although credit is not the exact opposite of blame, credit can be characterized in a parallel fashion as a social explanation

for success. Importantly, credit is often assigned more liberally than blame (Pizarro, Uhlmann, & Salovey, 2003).

Blame has been examined from numerous scholarly perspectives, including psychology (Alicke, 2000), sociology (Tilly, 2008), anthropology (Douglas, 1992), philosophy (Shaver, 1985), legal studies (Pennington & Hastie, 1986), and psychiatry (Brickman et al., 1982). Much of this work, however, has focused exclusively on blame-assignment, as opposed to other forms of blame behaviors, such as the blame-taking case of GM CEO Mary Barra.

Furthermore, literature on organizational attributions suggests that there are particular individuals in organizations who are blamed more frequently – an organization’s leaders, or senior managers. There are at least two reasons for this outcome. First, individuals inside organizations may subscribe to the “romance of leadership,” the belief that leaders determine the fate of their organizations (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). Here, people believe that failures and negative outcomes imply that the leader or senior manager did something wrong in the case of a negative outcome or right in the case of a positive outcome. Thus, the theory indicates a belief in the link between the events and the senior leaders’ actions (Lee & Tiedens, 2001; Meindl et al., 1985; Salancik & Meindl, 1984). One example of this theory is when a football coach loses his job when his team underperforms. Second, leaders are often blamed by “proxy” as the representative of the organization or team that has fallen short (e.g., Gibson & Schroeder, 2003; Zemba, Young, & Morris, 2006). The idea that leaders may be blamed “by proxy” is illustrated in instances in which leaders, such as CEOs, whose actions are most likely removed from the negative outcome, are blamed or expected to take blame for a crisis.

Theories on self-enhancement and the promotion of self-image may explain why much of the academic research has directed more attention to blame giving as opposed to other blame

behaviors (e.g., blame-taking). These theories operate on the assumption that actors want to reduce the blame assigned to them and increase assigned credit. The motivation to avoid threats to self-esteem drives individuals to take credit for successful outcomes more than they take blame for unsuccessful outcomes, as well as take credit for diffuse achievements and blame others for diffuse failures (Shaver, 1985; Gioia and Sims, 1985). For example, Crant and Bateman (1993) found that accounting firm employees who employed the use of tactics such as self-handicapping and causal accounts were able to diminish the amount of blame assigned for a failure. This finding highlights that individuals may strategically present information in order to sway others' assignments of blame or credit in order to shift blame away (i.e., to protect the self) and to shift credit towards themselves (i.e., to enhance the self) (Crant & Bateman, 1993).

Although it seems unlikely, that the current academic literature places more weight on the act of blame giving, rather than blame-taking, may imply that individuals generally do not take blame in organizations. Indeed, in recent years, popular news media outlets have addressed the idea that managers and leaders may in fact reap benefits from taking blame, not only individually but across their groups and organizations as well (Bregman, 2013; Sharer, 2014; Suddath, 2012). Furthermore, at least one organization explicitly promotes a culture of blame-taking: U.S. Navy SEALs are taught that “someone has to be able to take the blame when things go wrong” (Cannon and Cannon, 2003: 87); they are instructed not to “shirk or run away” but to “take the hit” (92). Thus, given the acknowledgment of the potential benefits of blame-taking in the popular press and anecdotal documentation of blame-taking occurrences in some organizations (e.g., U.S. Navy SEALs, CEO Mary Barra at GM), there exists evidence that managers and leaders do, at times, engage in blame-taking, though perhaps not as often as blame-assignment.

Moreover, although existing research has not comprehensively examined the wide variety of blame and credit behaviors, the notion of taking blame has not been completely overlooked. Specifically, in his dissertation work, Gunia (2011) investigated the incidence and effectiveness of blame-taking within organizations. Through eight studies using surveys, scenario manipulations, and laboratory methods, Gunia established that blame-taking occurs less commonly than evasion in light of a failure. His work further illustrated that people believe that they would engage in blame-taking over evasion, and that they prefer acts of blame-taking to remorse and acts of remorse to evasion. Indeed, his dissertation suggests that blame-taking is linked to positive perceptions of the transgressor's character, whereas evasion is not. Nevertheless, beyond this work on the incidence and effectiveness of blame-taking, there remains a wide gap in our understanding of the other ways in which blame (and credit) may be communicated, and importantly, why.

Given that the current literature focuses disproportionately on blame giving rather than other forms of blame behaviors, the question of how these other types of blame behaviors compare deserves attention. Similarly, the question of what other types of credit-related behaviors exist and how they compare also needs attention. We know little with respect to what other types of acknowledgements of blame and credit may look like in organizations; that the organizational literature has not delved into the topic of blame-taking specifically exposes a void in existing theory. Consequently, the literature does not consider that there may be situations in which blame-taking may be natural, appropriate, or even beneficial. We also know little about when and why individuals take blame, as well as the factors and conditions that contribute to such events. Further, what drives leaders to engage in disparate types of blame and credit behaviors is a key unanswered question. Although a universal self-serving bias might be one

explanation behind the tendency for an individual to assign blame and take credit, we lack a full understanding of when and why someone might choose to take or share blame or assign or take credit. In sum, the blame and credit literature does not currently address the motives and consequences of these behaviors and does not adequately examine the various types of blame and credit behaviors enacted by leaders. This dissertation aims to improve our understanding of why leaders choose to engage in different types of blame and credit behaviors. In addition to identifying the drivers of these various behaviors, this dissertation identifies contextual factors that influence the effects of these motives on blame and credit behaviors.

1.2 Central Concepts and Assumptions

1.2.1 Diffuse events. The scope of this paper includes diffuse but not concentrated events. Specifically, it includes negative and positive events that are *diffuse* in nature because they cannot readily be attributed to a single source or cause. A diffuse failure is seen as a negative event for which several parties are likely to be responsible (Shaver, 1985). Conversely, diffuse successes are seen as positive events for which several parties are responsible. In contrast, *concentrated* events are those in which the event can be directly attributed to a single source or party. The scope of this paper does not include concentrated events. Whereas concentrated failures prescribe apologies as an appropriate response, Gunia (2011) suggests that diffuse events require a different response, such as blame-taking, or the taking of personal responsibility for a diffuse negative event (i.e., failure). The cases of the Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 and the GM ignition switch scandal can be classified as events for which numerous factors and decisions could be attributed to the eventual outcomes (i.e., a diffuse failure, or a diffuse negative event).

The abundance of possible causes and the division of labor in organizations (Weber, 1928) contribute to the ambiguity surrounding ownership of a negative outcome (i.e., diffuse failure) or a positive outcome (i.e., diffuse success). The positive and negative events examined in this paper are complex in that there are multiple potential variables that led to the outcome. Although there may be certain factors that are more salient, the sequence of decisions in the events ultimately leading to the outcome are interdependent and cannot be easily disentangled. In addition, the diffuse outcomes studied are bounded in that the set of possible individuals or groups being blamed or credited is not infinite; instead, there is a finite set of potential individuals who can incur blame or credit for an event. Further, that individuals are employed by the same organization does not necessarily mean that they are equally culpable for or connected to a diffuse success or failure within the organization.

Moreover, the direction of the outcome, positive or negative, is generally dependent on the perspective of the focal individual or group. Outcomes may be positive for one party yet negative for another, and likewise, negative outcomes may be negative for one party yet positive for another. Organizational members may face uncertainty when determining whether an event constitutes a success or a failure (Ginzel et al., 2004). Whether an outcome is positive or negative is dependent on a reference point. According to Kahneman & Tversky's (1979) prospect theory, the psychological reference point corresponds to the current "level," or status quo, but this level may be shaped by other factors, such as recent changes to this level or comparisons to other parties. Kahneman and Tversky's ideas have also given rise to the idea that reference points can change, that they can vary by individual, and that subjective perceptions of an outcome are dependent on its deviation from some reference point, which results in a "gain" (i.e., a positive outcome) or a "loss" (i.e., a negative outcome) (Hardie et al., 1993). Thus, the

positive or negative nature of the diffuse outcomes in this dissertation are dependent on a reference point set by the leader. The leader must manage this reference point and frame her communications (e.g., regarding blame and credit) accordingly following a positive or negative outcome. A loss could be seen as a gain, depending on the reference point; for example, if profits come in below expectations, a leader may frame this as a positive outcome because of the reference point being set even lower than the actual profits earned. Therefore, because of reference dependence, some losses may feel like wins and some wins may not feel as positive, and leaders may frame their communications according to this reference dependence.

In prospect theory, the reference point plays a prominent role, yet this point can change over time (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Given a series of outcomes, the hedonic consequences of an outcome may cause one's reference point to change, and the consequences of a subsequent outcome then depend on the adaption of this reference point. Relatedly, various researchers have also studied changes in behavior and their relationship to changes in aspiration levels (e.g., Lopes, 1987; March 1988). An aspiration level is a specific type of reference point, defined as "the smallest outcome that would be deemed satisfactory by the decision maker" (Schneider, 1992: 1053). When evaluating an outcome, comparisons to an aspiration level are made to determine if the outcome is a success or failure (Cyert & March, 1963; Levitt & March, 1988). Furthermore, according to adaptive aspirations theory, an organization's aspiration levels may change over time; these levels are set and adjusted in response to goals in previous periods, experiences with respect to that goal in the previous period, and comparisons made to other organizations (Cyert & March, 1963). This suggests that an individual's aspirations levels can vary as well, in line with assertions made by prospect theory. In this dissertation, the leader is the decision maker, and she will adjust her behavior based on an outcome's relationship to an

aspiration level, which too may be subject to change based on past outcomes and on social comparisons. Ultimately, the leader's subjective reference point determines the positive or negative nature of an outcome, and the leader can choose to respond to the outcome depending on their subjective interpretation of whether it is positive or negative.

1.2.2 Blame and credit behaviors. When unanticipated behavior occurs, we expect an account or explanation of the behavior to follow (Scott & Lyman, 1968). In a similar vein, following a diffuse negative event such as an organizational failure, we expect a representative of the organization to give an account or explanation of the event. Leaders of organizations are often the individuals expected to step forward and make a statement regarding the event. Acknowledgments of positive events exist as well; when an organizational success occurs, leaders and members of those organizations may also give reasons for successes that other individuals and organizations can use as exemplars or guidelines for achieving success. In this paper, I define a leader as a formal leader within an organization who is in a formal relationship with one or more subordinates as their direct manager (or direct supervisor). I define a blame behavior as a voluntary behavior of designating internal responsibility for a negative outcome to an individual or group of individuals, either the self or followers. Similarly, a credit behavior is a voluntary behavior of designating internal responsibility for a positive outcome to an individual or group of individuals, either the self or followers. Thus, both blame and credit behaviors shift blame or credit toward a specific person or group of people, through the taking, sharing, or assigning blame or credit.

In addition, the apology is not included in the scope of this dissertation. Blame-taking and apologizing are closely related concepts, but the apology is distinctive because it involves an expression of regret or remorse. Kim and his colleagues (2004; 2006) defined apology as having

two components, one that acknowledges responsibility and another that conveys remorse. In an apology, the acknowledgement of responsibility may be directed toward the group and not necessarily the self. In contrast, blame-taking does not include the regret component of apologizing, and beyond an acknowledgment of responsibility, blame-taking is solely the voluntary shouldering of or designation of responsibility categorically unto oneself.

1.2.3 Audiences. The organizational communications literature divides communications into two groups of stakeholders: internal and external (Cornelissen, 2008). Internal communications refer to those that are distributed inside an organization, whereas external communications are those to stakeholders outside of an organization. Similarly, research on marketing and ad campaigns have referred to internal communications as those directed toward employees and external communications as those directed toward consumers (Celsi & Gilly, 2010). The distinctions between internal and external audiences in the communications literature parallel Weiner's (1986) notion of locus and controllability. In a crisis context, the locus indicates whether the cause of the crisis is internal or external to the organization, and controllability refers to whether the organization has control over whether it can prevent the crisis (i.e., an internal locus is associated with a controllable crisis, whereas an external locus is associated with uncontrollable crisis). A crisis perceived to fall within the boundaries of an organization is then classified as having an internal locus, and one that falls outside the boundaries of an organization are classified as having an external locus (Lee, 2004).

For the purposes of this research, the audience is defined as the individual or group of individual who observe a leader's blame and credit behaviors. Blame and credit behaviors are the designations of internal responsibility for an outcome toward an individual or group within the organization. These designations can be communicated to both external and internal audiences

with differing consequences. In this dissertation, the distinction between an external and an internal audience stems from the organizational communications and crisis communications literature. Therefore, an *external audience* is comprised of individuals who are not formally members of the organization – namely, they are external to the organization. These individuals can be consumers of what the organization produces, but they are not official members of or employed by the organization. For example, users of an end product or fans of sports teams can be affected by behaviors of an organization, but they are not an official or formal member of the organization. An external audience includes stakeholders and the general public, but not employees of an organization. Leaders of organizations, such as coaches or executives, will provide opinions or statements to the media, and as recipients of that information, the general public can be considered an external audience for blame and credit behaviors that may be incorporated in these communications.

Conversely, an *internal audience* is comprised of individuals who are official employees of the organization. An internal audience may be aware of the public communication (e.g., blame or credit behaviors) from individuals within the organization, such as a leader to an external audience, but blame or credit behaviors may also be communicated to them in an internal setting. Acknowledgements of blame and credit to an internal audience are thus private and intended to be disclosed only within the organization.

In this dissertation, I also distinguish between two types of internal audiences: the *intra-team audience* and the *extra-team audience*, terminology that is also inspired by the organizational communications literature that divides audiences into internal and external categories (e.g., Cornelissen, 2008; Lee, 2004). The intra-team audience includes individuals or parties whose actions could have directly led to the diffuse event. For example, salespeople on a

sales team that fails to meet its collective sales target are an intra-team audience, as are coaches and football players on a team that win a football game. These individuals might incur blame or receive credit based on closer proximity to the outcome compared to the extra-team audience. The extra-team audience includes parties who are formal members or employees of the organization but not directly involved in the diffuse event. These extra-team parties may be other people (e.g., other employees, other managers) or groups within the organization (e.g., other teams in the same organization or department) who are not considered potential causes of the outcome because, for example, their roles and actions are isolated from the diffuse event. Both intra-team and extra-team internal audiences can include individuals who are above, below, or of equal hierarchical rank to the individual engaging in the blame or credit behavior.

1.3 Overview

In this dissertation, I examine how and why leaders, defined in this paper as formal leaders in the role of a manager or supervisor, of organizations communicate accountability by addressing blame and credit. This dissertation contributes to and extends the conversation about blame and credit behaviors in the workplace by deepening our understanding of the distinct ways in which leaders express blame and credit to an external audience and leaders' perspectives on their own blame and credit behaviors to an internal audience. I then develop a theoretical framework delineating the motives and related factors driving such behaviors internally within organizations. Chapter 1 provided the general motivation for studying the selected topic and clarified concepts central to this dissertation in particular.

In Chapter 2, I take an exploratory approach to identify numerous blame and credit behaviors beyond those previously emphasized in the literature. In the initial Pilot Study, I use an in-depth, semi-structured interview approach to garner an understanding of the internal,

conscious processes of leaders of sports teams, coaches. These leaders may be aware of their conscious thought processes prior to and during their communication of blame and credit to team members situated hierarchically (and internally) below them. In Study 1, I survey statements made by professional American football coaches in a public setting that address blame and credit following the win or loss of a football game. The purpose of this study is to develop a more comprehensive picture of what expressions of blame and credit look like, as well as to identify any patterns regarding these behaviors. Together, these two studies (i.e., Pilot Study and Study 1) address the distinctions among different blame and credit behaviors, providing suggestions for why some leaders may engage in one type of behavior over the other.

Chapter 3 builds upon conclusions drawn from the Pilot Study and Study 1 and develops a model arguing that leaders' tendencies to engage in blame and credit behaviors are not always driven by self-serving biases. I explore the reasons behind these disparate behaviors by proposing that there is a set of commonly experienced motivations that drives leaders to enact various blame and credit behaviors beyond shifting blame away and credit towards oneself. Drawing from a variety of literatures, I identify four broad categories of motives driving blame and credit behaviors. The set of motives introduced in Chapter 3 provide a method for categorizing the key common explanations for why leaders might choose to enact one type of blame or credit behavior over another. Thus, Chapter 3 contributes to the existing literature by expanding our understanding of why leaders engage in specific types of behavior through a new theoretical framework.

Next, in Chapter 4, I describe three studies (Studies 2, 3 and 4) conducted to test key elements of the theory proposed in the third chapter regarding leaders' motivations to shift blame and credit either toward themselves or away, toward others. I develop hypotheses that test

motives developed in Chapter 3, as well as potential moderating variables. Study 2 is an online field survey study conducted with a sample of working managers. Study 3 is an experimental study conducted with a sample of undergraduates, testing the main effects of the model. Finally, Study 4 is an experimental study using a procedure similar to Study 3 that additionally tests the moderating effect of reward structure. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 5, presenting the key takeaways and contributions, implications, and proposed future steps.

In sum, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of the communication of blame and credit in organizations, the distinctions among different types of blame and credit behaviors, and the motives driving these types of behaviors. It both exposes and extends the opportunity for future exploration of the downstream consequences of blame and credit behaviors. It does so by initiating a dialogue about why leaders engage in disparate behaviors, such as blame-taking and credit-giving. Examining these factors, as well as contextual factors, allows for a deeper understanding of the variation in behaviors across leaders. I aim to offer practical guidance for managers and other formal leaders about how to navigate their set of response options following a positive or negative organizational event. Thus, this dissertation paves the way for future research on how blame and credit behaviors can improve the nature, efficiency, and effectiveness of leaders who manage subordinates and teams.

Chapter 2: Introductory Studies

2.1 Introduction

The blame and credit literature has not yet delved into the variety of ways in which organizational leaders acknowledge blame and credit following diffuse positive and negative outcomes. Although scholars have examined blame assignment behaviors, much of this work has operated on the assumption that individuals act to reduce blame and increase credit assigned to them. As a result, within the literature, we know little with respect to the other blame behaviors that might exist or what they look like, as well as credit behaviors beyond credit taking. This dissertation addresses this void by surveying a context in which acknowledgements of blame and credit arise with regularity and investigating the display of these types of behaviors and how they compare to one another.

In this chapter, I conduct exploratory work to create a more comprehensive picture of blame and credit behaviors. In the Pilot Study, I interview two organizational leaders to address and develop an understanding of private, internal blame and credit behaviors. The objective of the Pilot Study is to enhance our understanding of *why* leaders choose to engage in certain types of blame and credit behaviors and how they view these processes themselves.

The objective of Study 1, an exploratory study qualitative in nature, is to illustrate that a variety of blame and credit behaviors exist, and these expressions may not occur in symmetric ways in the public context of the study. By identifying and mapping out distinct categories of blame and credit, I uncover existing patterns in these types of behaviors. I also explore both public and private blame and credit behaviors, determining that these behaviors vary when directed to an external (aligned with Study 1) versus an internal audience (more aligned with the

Pilot Study). The private context of behaviors observed in the Pilot Study and the opportunity to probe the thought processes of those who directly enact these behaviors, on top of the mapping of blame and credit behaviors in a public arena through Study 1, will prompt a conversation regarding the possible motivations behind various blame and credit behaviors from the perspective of the leaders.

2.2 Pilot Study: Coach Interviews

In order to begin to understand blame and credit behaviors enacted by leaders, I first looked to leaders of sports teams. While I am interested in how coaches communicate blame and credit toward an external audience, enhancing my understanding of how they communicate blame and credit toward an internal audience helps identify potential opportunities for conceptual development and data collection. Namely, in this study, I wanted to answer the question of how coaches determine which blame and credit behaviors to engage in when communicating with an intra-team audience of their athletes.

I conducted two rounds of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with two coaches at a mid-sized, private university in the Midwest with an athletic program competing in Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In-depth interviews that are scheduled in advance and take place in a private setting are conducive to trust and candor on part of the interviewee (Padgett, 2008). In addition, advance preparation of an interview guide with questions and probes allows the interviewer to clarify the goal of the interview (e.g., Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). Qualitative interviewing also gives the interviewer the opportunity to decide whether to probe further or to cover broader or additional topics, providing some control over data collection. Challenges with this technique include striking a balance between the general versus the particular and the planned versus the spontaneous. The approach can also be

physically and emotionally taxing based on the topics discussed and the length of the interview. To address these challenges, I prepared ahead of time and consulted various resources to develop my interview guides and protocols.

The purpose of the interviews was to gain further insight into how coaches themselves believed they made decisions regarding blame and credit behaviors and their general approach to communicating with the team (e.g., giving feedback). Thus, the focus of the Pilot Study was on coaches' perceptions of their own process of coaching and communicating blame and credit, as well as their personal "philosophy" and reasons for doing so.

2.2.1 Method. I developed interview questions with the objective of conducting semi-structured interviews. The interview guides were developed to create a short, in-depth interview that was both discursive and dialectical (Soss, 2014). The interviews were dialectical in that there was not one single path to be taken, allowing the element of unpredictability of a conversation to occur. I wanted to maintain the presence of a goal of the interview while still allowing the interviewee, the coach, to prioritize what information to share in the interview. The dialectical aspect of the interviews was reflected in that the interview was a back-and-forth conversation instead of one single person dominating the conversation, and the discursive aspect was reflected in the natural flow of the interview from topic to topic, similar to a conversation. I needed to moderate the discussion but they needed to provide the information for which I was looking.

The first interview protocol included questions to provide a basis for understanding the circumstances and context in which the coach leads. These questions focused on how the coaches perceived their role as coach and the role of the athletes, as well as how the coaches communicated with the athletes. The later interview questions in this protocol directly addressed beliefs about blame and credit in the sports context. The second interview protocol included

questions that were developed based on what I learned from the first interview. I probed deeper into the coaches' growth over their career regarding providing communication and feedback to the team, as well as their personal opinions about leading and growing a team. I developed questions in certain topical domains (e.g., responsibilities of coach, communication to team, career trajectory, and lessons learned) and annotated these questions for my own use with probes (Padgett, 2008). These probes would remind me to ask the coach a specific question in case they did not cover it spontaneously.

I conducted two rounds of semi-structured interviews with the men's basketball coach and women's softball coach at the university. I met with each coach for one hour in each session, and the second interview occurred approximately three months after the first. The basketball coach was male, his age was 79 years, and he had served as the head basketball coach at the university for 37 seasons and as assistant coach for one season. He had previously spent 9 seasons as assistant coach at a Division I university and was a former Division III basketball player. The softball coach was female, her age was 44 years, and she had served as the head softball coach at the university for one season. Previously, she had been the head coach at a Division I university for eight seasons and assistant head coach at another Division I university for six seasons. She was a former Division I softball player, in addition to being a former member of the U.S. National Team and the U.S Olympic Team.

2.2.2 Results. Both coaches emphasized process over outcome. This was interesting because outcomes in sports are often what the stakeholders (e.g., owners, fans, and media) focus on and value. Although the coaches emphasized process over the outcome in the interviews and we might assume this is what they actually do with their teams, a coach can also make acknowledgments of blame and credit with respect to the process instead of the diffuse outcome

(i.e., wins and losses). The coaches also conveyed an awareness of the importance of sensitivity to the needs of the players, explaining that one player's reaction to a blame or credit behavior might be very different from another's, i.e., one athlete might experience the communication as constructive and another as humiliating. Both coaches also spoke at length about building a relationship with the players. They believed that understanding their players and creating a high level of trust with them would help them, as the coach, to provide effective and compelling feedback and directives to an athlete.

Furthermore, the coaches were insistent that they cannot (i.e., should not and do not) place blame on the team members because doing so might lead to reduced morale, weakened relationships with athletes, or negative emotions that disrupt the process and progress of the team. They both acknowledged the possibility that athletes experience blame when given feedback during and after practices and games. As a result, although coaches may not think they are blaming players, the players may interpret words and actions in a manner different from what their coaches intended. The coaches voiced the importance of building rapport with the athletes so that they, as the coach, would know the best course of action to take when communicating blame or credit – whether it was after the outcome of a game, during a game, or during practice while refining skills to be exhibited during an official game. Nevertheless, both coaches emphasized that they were the leaders of a team and therefore both had the final say in communicating blame and credit, and once they carefully thought through what engaging in specific blame or credit behaviors would achieve, would communicate it accordingly.

2.3 Study 1: Public Acknowledgements of Blame and Credit

Private, internal communications may differ from statements made to the public (i.e., to an external audience), including in the context of sports. For example, although coaches may

exercise more restraint in press conference dialogue and body language than they do when speaking privately with the team (e.g. in the locker room or during practices), public statements that a coach makes that communicate blame and credit arise with regularity and are ripe for analysis. Because the current literature has focused heavily on blame assignment and credit taking over other types of possible blame and credit behaviors, our knowledge of other types of acknowledgements and how they compare and contrast to self-serving blame and credit behaviors is lacking. In order to further our understanding of how and when individuals acknowledge blame and credit, I examine actors' expressions of blame and credit in organizations. Using an exploratory approach, I conducted a study in a professional sports context to map out various types of blame and credit behaviors that leaders engage in in the public to discover patterns indicating that actors tend to approach potential incidents of blame and credit in predictable ways.

2.3.1 Study context. Mary Barra's blame-taking statement was in response to an unexpected anomaly and, as a result, is inherently irregular, resulting in unpredictable communications. Therefore, it is not possible to analyze similar situations and construct a valid dataset. Acknowledgments of blame and credit, however, occur with regularity and consistency during professional sports postgame press conferences. During these conferences, each head coach addresses the public through the professional sports media. Coaches often take this opportunity to make evaluative and explanatory statements, including reflections on the game played, explanations for actions or outcomes, and/or assessments of the team's performance and condition. Archives of coaches' press conferences are publicly available on many sports teams' official websites, and that makes them a source of data for systematically examining communications of credit and blame in business organizations.

Behaviors in professional athletics provide a good source of comparison for behaviors in other organizations. Professional sports are becoming increasingly recognized as a huge and globally expanding business that has reshaped cultures around the world (Mooney & White, 2014; Morss, 2012). For example, in the past couple of years, the controversy surrounding corruption in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) increased the recognition of professional sports associations operating as businesses (Ozanian, 2015). Moreover, in contrast to manufacturing companies, which are rapidly incorporating automation into their operations and thus diminishing the human factor (McAfee, 2013), the human factor remains central in professional sports. Consequently, examining human behaviors, especially those of an individual observed to be the leader (i.e., coach) of a group or organization of people (i.e., a sports team), through postgame press conferences provides case studies in which acknowledgments of blame and credit arise with regularity.

Study 1 examines postgame press conferences in the National Football League (NFL), one of the four major professional sports associations in North America. The NFL is a profitable business; in the 2015 season alone, the NFL brought in over \$13 billion dollars in revenue, up from \$8.5 billion in revenue in 2010 (Belzer, 2016), which was distributed among the teams. Revenue in the NFL comes from licensing agreements, sponsorships, merchandise, and ticket sales, but most critically from television rights fees (Rocco, 2015). In 2015, the largest proportion of revenue was accounted for by television rights at about \$5 billion from CBS, NBC, FOX, and ESPN combined (Kutz, 2016).

During its season, NFL games occur weekly, with each team receiving one bye week. Because games are played once a week, coaches and teams have time to analyze the previous game and prepare for the upcoming game. In other professional sports associations, games may

occur more frequently, such as in Major League Baseball (in which teams play games almost every day, with about one day off every ten days), resulting in less time to reflect and practice between games. Journalists and fans of baseball also have less time to focus on the events of one contest before they are superseded by the next. Thus, any given football press conference has greater salience.

Postgame press conferences by NFL head coaches provide a rich dataset for acknowledgments of blame and credit given the extent of their responsibilities as head coach of the team. Some coaches are involved with the intricacies of team membership and game execution (e.g., in obtaining players and calling plays). But most NFL coaches are regularly in charge of postgame analysis, game planning, managing practices, making adjustments during the game (often aided by communication from staff members from a “bird’s-eye view,” via headset), providing a framework for schemes and formations, and ultimately leading “on and off the field—in and out of the locker room” (Garda, 2013). Because NFL coaches are deeply involved with their players before and after the game, and because football games move at a pace allowing for awareness of almost every decision made by the team on the field during the game, postgame statements of NFL coaches are often reported extensively in the media and widely analyzed by sports journalists.

In the NFL, policies regarding press conferences have been implemented with the approval of franchise owners, to sustain public interest which, in turn, translates into advertising revenue. Postgame press conferences occur approximately 10-12 minutes after the completion of each game, and the coach and “at least one star player of the game” arrive at an interview area near or inside the home and visiting team locker room areas (NFL Media Access Policy, 2015). All accredited news media are allowed into the area. During the press conference, the head coach

can provide comments without being prompted explicitly, but news media people oftentimes guide the “interview” by asking the coach open-ended questions. Coaches, as well as athletes, most likely receive professional media training paid for by the owners of the franchise. Because coaches’ statements during press conferences are so widely reported and scrutinized, coaches are trained in order to cast the organization and themselves in a better light. As a result, some of the statements made during post-game press conferences are likely a combination of what professionals believe are normatively proper responses and coaches’ gut responses made under stressful conditions (e.g., severe losses), which may not cast the organization in as favorable a light.

2.3.2 Methods.

Post-game press conference transcriptions. I focused on NFL postgame press conferences from the 2015 regular NFL season. Because of resource constraints, I randomly selected 12 NFL teams to be included in this study, as listed in Table 2.1. At the time of data collection (and currently), all head coaches in the NFL were male.¹ The dataset included 14 total head coaches instead of 12 because two teams fired and replaced the head coach midseason.² Within the subset of 12 teams, 12 coaches were white, one was Hispanic, and one was African American.

¹ There has never been a female head coach in the NFL, although the Buffalo Bills made history in January 2016 by appointing the first full-time female coach in NFL history, Kathryn Smith, who was the special teams quality control coach for the Bills during the 2016 season (Rodak, 2016). To date, there have been three women on full-time NFL coaching staffs (Florjancic & Lai, 2018).

² The Philadelphia Eagles fired head coach Chip Kelly after Game 15 (6-9 record), and offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur took over as interim head coach for the final week of the 2015 season. The Tennessee Titans fired head coach Ken Whisenhunt following Game 7 (1-6 start), and tight ends coach Mike Mularkey replaced him as interim head coach for the remaining nine games of the season.

Table 2.1 National Football League (NFL) Teams Included in Study 1

Team	Coach	2015 season record	2015 preseason record	Playoffs	Previous season record (2014)
Arizona Cardinals	Bruce Arians	13-3	2-2	✓	11-5
Baltimore Ravens	John Harbaugh	5-11	1-3		10-6
Carolina Panthers	Ron Rivera	15-1	3-1	✓	7-8-1
Cleveland Browns	Mike Pettine	3-13	1-3		7-9
Denver Broncos	Gary Kubiak	12-4	3-1	✓	12-4
Green Bay Packers	Mike McCarthy	10-6	2-2	✓	12-4
Houston Texans	Bill O'Brien	9-7	2-2	✓	9-7
New Orleans Saints	Sean Payton	7-9	0-4		7-9
San Francisco 49ers	Jim Tomsula	5-11	2-2		8-8
Philadelphia Eagles ^a	Chip Kelly	7-9	3-1		10-6
	Pat Shurmur				
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Lovie Smith	6-10	2-2		2-14
Tennessee Titans ^b	Ken Whisenhunt	3-13	2-2		2-14
	Mike Mularkey				

^a Philadelphia Eagles coach Chip Kelly was fired after Game 15, ending with a 6-9 record. Interim coach Pat Shurmur was appointed and ended the season with a 1-0 record.

^b Tennessee Titans coach Ken Whisenhunt was fired after Game 7, leaving with a 1-6 record. Interim coach Mike Mularkey was appointed and ended the season with a 2-7 record.

Video files of post-game press conferences were obtained from each of the 12 NFL teams' official team websites, and the videos ranged from approximately 3 minutes to 16 minutes. I transcribed 192 NFL postgame press conferences given by 14 head coaches of 12 teams from video into text. I collapsed each conference into logical subsections or "blocks" and preserved the chronological ordering of these blocks for the sake of the organization and systemization of the coding and analytic processes.

Coding the post-game press conference transcription data. The analytic approach followed an iterative process of developing themes, based on the working hypotheses with

respect to asymmetry and occurrences of acknowledgments of blame and credit. I informally tested these themes and hypotheses in subsequent analyses. This process is described below. This methodological approach draws on aspects of grounded theory research design in an effort to understand and theoretically explain a process, action, or interaction (e.g., blame and credit behaviors and acknowledgements) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) through multiple phases of coding, in addition to aspects of content analysis in order to quantify incidents of certain phenomena (e.g., instances of blame and credit) (Creswell, 2013). I used these quantifications as variables in conducting regression analyses in order to help identify patterns and compare frequencies of blame and credit acknowledgements across coaches.

First, during the transcription of the postgame press conferences, I took notes alongside logical subsections or blocks of the press conference, developing significant themes or distinct comments. Every transcribed press conference was transferred to a matrix which allowed me to view coaches' statements by block (down) and by theme or coding category (across), as well as by game-level data (also across). This provided a systematic line-by-line (or rather, block-by-block) coding procedure.

Along with the initial emergent themes, I established preliminary, broad categories (i.e., open coding; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that would account for focal concepts of the study – for example, “Blame” and “Credit” to indicate instances where either was acknowledged. Next, I sorted comments and subsections into this emergent set of topical categories using descriptive and process coding, some categories of which were predetermined prior to coding and some were established “in vivo,” to capture what seemed like frequent themes or chunks of data (Saldaña, 2016). Descriptive coding uses a word or short phrase to summarize the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data (e.g., “Blame,” “Credit”) (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Wolcott,

2009), and process coding (or action coding) uses gerunds to connote action in the data (e.g., “Taking blame,” “Assigning credit”) (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Charmaz, 2002, 2008; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). After open coding each set of eight press conferences, (i.e., half of the regular season games for each team), I compared notes among the eight press conferences in each set to ensure that the use of the coding scheme was consistent and to see if any new patterns had surfaced.

After the first round of open coding, I completed two iterations of more focused coding. I used narrow concept coding to search for “the most salient categories” and to make decisions regarding which initial codes from the first round made “the most analytic sense” (Charmaz, 2006). The coding categories were also narrowed to distinguish between taking, sharing, deflecting, and assigning blame and credit, to highlight instances of mixing blame and credit, and to flag important events that corresponded to these behaviors, such as winning and losing streaks and breaks in those streaks. I conducted a final and third iteration of coding to ensure that I reached a point of saturation in which all text blocks were coded appropriately. Lastly, I revisited the press conference transcriptions to ensure that I had not missed relevant codes and to confirm certain patterns I identified were classified correctly during the coding and mapping processes.

Team-level data. During and after the transcription of the postgame press conference videos, I also collected information from the official websites of each team regarding each game for each press conference. Team-level variables included the team’s final record for the 2015 season, the previous (2014) season, and the 2015 preseason record, as well as whether the team earned a spot in the postseason playoff tournament (see Table 2.1).

Individual game-level data. For each game, I recorded the name of the opposing team, the result of the game (i.e., win or loss), the game score, and the score margin, which was

positive (>0) if the team won and negative (<0) if the team lost (e.g., a score margin of -14 denotes that the team lost by 14 points). I recorded the season record up to and including that specific game and the record margin including that game, which was positive (>0) if the team had more wins than losses and negative (<0) if more losses than wins. I also noted whether the opposing team was a division opponent and the location of the game (i.e., home or away). I recorded the number of consecutive wins and the number of consecutive losses; for example, if the team lost Game 7 and Games 4, 5, and 6 were also lost, Game 7 would be coded as “4 consecutive losses.” I recorded the team’s rank in the NFL prior to that game.

I accessed historical data regarding Vegas betting odds and point spreads for each game and recorded the betting spread as a way of measuring the most likely, or the expected, outcome of each game (FootballLOCKS.com, 2016).³ Using betting odds and point spreads is important in determining whether the outcome of a game is considered positive or negative (i.e., a gain or a loss), as outcomes are reference point dependent (see Chapter 1). While the reference point may sometimes be simply neutral, in that a win is a successful outcome and a loss is an unsuccessful outcome, the reference point may also vary and depend on the team’s previous game record leading into the current game.

³ The point spread in sports betting is the key unit of measurement between the two NFL teams playing against one another. The point spread indicates how much better one team is perceived to be than another (Odds Shark, 2016; TheSportsGeek.com, 2016). The betting moneyline would then refer to the amount an individual would need to bet to win (i.e., profit) \$100. For example, if the point spread was -3 (i.e., the team is favored to win by 3 points) and you bet the moneyline of -110 (i.e., you bet \$110), and the team covers the spread and wins, you would earn \$100. Conversely, if you bet on the underdog in the same game on the moneyline of +120, a \$100 bet would win you \$120 if the underdog ultimately won the game. There was a record \$132.5 million placed in bets on Super Bowl 50 at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 NFL season (Brinson, 2016).

A negative spread (<0) indicated that the team was favored and a positive spread (>0) indicated that the team was the underdog. Based on the betting point spreads (i.e., + vs. -) and result of the game (i.e., W vs. L), I coded whether the outcome of the game was an unexpected loss (*unexpectedloss*) or an unexpected win (*unexpectedwin*). As a result, if the spread was less than zero (i.e., they were the favorite to win) but the team lost the game, the game was coded as an unexpected loss (*unexpectedloss*=1), and if the spread was greater than zero (i.e., they were the underdog) but the team won the game, the game was coded as an unexpected win (*unexpectedwin*=1).

Based on the betting spread and the final score margin of the game, I computed the difference between the predicted outcome of the game (by using the betting spread) and the actual outcome of the game and called this variable the “bet versus actual” (*betvsactual*). For example, if the betting spread was -5.5, then the most likely outcome, or predicted outcome, of the game was that the team would win by at least 5.5 points. If the actual outcome of the game was a 13-24 loss, this would be a score margin of -11 points. The difference between 5.5 points and -11 points is -16.5, and thus *betvsactual* = -16.5. From this variable, I calculated *magnitude*, or the absolute value of *betvsactual*, which denotes the magnitude, or severity, of the difference between the actual final score of the game and the predicted, most likely outcome of the game based on the Vegas betting spread.

Lastly, based on the betting spread data and the final score of the game, I computed two binary variables. The first binary variable (negative violation, *negv*) denoted whether the team underperformed and did not meet the predicted expectation of the bettors (i.e., lost when they were expected to win, or won by a smaller margin than they were expected to win by) – thus, 1 = the game was a negative violation of predicted expectations, and 0 = the game was not a negative

violation of predicted expectations. The second binary variable (positive violation, *posv*) denoted whether the team “overperformed,” exceeding the predicted expectation of the bettors (i.e., won when they were expected to lose, or lost by a smaller margin than expected).

2.3.3 Results.

Types of blame and credit behaviors (acknowledgements). I observed several types of acknowledgments with respect to blame and credit. The range of acknowledgments in the dataset created goes beyond what Crant and Bateman (1993) examine by including not only the assignment and taking of blame or credit but also deflection and sharing. As in Gunia’s (2011) characterization of blame-taking, the act of assuming personal responsibility for a diffuse negative outcome was evident in statements acknowledging that an actor takes full responsibility for an outcome (e.g., “this is my fault,” “this is on me,” “I take responsibility for this loss”). The data also revealed that a diffuse failure may also lead to expressions that convey the sharing of blame among a group of people (e.g., “this is on us,” “we didn’t do it right,” “no one to blame but ourselves”), the deflection of blame away from oneself or any one group or individual in particular (e.g., “this is no one’s fault,” “I can’t give you a reason”, “feel like we ran out of time”), or the assignment of blame unto another actor or group (e.g., “he did something wrong,” “he made poor decisions”).

A diffuse success (i.e., a diffuse positive outcome) elicited parallel acknowledgements of credit. Taking credit, or the act of assuming personal responsibility for a diffuse positive event (i.e., diffuse success), conveys that the success is attributed to the actor and to decisions he or she made, whereas assigning credit conveys that the success is attributable to another actor or party (e.g., “he did a great job,” “the offense did a great job”). Sharing credit conveys the sharing of responsibility and acclaim for a diffuse positive event with other individuals or groups (e.g., “we

played well as a team,” “we got it done on the field”), and lastly, deflecting credit attributes the cause of the success to an external source, either tangible (e.g., a person or group) or intangible (e.g., luck, timing: “we were fortunate ... that we got away with it today”).

I aggregated the statements coded as acknowledging blame or credit – specifically, taking, assigning, deflecting, and sharing either blame or credit – at the game level. To do so, I computed the number of times each type of blame- or credit-acknowledgment was made during a single post-game press conference. Thus, I counted the number of times every type of blame- or credit-acknowledgment was made in a specific post-game press conference, and how many times each coach used each type of acknowledgment across the entire season. For more complete examples of various acknowledgments of blame and credit, see Table 2.2 and Table 2.3.

I discovered an observable asymmetry between parallel acknowledgments of blame and credit (see Appendix A for boxplot comparisons) that has not previously been addressed. The asymmetry is most prominent for credit- versus blame-sharing and credit- versus blame-taking. Notably, leaders took blame quite often but almost never took credit; only one instance of credit-taking was coded in the entire 192 post-game press conference dataset. This single instance was coded simultaneously as assigning credit to a specific player as well as the coach taking credit; the coach, Ron Rivera, of the Carolina Panthers briefly referenced a decision he made that contributed to an important play call that gave the team an advantage:

“On the fourth down, I decided to go for it because I felt comfortable and confident that we were winning at the point of attack on that drive and thought it was a good opportunity to go for it. I’m really pleased with what Jerricho Cotchery (wide receiver) did, with that catch, willing to get that first down conversion. It was huge.”

The analyses conducted in this study that delve further into the above observations, along with arguments drawn from theory, inform the propositions put forth in Chapter 3.

Table 2.2 Study 1 – Examples of Taking and Assigning of Blame and Credit: NFL Post-game Press Conferences

Type of acknowledgment	Definition	Example	Coach	Team
Taking blame	Assuming full, personal responsibility for an diffuse negative event (i.e., diffuse failure)	That's on me. Not a good call. That's 100% on me. I made the call. Not a good call.	Chip Kelly	Philadelphia Eagles
		Everything is on me. I'm the head football coach on everything that we do here.	Lovie Smith	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Taking credit	Assuming full, personal responsibility for an diffuse positive event (i.e., diffuse success)	On the fourth down, I decided to go for it because I felt comfortable and confident that we were winning at the point of attack on that drive and thought it was a good opportunity to go for it. I'm really pleased with what (wide receiver) Jerricho Cotchery did, with that catch, willing to get that first down conversion, it was huge.	Ron Rivera	Carolina Panthers
Assigning blame	Attributing responsibility for a diffuse negative outcome to a particular individual or party	He made some poor decisions, there's no question about it. That's really poor decisions.	Mike Mularkey	Tennessee Titans
		I'm not sure why he got it in his head to do that. I'm not sure. I mean, that's an example of somebody wanting to try to make a play and kinda losing his mind. He knows what he did wrong, but it's unfortunate that it came at that point in time and ended up costing us 4 points.	Mike Pettine	Cleveland Browns
Assigning credit	Attributing responsibility for a diffuse positive outcome to a particular individual or party	I thought Juan Castillo and our offensive coaches along with Marc Trestman and Andy Bischoff did a great job of game planning the thing. I think our offensive line did a great job.	John Harbaugh	Baltimore Ravens
		I am proud of that staff. I am proud of those guys. They showed up to work every day and left no stone unturned and went out to the practice field and tried to get it taught.	Gary Kubiak	Denver Broncos

Table 2.3 Study 1 – Examples of Sharing and Deflecting of Blame and Credit: NFL Post-game Press Conferences

Type of acknowledgment	Definition	Example	Coach	Team
Sharing blame	Dispersing responsibility among multiple individuals for a diffuse negative outcome	But we don't take losing lightly, a lot of accountability with this bunch. That doesn't concern me, a lot of fight, a lot of grit. We're just not performing to our standard and that's clearly I think what everyone's frustrated. No one to blame but ourselves.	Mike McCarthy	Green Bay Packers
		Today we didn't do it right or well enough to get it done in all three phases.	Bruce Arians	Arizona Cardinals
Sharing credit	Dispersing responsibility among multiple individuals for a diffuse positive outcome	Offensively and defensively as complete a game as we've played. It was great to see us run the football as well as we did - over 200 yards.	Mike Pettine	Cleveland Browns
		Obviously, I feel good about our progress. I'm proud of the way we played tonight. We played well as a team. We played hard and physical, but it's late and we'll be thinking about the next one here real quickly. That's the way that it works.	Gary Kubiak	Denver Broncos
Deflecting blame	Directing responsibility away (from self and associated others) for a diffuse negative outcome	It's one of those, you look at the scoreboard and you lost, but in some senses you feel like you just ran out of time.	Mike Pettine	Cleveland Browns
		I've been in this a long time. These games happen and I can't give you a reason why.	Lovie Smith	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Deflecting credit	Directing responsibility away (from self and associated others) for a diffuse positive outcome	We were fortunate that we did it and got away with it today, but in this league, you can't do that and sustain things and sustain winning."	Chip Kelly	Philadelphia Eagles

Violations of expectations. When unexpected behavior occurs, it violates expectations and warrants an explanatory account (Scott & Lyman, 1968). Leaders of organizations, following a failure or success, are expected to address an unexpected outcome – for example, an

unexpected win or an unexpected loss. With a violation of expectations, the magnitude of the violation may influence how a leader chooses to address blame or credit.

For the data collected, a positive violation of expectations was operationalized by two variables: *unexpectedwin* (i.e., if the team was the underdog but ultimately won the game) and *posv* (i.e., if the team won when they were expected to lose, or lost by a smaller margin than they were expected to lose). A negative violation of expectations was operationalized by two variables: *unexpectedloss* (i.e., if the team was favored to win but ultimately lost the game) and *negv* (i.e., if the team lost when they were expected to win, or won by a smaller margin than they were expected to win).

The data provide preliminary support for the above ideas. For games that were unexpectedly won, sharing credit ($M = 4.06, SD = 2.79$) occurred significantly more than taking credit ($M = 0.00, SD = 0.00$), $t(31) = 8.23, p < .001$. For games in which the team won when they were expected to lose, or lost by a smaller margin than they were expected to lose, sharing credit ($M = 3.54, SD = 2.46$) occurred significantly more than taking credit ($M = 0.01, SD = 0.10$), $t(90) = 13.69, p < .001$. This significant difference, extreme beyond asymmetry, was likely driven by the fact that only one coach took credit only one time across all 192 postgame press conferences in the dataset. For games that were unexpectedly lost, sharing blame ($M = 6.06, SD = 3.35$) occurred significantly more than taking blame ($M = 0.37, SD = 0.81$), $t(38) = 9.76, p < .001$. For games in which the team lost when they were expected to win, or won by a smaller margin than they were expected to win, sharing blame ($M = 4.89, SD = 3.29$) occurred significantly more than taking blame ($M = 0.67, SD = 1.32$), $t(124) = 11.60, p < .001$.

In addition, the data provide preliminary evidence that a positive violation of expectations (e.g., a win when a loss is expected, a more substantial win than is expected, or a

smaller loss than is expected) is more likely to result in a leader sharing credit with others on the team or in the organization than taking credit. Similarly, for a negative violation of expectations (e.g., a loss when a win is expected, a more substantial loss than is expected, or a smaller win than is expected), a leader will more often share blame with others on the team or in the organization than take blame for the negative violation.

Magnitude of the violation. Although the direction of the violation of expectations may influence the tendency of a leader to share rather than take blame or credit, the magnitude, or severity, of that violation should also impact behavior. The magnitude (i.e., severity) of the violation was operationalized using the *magnitude* variable, which denotes the magnitude of the difference between the actual final score of the game and the predicted, most likely outcome of the game (based on the Vegas betting spread). I estimated regression models to examine if the criterion variable, the magnitude of the violation (measured both using the *magnitude* variable, as well as the *negv* and *posv* variables), was a significant predictor of specific blame and credit behaviors (i.e., taking, sharing, assigning, deflecting).

For unexpected wins, the *magnitude* of the positive violation was a marginally significant predictor of a coach sharing credit, $b = 0.14$, $t(30) = 0.09$, $p = .087$. The *magnitude* of the unexpected win also explained a marginally significant proportion of variance in occurrence of sharing credit, $R^2 = 0.09$, $F(1, 30) = 3.14$, $p = .087$. The regression of the magnitude of the violation using the variable *posv* (i.e., if the team won when they were expected to lose, or lost by a smaller margin than they were expected to lose) predicting sharing credit was not significant ($p = 0.14$). Hence, for positive violations of expectations, there is preliminary evidence supporting a positive relationship between the magnitude of the violation and the sharing of

credit. Thus, for an unexpected win (e.g., when the margin by which the team won increases), a leader is likely to share credit.

Similarly, as the severity of the negative violation worsens, there is more blame to spread around for the diffuse failure. Although the linear regressions of the *magnitude* variable of unexpected losses predicting sharing or predicting taking blame were not significant, the results were more compelling when examining the magnitudes of negative violations using the *negv* variable (i.e., if the team lost when they were expected to win, or won by a smaller margin than they were expected to win). For negative violations of expectations (i.e., *negv*), the magnitude of the violation significantly predicted occurrences of a coach sharing blame, $b = 0.12$, $t(93) = 3.21$, $p = .002$; the magnitude of the violation also explained a significant proportion of variance in sharing blame, $R^2 = 0.10$, $F(1, 93) = 10.30$, $p = .002$. For negative violations of expectations, the magnitude of the violation also marginally significantly predicted occurrences of a coach taking blame, $b = 0.03$, $t(93) = 1.95$, $p = .055$; the magnitude of the violation also explained a significant proportion of variance in sharing blame, $R^2 = 0.04$, $F(1, 93) = 3.79$, $p = .055$. This relationship may be more prominent for the *negv* variable compared to the *unexpectedloss* variable because lumping unexpected losses with any of the slightest “negative” outcomes (e.g., winning by a smaller margin than expected) might have warranted a stronger acknowledgment of blame compared to only unexpected losses. Therefore, for negative violations of expectations, there is a positive relationship between magnitude and both sharing and taking blame: as the negative violation of expectations becomes worse, sharing and taking blame are more likely to occur compared to assigning and deflecting blame.

2.4 Conclusions

The Pilot Study previews and enriches the ideas uncovered in Study 1 by taking a semi-structured interview approach to examine how and why coaches enact blame and credit behaviors internally to members of the team. Public acknowledgements of blame and credit, such as in the NFL, are directed more toward an external audience (although an internal audience, e.g. team members, have access and exposure to such statements), whereas coaches' private communications of blame and credit to athletes on the team are directed to an internal audience. These communications may be more candid and may have a stronger impact on both the individuals on the team and the team as a collective.

Thus, the Pilot Study provides insight into two coaches' thought processes and strategies regarding blame and credit behaviors as a method of giving feedback to the athletes. The fact that these two coaches believed that blame and credit should be dispensed carefully following an actual outcome (i.e., a win or a loss of a game) and, instead, more frequently directed toward the process that led to the outcome raises an interesting point: as the leader of the team, the coach, following a diffuse outcome, may tend to think back to the series of events that contributed to the outcome instead of blaming or crediting a player or the team for the outcome itself. Thus, they may exercise care with respect to when they enact a blame or credit acknowledgement – for example, speaking to a specific skill or play that the team or team member failed to demonstrate during the game that was expected of them, rather than the ultimate result of the game. Implied in this behavior is that if the person or group had been able to demonstrate a specific competency, the (negative) outcome might have been avoided, leading to an implication of blame.

Given that coaches in the NFL are perceived as the leader of the team with myriad responsibilities, the insights drawn from the constructed dataset in Study 1 are likely most useful in considering organizations and groups with similar hierarchical structures. I selected the context of professional sports, namely the NFL, because it allowed me to directly examine blame and credit behaviors in a sample of coaches over an entire football season during which each team experiences diffuse events that are both positive and negative in relation to a reference point. Further, these behaviors were precisely recorded with no measurement error.

The findings in Study 1 map out the conditions and factors that shape how individuals, specifically leaders, may acknowledge blame and credit following a diffuse outcome at the team or organizational level. Although natural inclinations to promote a positive self-image and manage impressions advocates that individuals will claim credit and shirk blame, acts of taking and sharing blame do transpire and have been largely ignored in the literature. An asymmetry between blame and credit does exist, and elements of blame-taking and -sharing, as well as credit-giving and -sharing, should be included in a more comprehensive picture of this asymmetry. My findings that coaches shared and deflected blame and credit to a greater extent than taking and assigning blame and credit thereby support both the asymmetry and call for further study. Notably, the fact that credit-taking occurred only once in the data illustrates that credit-taking is a deviation from what is considered a normative response during a press conference and likely contrary to the media training coaches receive. The data demonstrate that there are circumstances and factors related to both the individual leader and the environment/situation that lead to the taking, assignment, and sharing of credit and blame. The patterns observed in Study 1 provide a starting point for exploring what motivates actors to acknowledge blame and credit in varied ways.

A key limitation for both of these studies is that they involve the context of sports at the professional level and collegiate level. The context for Study 1 was selected because it allowed examination of the ways in which individuals acknowledge blame and credit across a sample of coaches over an entire football season during which each team experiences diffuse events that are both positive and negative. Given the regularity and timing of NFL games and the uniformity of the postgame press conference arrangement with news media, I was able to analyze statements of blame and credit, along with other statements made during press conferences, with reference to situational features and team-level characteristics. It is important to consider how my findings and conclusions translate and compare to other organizational contexts other than sports. Given that coaches of sports teams are indeed perceived as the leader of the team with myriad responsibilities, my insights are likely most useful in considering organizations and groups with similar hierarchical structures. In other organizations with relatively flat structures, acknowledgments of blame and credit may occur differently. My findings have implications for groups within organizations and organizations themselves, particularly those with structure and norms similar to the NFL, as the nature of the postgame press conferences sampled in this study involve blame and credit behaviors that are directed toward and observed by an external audience (i.e., the public) rather than an internal audience (e.g., the athletes or assistant coaches), although the internal audience is also able to observe the coaches' statements.

Furthermore, Study 1 is limited to the study of male actors and their behavior, and women may behave differently, depending on the organization. Individuals in other firms may also be subject to disparate organizational cultures and norms that perceive blame and credit in a more or less extreme manner. It is quite possible that coaches, both those in the NFL and the college-level coaches I interviewed, acted according to their particular organization's norms. For

example, in the context of NFL press conferences, coaches rarely took personal credit for a positive outcome and rarely blamed specific players for a negative occurrence, which may be an artifact of the professional media training they receive. These behaviors may be more prevalent in other organizational contexts.

Existing literature does not fully address the range of blame and credit behaviors that leaders enact in organizations, and instead focuses more heavily on blame placement and credit taking. In terms of public expressions of blame and credit, findings from Study 1 demonstrate that leaders of teams communicate blame and credit in disparate ways, shifting blame and credit in different directions (e.g., taking, sharing, assigning, and deflecting). Previously, because of the lack of a comprehensive map of various blame and credit behaviors in organizations, it was impossible to determine the balance of such behaviors. Study 1 provides preliminary evidence that, in general, leaders shift more blame towards themselves and more credit away from themselves and toward others.

Based on the responses to interview questions in the Pilot Study as well as additional information conveyed during these interviews, some coaches may be cognizant of how they communicate to players and sensitive to the potential variation of responses across the team to their blame and credit behaviors. But not all coaches may lead in a similar way or have a parallel leadership philosophy. Coaches from different schools or sports or with different genders, backgrounds, and levels of experience may act in ways that are different from one another. In addition to these observable differences, leaders of sports teams may also be driven by motivations that are less easily observed. What separates a coach who avoids blaming the players for a loss and instead shares blame from a coach who outright blames the team for each mistake? The two coaches interviewed for the purposes of the Pilot Study help us understand why some

leaders engage in certain blame and credit behaviors in that these two coaches both understood that, as leaders, their behaviors would indeed impact the team (e.g., their “subordinates”) and future elements related to the team – for example, future performance outcomes, team dynamics, and the relationship of the coach with specific or all players.

Thus, leaders of organizations may have different motivations for engaging in certain blame and credit behaviors. Although the two coaches interviewed for the Pilot Study believe that they deliberately act and react to the performance of athletes on the team, insights from this study suggest that individuals may not be aware of the exact motive driving their behavior, even if they have consciously thought through their actions. Therefore, the objective of Chapter 3 is to outline a set of motives that helps explain why individuals, and particularly leaders, express blame and credit in specific ways. Following the development of the theory delineating these categories of motives, I conduct studies in Chapter 4 that test elements introduced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: The Motives Driving Private Blame and Credit Behaviors

The Pilot Study used a semi-structured interview approach to understand private blame and credit behaviors from the perspective of two coaches of collegiate sports teams. The findings from Study 1 provided evidence that leaders of teams do, in fact, publicly communicate blame and credit in disparate ways, shifting blame and credit in different directions. In addition, the acknowledgements of blame and credit observed in Study 1 were asymmetric: leaders shifted more blame toward themselves and more credit away from themselves and toward the team overall. Together, the studies in Chapter 2 introduced the idea that different motives explain why people engage in various types of blame and credit behaviors. In Chapter 3, I construct a theory that addresses what motivates leaders to enact different types of blame and credit behaviors, taking into account contextual factors (i.e., organizational culture and reward structure) that act as moderators of the relationship between each motive and associated blame and credit behaviors.

3.1 Introduction

Imagine a software development team of ten people working to deliver a banking technology software (i.e., a trading platform) product to a client, a financial investment firm. The team is one of many within a larger organization. A manager, who ranks hierarchically above the team members, is included in the ten-member team and leads the team and delegates tasks across individuals. These individuals all have different responsibilities, ranging from gathering business requirements of the product (from the investment firm), translating these business “asks” into technical specifications, developing the code to create the software, running user tests and stress

tests on the product, repairing defects that arise during software testing, compiling the code onto the proper channels, and executing the live release of the product by the deadline set by the client. This entire process occurs over several months and requires frequent iterating, heavy collaboration across individuals on the team, and clear communication among team members, as well as effective task delegation by the leader. Decisions made and actions taken throughout the duration of the project, though likely attached to a standard set of procedures, are interdependent and carry risks.

Now imagine that the development team presents the final product to the client and the software goes “live” to end users. In the first week of its use, end users discover a defect not previously detected by any of the members of the software build team that critically impairs the ability to execute certain types of trades and causes investors to lose a significant but not catastrophic amount of money. The defect is not linked to a specific individual’s work, and the interdependence and complexity of the software development lifecycle adds to the ambiguity of the situation and source of the defect. Thus, the failure of the team to deliver on expectations is a diffuse negative outcome. Yet in this unexpected negative situation, the development team, disappointed and worried after its failure to deliver a quality product to the client, will expect an account or explanation of the outcome (Scott & Lyman, 1968) likely from the leader of the team.

Envision a parallel scenario in which the trading software goes beyond what the business client requested, by executing trades more quickly or providing additional functionality that minimizes the time investors spend clicking through windows or entering figures. The unexpected positive nature of this outcome might also warrant an explanation from the leader, an account of the team’s success. In these two contrasting examples, the leader has a number of decisions to make regarding her communication to the team members, especially with regard to

the blame or credit that they may expect her to address. Why might a leader shift blame towards herself and away from the team in the case of the diffuse negative outcome (or vice versa)? In the case of the diffuse positive outcome, what might drive a leader to shift credit away from themselves and towards the team (or vice versa)?

Although the current literature on blame and credit has examined specific types of behaviors, such as blame assignment and credit taking (e.g., Crant & Bateman, 1993; Gunia, 2011; Shaver, 1985; Gioia and Sims, 1985; Greenwald, 1980), it has not fully addressed other blame and credit behaviors. As a result, there is great potential to develop theories to increase our understanding of what motivates leaders to engage in different types of blame and credit behaviors following a diffuse outcome. Extending our understanding of why leaders might choose to engage in one behavior over another will allow us to educate managers and leaders of organizations and teams on why they may be engaging in these types of behaviors, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 Definitions and Boundary Conditions

Blame behavior is the voluntary designation of responsibility for a negative outcome internally towards the self or group of individuals (e.g., self, subordinates, followers), whereas credit behavior is the voluntary designation of responsibility for a positive outcome internally towards the self or group of individuals. Credit and blame behaviors can be envisioned on two separate spectrums of behavior (see Figure 3.1). On the spectrum of credit behaviors, credit is shifted toward others on one end (i.e., assigning credit) and toward the self on the opposite end (i.e., taking credit), with sharing credit in the middle (e.g., sharing credit with the self and others). The spectrum of blame behaviors is constructed in the same way, with blame shifted

toward the self on one end (i.e., taking blame) and toward others on the other end (i.e., assigning blame), with sharing blame in the middle.



Figure 3.1. Spectrum of Blame and Credit Behaviors.

As uncovered in Study 1, leaders may also deflect blame and credit. Deflecting behaviors can be classified in two ways. Deflection may be observed merely as a description of a positive or negative outcome, without placing blame or credit on an individual or group. Deflection can also appear in the form of an excuse or justification, attributing an event to an external, rather than internal, cause that may not necessarily involve another person or group – for example, to good or bad fortune or to situational factors. The opposite ends of the spectrum of blame and credit behaviors depicted in Figure 3.1 signify blame or credit being shifted toward other people or to the self, which does not include deflecting behaviors that shift blame or credit on other individuals. Descriptions or factual summaries of what happened following a positive or negative outcome are sometimes interpreted as deflection, but these statements are not blame or credit behaviors that designate responsibility for an outcome towards the self or group of individuals. Therefore, in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation, I focus on the assigning, sharing, and taking of blame and credit rather than the deflecting of either, and the subsequent theory and studies only examine blame and credit behaviors directed towards the leader’s self or her subordinates.

Moreover, the theoretical model in Chapter 3 involves diffuse events, or outcomes that cannot readily be attributed to a single source or cause. Several parties may be responsible for the outcome. Furthermore, the model applies to events that are meaningful to the leader but does not include events of very small or very large magnitude. Events of very large magnitude may impact a leader's behaviors beyond medium-sized outcomes that are typically encountered by organizations and teams because they may cause catastrophic consequences. Leaders may not think that events of a very small magnitude warrant a response as compared to events of relatively more impact. Therefore, the theory presented in Chapter 3 assumes that diffuse outcomes are those that are substantive and meaningful, but not extreme in magnitude. These successful or unsuccessful outcomes rise to a leader's level of consciousness enough to warrant a communication of blame or credit, but not so much that they threaten the viability of the organization.

Lastly, the theory constructed in Chapter 3 establishes a set of motives that drive leaders to enact different blame and credit behaviors following positive and negative outcomes. In this theoretical model, a motive is an individual difference that is more state-like than trait-like and can be viewed as a long-lasting state. It is not a characteristic that is ephemeral or that changes dramatically – it lasts for a longer period of time, but is not permanent. In this chapter, the theoretical propositions argue that a leader's motives induce her blame and credit behaviors, and thus that these motives are linked to how a leader communicates blame and credit.

3.2.1 Blame-taking versus apology. Blame-taking is different from apology. Management scholars define an apology as including both an expression of fault (similar to blame-taking) and an expression of regret or remorse (Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2006), such that an apology “acknowledges both responsibility and regret for a trust violation” (Kim, Dirks,

& Cooper, 2009: 411) and the apologizer “must acknowledge responsibility... and express regret ... these are the definitional qualities of apologies” (Scher & Darley, 1997: 129). Thus, an apology, as defined in the management literature, includes two elements: a component that conveys fault and another that conveys remorse. The Oxford dictionary defines “apology” as “a regretful acknowledgement of an offense or failure” and “apologize” as “to express regret for something that one has done wrong” (Apologize, 2016; Apology, 2016). Blame-taking is only part of an apology and is analogous to the expression of fault (e.g., “I take the blame for this outcome,” “this is my fault”), and it does not necessarily include an expression of regret (e.g., “I am sorry that this happened”).

Although scholars have looked at the role of apologies in repairing trust following a violation, this body of work has operated largely on the assumption that in organizational and work settings, termination of a relationship may not be an option. In order for the trust repair process to begin, the parties each must be willing to put in the effort to repair a relationship they deem worth repairing (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). However, *why* individuals might be willing to put in effort and how they come to the calculus that the benefits of continuing the relationship outweigh the costs has not yet been examined. In this dissertation, I examine the antecedents, specifically the possible motives, behind why leaders may enact certain blame and credit behaviors. The motives driving blame and credit behaviors may help inform potential antecedents of apologies as well.

3.2.2 Focal audience. In the current and subsequent chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), the scope of blame and credit behaviors pertains only to internal behaviors. Study 1 examined the public acknowledgements of blame and credit made by professional football coaches to an external audience (and observable by the internal audience), but the remainder of this dissertation

focuses solely on blame and credit behaviors enacted toward an internal audience. Based on responses to interview questions in the Pilot Study, coaches focus heavily on and understand that their behaviors in private with the athletes (e.g., during practice, on the sidelines of a game) have implications beyond public press statements. Coaches also seem to have varying reasons for acting in a certain way or deliver a particular message. Therefore, the scope of Chapters 3 and 4 focuses on the private communications and interactions between leaders and their subordinates (i.e., members of the internal audience – the players, formal members of the team)

In addition, with respect to these internal, private communications, the scope of Chapters 3 and 4 includes communications of blame and credit concerning the intra-team internal audience rather than the extra-team internal audience. To clarify, an organization refers to a social structure with hierarchy and division of labor (Hall, 1987; Scott, 1964; Weber, 1928). Within an organization, I differentiate between two types of internal audiences: the intra-team audience and the extra-team audience. The intra-team audience refers to individuals and parties directly involved in the event and diffuse outcome who could sustain blame or receive credit due to their proximity to the outcome. Both types of audiences include individuals and groups who can be hierarchically situated above, below, or at a laterally equivalent level with the individual or group involved in the diffuse event or the individual engaging in the blame or credit behavior. On the other hand, the extra-team audience refers to parties affiliated with or located within the organization and who are not directly involved in the diffuse event (e.g., other managers or employees who are not involved in the event). The extra-team audience may have reactions to the leader and her behaviors and communications, even though the audience is not a formal member of the team and its actions are not linked to the outcome.

In the example of the software development team described previously, the intra-team audience is comprised of the leader or manager and the members of the development team. The extra-team audience includes other employees, teams, and managers within the organization who were not working on the specific project, as well as the business client to whom the product was delivered. The extra-team audience parties who are official members of the organization in which the event occurred but not directly related to the event (i.e., not formal members of the team). They are not relevant to the blame and credit behaviors enacted by leaders, but can be observers with their own perceptions and reactions to these behaviors.

3.3 Motives Driving Blame and Credit Behaviors

Leaders enact various blame and credit behaviors that include the taking, sharing, and assigning of credit or blame. These credit behaviors occur along a spectrum that shifts blame (or credit) toward the self (i.e., taking) or toward others (i.e., assigning), with sharing of blame (or credit) occurring in the middle of the spectrum (see Figure 3.1). In the following sections, I introduce four theoretical perspectives on motives that cause leaders to enact specific types of blame and credit behaviors toward the self or toward others: (1) ego-defensive, (2) impression management, (3) implicit beliefs, and (4) relationship building motives. Based on the two-dimensional classification scheme established in the paragraphs following, this set of motives encompasses the most common drivers at play in interpersonal processes and thus for engaging in blame and credit behaviors, but may not be exhaustive.

The literatures from which I extracted these motives differs, and as a result, I introduce each of these four motives separately. This accounts for the possibility that they may result in divergent predictions based on differing assumptions; in Chapter 3, I tie these different theoretical perspectives together. In making sense of these disparate literatures and identifying

the set of motives of blame and credit behavior associated with them, I also establish a way to categorize the motives on two dimensions. This classification scheme provides a way to organize four classes of motives that comprise the most common reasons for a leader’s blame and credit behaviors.

The classification scheme I developed as part of the theoretical model classifies each motive on two dimensions: *objective* and *direction*. A visual depiction of the matrix composed of these two dimensions is shown in Table 3.1. The primary dimension, the *objective* of the motive, refers to whether the behavior driven by the motive is enacted with the purpose of influencing either image or performance. An *image* objective indicates that the motive is associated with ultimately enhancing one’s image, whereas a *performance* objective indicates that the motive is related to enhancing performance, either of self or of others (e.g., subordinates, the team).

Table 3.1 Categorizations of the Four Motives Driving Blame and Credit Behaviors

		<i>2. Direction</i>	
		INWARD	OUTWARD
<i>1. Objective</i>	IMAGE	Ego-defensive motive	Impression management motive
	PERFORMANCE	Implicit beliefs motive	Relationship building motive

The secondary dimension, the *direction* of the motive, refers to whether the objective of the motive is directed either inward or outward. An *inward* direction indicates that the goal of the motive is self-focused (e.g., related to one’s own ego or beliefs); whereas, an *outward* direction implies that the goal of the motive focuses on others (e.g., related to others’ perceptions or

relationships with others). The direction of the motive is different from the concepts of individualism and collectivism. For example, the objective of an individual's motive may be to enhance performance, but this objective could be in an inward direction – e.g., to enhance one's own performance. Moreover, the objective of an individual's motive could be to enhance image, and this objective could be in an external direction – e.g., to enhance one's image with respect to how others perceive and see the individual. In addition, the fact that the objective of image has an outward direction does not mean that it is necessarily collectivistic in nature, because being perceived favorably by others may not be directly aligned with collectivistic or joint goals or norms.

In the following section, each motive is presented not only in terms of, first, its image or performance objective and, second, its inward or outward direction, but also with propositions regarding the motive's relationship to blame and credit behaviors. Each motive is presented separately because the research supporting each is distinct. This chapter thus unifies these four theoretical spaces to explain why individuals are driven to enact blame and credit behaviors toward the self and toward others. The motives are presented in order of their objective: those with an image objective are presented first (i.e., ego-defensive and impression management motives), followed by those with a performance objective (i.e., implicit beliefs and relationship building motives). A diagram depicting the proposed relationship between the motives with blame and credit behaviors can be seen in Figure 3.2.

3.3.1 Ego-defensive motive. Literature on relational and motivational psychology has operated on the assumption that humans are universally motivated to promote and defend a positive self-image (Greenwald, 1980). This literature indicates that individuals will take credit for successes and blame others for failures in order to avoid threats to their self-esteem.

Greenwald states that “people perceive themselves readily as the origin of good effects and reluctantly as the origin of ill effects,” citing evidence that people accept more credit for successful outcomes and assign more blame for unsuccessful outcomes (Greenwald, 1980: 605). These arguments from psychology function on the assumption that blame threatens a positive self-esteem, whereas credit strengthens a positive self-esteem. The motivation to avoid threats to self-esteem thus drives individuals to reduce the blame and increase the credit assigned to them (Shaver, 1985) because individuals may see blame and credit behaviors as ways to maintain their ego.

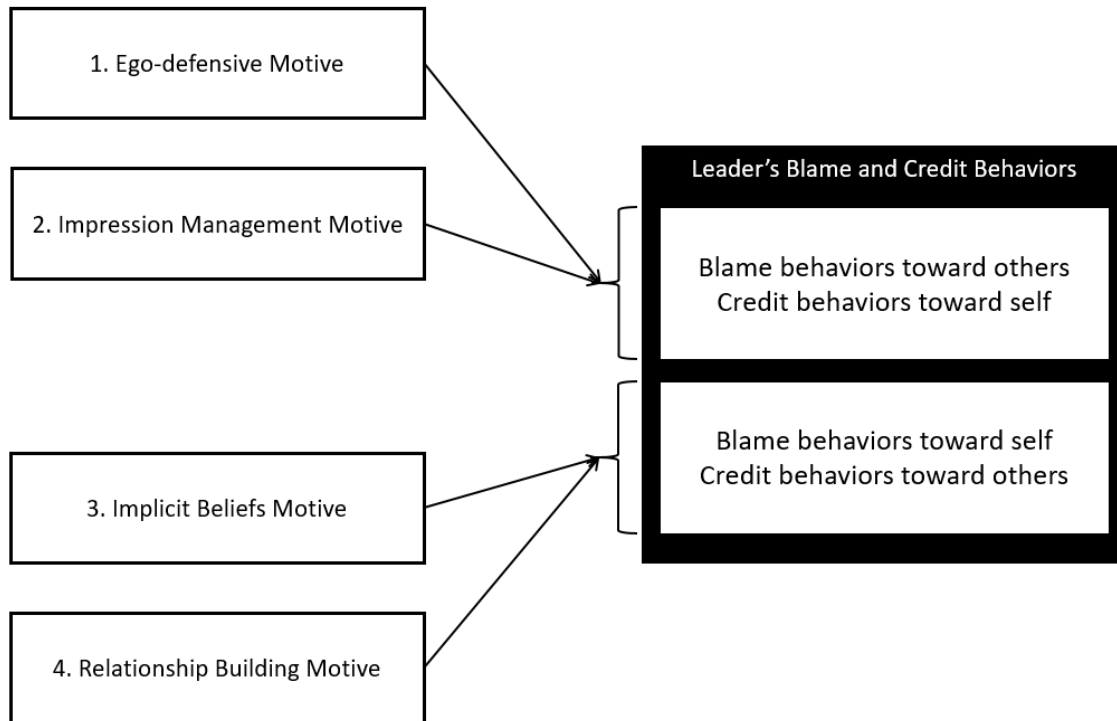


Figure 3.2. Diagram of Motives Driving Blame and Credit Behaviors.

Displaying an ego-defensiveness bias when it comes to attributing causality for successful and unsuccessful experiences underscores the tendency to place or shirk blame instead

of taking blame for shortcomings (Ross, 1977). This pattern was observed in governmental hearings after the financial crisis. The ego-defensive motive has an image objective because the goal is ultimately related to enhancing sense of self-image and perceptions of self – or her ego. With respect to the secondary motive dimension, direction, the ego-defensive motive driving blame and credit behaviors has an inward direction because the image objective refers to image and perceptions of the self. Research on ego-defensiveness suggests that because individuals are more likely to take credit for successful outcomes than take blame for unsuccessful outcomes in order to preserve a positive ego, therefore, leaders motivated strongly by a desire to protect and promote ego should enact blame and credit behaviors consistent with an ego-defensiveness bias.

Proposition 1. Leaders motivated to protect and defend their ego will tend to enact blame behaviors toward others and credit behaviors toward the self.

3.3.2 Impression management motive. The impression management literature defines impression management itself as “the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them,” which can be traced back to notion that “people have an ongoing interest in how others perceive and evaluate them” (Leary & Kowalski, 1990: 34). In the context of this dissertation, actors prefer to be seen by others in a favorable light, and leaders in particular are motivated to be seen as competent and effective in their roles (Pfeffer, 1981). Because individuals in leadership positions may feel the need to maintain a sense of authority and competency, they could enact behaviors to ensure that others view their competency favorably (e.g., Elsbach, 2003; Salancik & Meindl, 1984; Staw, McKechnie, & Puffer, 1983). With respect to the impression management motive, “others” refers to the both the intra-team and the extra-team audience. Leaders may be concerned with the perceptions and evaluations of an extra-team audience member, such as managers of other teams or individuals with a higher

hierarchical rank. Leaders may also recognize that blame and credit behaviors can be used to strategically shape their reputation and others' views of them so that other parties (e.g., extra-team audience members) believe they are responsible for successes rather than failures (e.g., Crant & Bateman, 1993). Furthermore, individuals may believe that they have more to gain from being seen positively by others than they have to lose by casting others in a negative light, and therefore, the benefits to being seen in a positive light may outweigh the costs of putting others in a negative light.

As a result, leaders strongly influenced by a desire to preserve their image in the eyes of others, in particular the extra-team audience, may be motivated to maintain their status. The impression management motive is similar to the ego-defensive motive in that both of these motives have the primary objective of serving image. Therefore, these two motives are appropriately grouped into an image objective bucket. The ego-defensive and impression management motives, however, are dissimilar in their direction. The ego-defensive motive is directed inward while the impression management motive has an outward direction, associated with how *others* perceive the actor. This idea aligns with those from impression-management theory, which suggests that actors prefer to be seen by others in a favorable light (Gioia and Sims, 1985; Salancik & Meindl, 1984; Staw, McKechnie, & Puffer, 1983; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971). The outward direction of the impression management motive does not indicate that this motive is collectivistic in nature; instead, it simply denotes that individuals motivated to manage impressions attempt to do so to enhance their image (i.e., the objective of the motive). Specifically, they prefer to be perceived favorably in the eyes of *others* (i.e., the outward direction of the motive), not necessarily (or solely) in their *own* eyes.

I expect that leaders motivated to maintain their authority and competency as leaders may act to manage these impressions accordingly, and as a result, leaders who are motivated to manage others' impressions will shift blame away from and credit towards themselves.

Proposition 2. Leaders motivated to manage impressions will tend to enact blame behaviors toward others and credit behaviors toward the self.

3.3.3 Implicit beliefs motive. The third motive, the implicit beliefs motive, is the first motive out of four that falls into the bucket of a performance objective. The implicit beliefs motive operates on ideas from implicit leadership theory, or preconceptions of the patterning of leadership variables (Eden & Leviatan, 1975). Implicit theories of leadership represent followers' subjective view of a leader. Implicit leadership theory derives from Rosch's (1977, 1978) categorization theory, in which individuals create and possess schemas in their mind that store exemplars of different types of leaders. Literature on implicit leadership theories (ILTs) suggests that congruency between follower ILTs and leader behavior is linked to more positive evaluations of leaders (Nye & Forsyth, 1991). Positive ILTs are those "ideal" leader qualities such as being charismatic and team-oriented. When leaders exhibit these qualities, subordinates may show higher overall well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). In the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, House and colleagues (1999) developed and validated a 112-item leadership behavior scale that measured the image of an ideal leader, or an effective leader. The scale determines if an individual believes a behavior or characteristic greatly inhibits or greatly contributes to an individual being an outstanding leader. In the GLOBE project, House and colleagues found that *positive* ILTs, or qualities prototypical of an ideal leader, included

characteristics such as being team-oriented, charismatic, participative, and humane, and excluded characteristics like being self-protective and autonomous.

From the literature on ILTs, we know that individuals hold stored conceptions of traits associated with leadership that inform their ILTs and lay theories about “good leadership.” These ILTs may prompt leaders to enact credit and blame behaviors in particular ways. Individuals want to communicate their desired identity (e.g., “a good leader”), and others will use these messages to make inferences about them (Belk, 1988, Berger and Heath, 2007). Moreover, leaders who have their own ILTs regarding how a “good leader” acts may believe that wasting tangible and intangible resources on the allocation of blame for a diffuse event will preclude optimal performance outcomes. These leaders may want to behave in ways they believe a “good leader” would in order to enhance performance outcomes.

Literature outside of academia suggests that people have lay beliefs about “good leaders,” namely that good leaders take blame rather than shirk blame or place blame on their employees. American business-related news media have published articles on how to “navigate the blame culture,” “stop playing the blame game,” and other blaming-related topics (e.g., Donner, 2011; Fast, 2010; Patel, 2014; Zimmerman, 2011). Although there may be variations in implicit beliefs about how a good leader acts, the implicit beliefs motive outlined here operates on the assumption that, in general, individuals believe that a good leader acts in ways that are more team- rather than self-focused. Thus, the implicit beliefs motive contrasts with the ego-defensive and impression management motives.

The primary dimension, the objective, of the implicit beliefs motive is to improve the performance of the leader, and subsequently the team, through the actions that an ideal, or good, leader would take. By attempting to be an ideal leader, and therefore, enact the qualities of an

“ideal” leader, the leader hopes to perform well. The objective of this motive is performance-based, the motive’s direction, and the secondary dimension, is inward rather than outward because this motive presumes the leader is attempting to deliver a high quality “performance” as the leader. A leader who holds these implicit beliefs about good leadership and attempts to act accordingly as a leader does so to fulfill her personal belief about how a good leader should act. Conceptualization of ideal leadership, or ILT, is closely related to individual self-concept. In a similar vein, individuals want to work for leaders who match their ILTs, and individuals may also want to be the type of leader for whom they would want to work (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). ILTs may influence a leader’s behavior because individuals are motivated to behave consistently with his or her own self-concept (e.g., Lord & Brown, 2001), which is related to idealized conceptualizations of leadership. Thus, by trying to behave congruently with her personal beliefs regarding good leadership, the leader is attempting to match their implicit theories regarding ideal leadership with her behaviors as a leader. Thus, I expect that leaders driven by the implicit beliefs motive will enact blame and credit behaviors congruent with the qualities of what a “good leader” would do.

Proposition 3. Leaders who are motivated to fulfill positive ILTs will tend to enact blame behaviors toward the self and credit behaviors toward others.

3.3.4 Relationship building motive. Leadership behaviors that occur through interpersonal exchanges can help develop the relationship between a leader and a member (for example, LMX) by establishing norms of reciprocity and patterns of interdependence (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Interdependence in social exchanges involves mutual and complementary arrangements; thus, social exchanges are defined by bidirectional transactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Molm, 1994). The principal of

reciprocity is key to understanding the interdependent nature of social exchanges because if one party supplies a benefit (i.e., an individual takes the blame for an undesirable outcome), the receiving party should respond correspondingly in the future. Social exchange theory assumes that exchange relationships that follow expectations of reciprocity will “evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005: 875). Therefore, leaders may believe that employees will repay a supportive employer with hard work (e.g., if leader supplies a benefit, receiving party will respond in kind in the future).

For example, the gesture of taking blame may be considered a high quality social exchange that enhances perceptions of organizational support. Stronger relationships between a leader and her followers may then enhance team performance. Scholars suggest that perceived organizational support predicts organizational commitment, and that organizational commitment improves with increased perceptions of organizational support (Settoon et al., 1996; Masterson et al., 2000). Not only does greater organizational commitment positively influence job performance (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001), but high levels of perceived organizational support have also been linked to better job performance (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Wayne et al., 1997). Therefore, interpersonal exchanges in the form of blame and credit behaviors may be used as a way to establish and strengthen the relationship between a leader and her subordinates.

Blame and credit behaviors may also be seen as a way to build trust and respect. Trust in a leader is defined as the expectation or belief that the leader has good intentions toward the group and that the team can rely on the leader’s actions or words (Dirks, 2000). If a leader assigns the blame to a subordinate or subordinates for a failure, trust in the leader may decrease. On the other hand, a leader who takes the blame after a diffuse failure sends the message that the

failure was a result of poor leadership and of the leader's behavior. By blaming her own leadership instead of the behavior of the team members, the leader may be perceived as more trustworthy because she is fulfilling her role as a leader, which strengthens the quality of the relationship between leader and subordinate. As a result, leaders may believe that blame and credit behaviors are viable means to augment the relationship with a subordinate.

A leader motivated by the potential benefits of social exchange may engage in behaviors that could be perceived as supportive of her followers. Yet the converse argument can be made that leaders will behave in ways that do not necessarily augment their relationship with a subordinate, but instead *protect* the relationship and their followers from harm (e.g., Rosen et al., 2011). Leaders may enact certain blame and credit behaviors in order to establish a relationship (e.g., placing credit, taking blame), but they may also be motivated to *avoid* certain blame and credit behaviors. These leaders do not wish to harm their followers (e.g., avoiding placing direct blame, avoiding taking credit) and instead wish to protect them as a way to maintain their high quality relationship (e.g., Scandura & Graen, 1984). As a byproduct of that protection, leaders may believe that employees will repay them in the future in accordance with the story of interdependent exchange and mutual obligations as outlined by social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

with hard work (e.g., if leader supplies a benefit, receiving party will respond in kind in the future) – these perceived mutual obligations may lead some leaders to believe that .

The objective of the relationship building motive is to augment performance. By building relationships and improving relationship quality with subordinates, leaders driven by the relationship building motive aim to ultimately see performance improvements. Thus, the implicit beliefs motive and the relationship building motive can be grouped together into a performance

objective bucket. Furthermore, a leader driven by a relationship building motive thus works to establish and maintain her relationships with followers (i.e., subordinates and other individuals who are a part of the intra-team audience) in order to enhance performance. Thus, the relationship building motive can be classified as being directed outward, as the leader behaves to uphold the relationship and/or avoid harming the other individual. I expect that leaders driven to develop positive relationships with subordinates will exhibit blame and credit behaviors to that end.

Proposition 4. Leaders motivated to strengthen relationships with their subordinates will tend to enact blame behaviors toward the self and credit behaviors toward others.

Although it is possible that other motivations also exist, the proposed set of four motives include the most common motives that influence leaders' blame and credit behaviors and communications. These can be envisioned as individual differences, or characteristics, with internal drivers. These motives are not fleeting, but they also are not permanent. Each of the motives introduced are states that are relatively long-lasting drivers of a leader's blame and credit behaviors, compared to ephemeral states. I argue that individuals are driven to some extent by each of the four motives presented, but that one motive (e.g., to manage impressions) may outweigh one (or all) of the other motives (e.g., to build and strengthen relationships with subordinates). In short, a leader holds some level of each of the four motives, but some motives are more salient than others. Therefore, one (or more) motive may be more salient for a leader, and this motive may have heightened impact on her blame or credit behaviors. Conversely, (or more) motive may be more muted for a leader, and this motive may have diminished influence on her blame or credit behaviors.

3.3.5 Relaxing the assumption of an internal, intra-team audience. The scope of the motives introduced above is limited to the blame and credit behaviors of a leader directed toward the internal, intra-team audience – that is, those individuals who are officially affiliated with (i.e., employed by) the organization and directly involved in the event and diffuse outcome, such that they could sustain blame or receive credit due to their proximity to the outcome. The impression management motive, as delineated above, relaxes this assumption slightly to allow for certain leaders who may be motivated to manage the impressions that both the internal intra-team audience and *extra*-team audience (e.g., other employees who do not report to that leader, other managers with similar hierarchical rank) have of them. For the impression management motive, this difference in assumption with respect to the audience of the behaviors enacted by a leader stems from the notion that some leaders may be motivated to be viewed as competent in their role by others within the organization (Elsbach, 2003; Pfeffer, 1981). Thus, blame and credit behaviors beyond what a leader directs toward an internal, intra-team audience can be studied for other motives as well. In the following section, I will explain how different types of audiences may change how motives manifest as blame and credit behaviors.

To begin, the boundaries that separate the external audience from the internal audience, as well as the intra-team from the extra-team audiences within the internal audience, can be thought of as either *open* or *closed*. The boundary may affect the extent to which leader blame and credit behaviors may be observed or visible to one or more audiences. Boundaries, then, allow us to explore the isolation of an audience from the behaviors that another audience observes. An *open boundary* refers to a porous boundary through which all leader behaviors and communications pass easily and are not isolated to a specific audience. For example, when there is an open boundary, behaviors enacted toward an external audience or even an internal, extra-

team audience are observable by the internal, intra-team audience. An NFL press conference is an example of an open boundary that is accessible and observable by both internal and external audiences. On the other hand, a *closed boundary* refers to a boundary through which the behaviors and communication from the leader cannot and do not pass and are isolated to a specific audience. For example, when there is a closed boundary, behaviors enacted toward an external audience (or an internal, extra-team audience) are not observable by the internal, intra-team audience.

In addition, the type of audience observing the leader's blame or credit behavior and the boundaries associated with these audiences will not influence the two motives categorized as having an inward direction with respect to objective (i.e., ego-based motive and implicit beliefs motive). The behaviors predicted by these motives will not change because the objective of both the ego-based motive and implicit beliefs motive is directed inward instead of outward and is focused on the self (i.e., one's own ego or own beliefs) rather than on others in the environment (i.e., the perceptions and relationships one has with other individuals). Leaders driven by the ego-based motive or the implicit beliefs motive will not act differently toward different types of audiences. For example, a leader driven most strongly by the implicit beliefs motive, to enact behaviors congruent with those of an ideal leader and with positive ILTs, will want to behave consistently with this idealized conceptualization of leadership in front of an external audience as well as in front of all types of internal audiences.

Conversely, because their objective is directed outward instead of inward, the impression management motive and relationship building motive may be affected by different types of audiences and the boundaries between those audiences.

Impression management motive. When boundaries between audiences are closed, leaders who are driven by the impression management motive may then view their resulting blame and credit behaviors as a means to tailor their image to a specific audience (e.g., an external audience, an internal intra-team audience, or an internal extra-team audience) because leader behaviors observed by one audience are not visible to another. Furthermore, leaders may feel the need to manage impressions differently when communicating to internal extra-team audiences situated hierarchically above, below, or laterally (Ginzel et al., 2004). Toward superiors, a leader may engage in blame and credit behaviors directed toward an upward, extra-team audience that protect her image of being competent in a leader role. As a result, the leader may shift credit toward the self and blame away, as predicted. In a laterally equivalent or in a downward direction (e.g., toward an extra-team audience member who is hierarchically situated below), a leader may be driven in a similar manner – to shift blame away and credit toward (e.g., Crant & Bateman, 1993).

Consider next a leader who would like to be viewed by others in a favorable light to individuals at her same hierarchical rank or to lower level employees who either report or do not report to them (e.g., either the intra-team audience or extra-team audience). This leader may wish to manage the impression of being a certain type of leader (for example, team-oriented, generous, or humble). In this case, for the leader, managing impressions might mean shifting credit away toward others and shifting blame toward the self to appear as though one is a humble and/or team-oriented leader. A similar prediction can be made for an external audience; if a leader wishes to protect an image of being competent in front an audience with closed boundaries, she will shift credit toward the self and shift blame away toward others. Yet, these

behaviors may be less likely to occur and perhaps reversed if the leader wishes for the external audience to perceive him or her as being a generous, humble, or team-oriented leader.

In a situation in which there are open boundaries across the different types of audiences, leaders' behaviors will be visible to a variety of audiences, both internal and external. With open boundaries, leaders may then enact behaviors that maintain the impression that the leaders wish to manage in light of the highest priority audience. For example, if the leader has a low priority to cater to the external or the internal, extra-team audience, and instead, the leader's top priority is to maintain an impression of being a competent leader in the eyes of the internal, intra-team audience, she may then shift blame toward others and shift credit toward themselves in front of an audience with open boundaries. If she is most inclined to be perceived as a favorable, team-oriented leader in the eyes of the internal, intra-team audience (and lower on the list of priorities are the internal, extra-team audience and the external audience), however, she may shift credit toward others and shift blame toward the self. The desire and motivation to be perceived as team-oriented may lead her to engage in relationship building. In this sense, the manifestations of blame and credit behavior stemming from one's drive to manage impressions may be congruent with the manifestations of behavior stemming from a drive to build relationships. Whether the boundaries between audiences are closed or open may influence what impression a leader wishes to manage and how.

Relationship building motive. When boundaries across audiences are closed, a leader's blame or credit behavior observed by one audience is not visible to and is isolated from the purview of other audiences. As a result, the leader may attempt to use blame and credit behaviors as a means to build relationships with other types of audiences. As previously described, an extra-team audience can be situated hierarchically above, below, or laterally equivalent. A

leader's blame and credit behaviors communicated toward an upward, internal, extra-team audience may not be the most effective means to build relationships. Yet, if this is the case, then a leader who is driven to build relationships with her superiors, or the internal audience members situated hierarchically above, may shift blame toward the self and shift credit away toward others (e.g., their own employees and team members) in order to signal that they can be held accountable in the organization. Nevertheless, building a relationship with a superior may sometimes mean promoting one's own competence, and that would then fall in line with the impression management motive and the behavior linked to that driver.

In contrast, if the extra-team audience to which the leader is communicating blame or credit is located at an equivalent level or downward, a leader driven to build relationships with these types of audiences may want to signal that she is trustworthy and not the type of leader to throw others under the bus (e.g., Rosen et al., 2011). Thus, in these cases, a leader may be inclined to shift blame toward the self and shift credit toward others. With respect to building a relationship with an external audience while boundaries across audiences are closed, the blame or credit behaviors enacted by a leader and communicated to these parties may be slightly different. Because these behaviors are not visible to anyone within the organization (either the intra-team or extra-team audience), the relationship that the leader wishes to build with external audience members (i.e., family members, partners, friends) is outside the scope of the organization. Therefore, leaders may be less likely to engage in behaviors that directly serve to build relationships with individuals who work in the same organization, let alone individuals who work for them or on their teams.

In cases where there are open boundaries across the different types of audiences, leaders' behaviors will be visible to a variety of audiences, both internal and external. With open

boundaries, leaders may then enact behaviors that either protect their relationships with their subordinates or protect their subordinates directly (or both) in an effort to preserve and maintain positive relationships with their employees. When boundaries are open across audiences, a leader will likely engage in the same blame and credit behaviors in front of all audiences as they would an internal, intra-team audience (i.e., shifting blame toward the self and shifting credit toward others) because they do not wish to harm the relationship they do have and want to have with their subordinates. Acting in a way that shift blame toward their subordinates and credit toward the self could potentially harm their subordinates as well as the relationship.

3.4. Individual- and Group-focused Moderating Factors

Although these motives are internal and can be visualized as long-lasting states and as individual differences or characteristics, there may also be contextual factors, such as organizational culture or reward structure, which contribute to variation in blame and credit behaviors as well. When an individual walks into a different context, the factors within that context will influence the relationship between the motives and blame and credit behaviors. A contextual factor may change the blame or credit behavior that a leader ultimately enacts, even though she may continue to be driven by a specific motive (or motives). In the previous section, I argued that leaders who hold certain motives, or characteristics, will tend to enact certain blame or credit behaviors across situations, but it is important to address that contextual factors may either decrease or increase the behavioral manifestations of those tendencies or motives. Individuals will continue to hold certain motives; those motives may continue to exist, but the relationship from a leader's natural motives to her behaviors may be amplified or attenuated.

In the following section, I introduce two contextual factors that may influence the degree to which a leader's motive drives blame or credit behavior: (1) the organization's culture and (2)

the reward system. I introduce these two specific motives because they are prominent factors in organizations that fit well with the theory developed in this chapter. Each of these motives are likely to affect how an individual behaves because they change the way certain behaviors, in particular blame and credit behaviors, are valued or perceived within an organization. I also highlight these two contextual factors because they are likely to affect the objective of an individual's motivation to act in a certain way. Indeed, the two factors delineated may switch a leader's focus toward image or toward performance (i.e., related to the objective dimension of the motive), and in doing so, the relationship between the leader's motive and their natural blame and credit behaviors may be altered. While contextual factors do not change whether the individual has a particular motive, these contextual factors may change how a leader decides to behave, and, in turn, their blame and credit behaviors.

Specifically, I look at each of these factors in terms of how individual- or group-focused they are. In a sense, the extent to which a factor is individual- or group- focused can be related to the constructs of individualism and collectivism.⁴ While collectivism and individualism has been studied at the societal level, collectivistic and individualistic values can be present at the organizational level as well (Earley, 1993), for example, through the attraction, selection, and attrition mechanism (Schneider, 1987). As part of this theoretical model, I incorporate the effects of individualistic and collectivistic values in an organization rather than of a society. In extant literature, the individualism construct refers to a concern for oneself and immediate family,

⁴ At this point, the current theoretical model focuses on organizational cultural differences and has yet to encompass national cultural differences. National and societal cultural differences are addressed in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3: Future Research). In Chapter 5, cultural differences, including individualism versus collectivism and low versus high power distance, are discussed with respect to the implicit beliefs and relationship building motives.

personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and the link from identity to personal accomplishments (Hofstede, 1984); thus it is conceptualized more broadly as “a worldview that centralizes the personal ... and peripheralizes the social” (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002: 5). In contrast, the collectivism construct assumes that the group, or collective, binds and mutually obligates individuals to further the goals of the group. In a similar vein, organizational cultures and reward systems can each be categorized as individual-focused or group-focused.

I argue that the individual-focused versus group-focused nature of the contextual factors (i.e., organizational culture and reward system) may shape, and more specifically, moderate the relationship between a leader’s natural motive and subsequent blame and credit behavior due to the contextual factor’s impact on the *objective* of the motive. When leaders are subject to individual-focused factors, such as an individualistic organizational culture or an individual reward structure, they may be more likely to act in the service of their own image because the environment emphasizes the importance of the individual and her own accomplishments. On the other hand, when leaders are exposed to group-focused factors, such as a collectivistic organizational culture or shared reward structure, they may be more likely to act to further the performance of the group as a whole, through actions of their own, because the environment emphasizes the importance of the collective and its shared interests.

3.4.1 Organizational culture. The culture of an organization is rooted in and characterized by the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by organizational members, which in turn shape which members and elements of the organization’s operations become salient and how individuals within the organization perceive and interact with one another (Denison, 1996; Trice & Beyer, 1993; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996). Culture contributes to an organization’s identity and sets the standard for members’ behaviors. As a result, I draw a connection between

the emphasis an organization's culture places on collectivistic or individualistic values and potential behaviors within the organization.

Whether an organization places an emphasis on individualistic or collectivistic values is related to task environment, organizational history, or industry; both individualism and collectivism are considered "legitimate and effective models of organizational functioning" (Chatman & Barsade, 1995: 424; e.g., Lincoln, Olson, and Hanada, 1978; Chatman and Jehn, 1994). In an organizational culture with strong individualistic values (i.e., individual-focused), organizational members place priority on the pursuit and maximization of individual goals. Examples include encouraging employees to think independently and to make decisions on their own (Chatman & Barsade, 1995). People in these environments tend to focus on their own and others' specific unique abilities and traits, categorizing them into what makes them different and unique from others. Conversely, in organizational cultures that emphasizes collectivistic values (i.e., group-focused), members place priority on shared goals and collective action. The focus is on joint objectives, shared interests, and commonalities among others in the organization. Examples include employees sharing responsibilities, brainstorming ideas together, and making decisions as a group.

Drawing on the example of the software development team's failure (or success), the organizational culture perceived by the members of that team and specifically the leader of that team will shape their behaviors. Namely, whether the culture tends toward individualistic or collectivistic values and norms might change a leaders' behavior through the impact of these values on to what extent particular blame or credit behaviors they enact, despite their motive(s). For example, if the team fails to deliver a successful product to the client, the leader's propensity may be to shift blame towards the rest of the team because the impression management motive

tends to drive her behaviors. The extent to which the organization's culture stresses collectivistic or individualistic values, however, may suppress the behaviors linked to her impression management motive and activate different behaviors instead.

To clarify the link from individualistic and collectivistic cultures to the set of four motives and the proposed ensuing blame and credit behaviors, I focus on the classification of the motives in terms of their *objective*, in the classification scheme developed in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.1). The objective of a motive refers to whether the resulting blame or credit behavior is enacted with the goal of either influencing the individual's (i.e., the leader's) image or influencing the performance. In an individualistic organizational culture with individual-focused norms, people are fixated more on meeting (and exceeding) their own goals and on their own unique characteristics and accomplishments. As a result, individualistic values are more congruent with the ego-defensive and the impression management motives, both of which have the objective of enhancing one's own image in terms of either one's own ego or how others perceive them. In contrast, in a collectivistic organizational culture with group-focused norms, members tend to fixate on the optimization of shared objectives and goals and on their shared interests. Therefore, collectivistic values are more congruent with the implicit beliefs and the relationship building motives, which, in turn, have the objective of enhancing performance, either through one's own performance as a leader or through the improvement of relationships with subordinates. Although leaders will continue to harbor a particular motive(s), organizational culture may change the likelihood of that motive manifesting as certain blame and credit behaviors, rather than changing whether the individual continues to hold that motive.

As a result, when a leader's motive(s) is incongruent with the organizational culture, the emphasis on individualistic or collectivistic values may then effectively suppress the behavioral

tendencies associated with this motive and instead activate behaviors that are more aligned with the organizational culture. Thus, the individualism or collectivism of an organizational culture will moderate the relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors.

Proposition 5. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors will vary based on organizational culture.

- a) In an organizational culture with an emphasis on collectivistic values, the relationship between the ego-defensive and impression motives and blame and credit behaviors is weaker than in a culture which emphasizes individualistic values.*
- b) In an organizational culture with an emphasis on individualistic values, the relationship between the implicit beliefs and relationship building motives and blame and credit behaviors is weaker than in a culture which emphasizes collectivistic values.*

3.4.2 Reward structure. Organizations can employ reward structures by which to distribute rewards to two or more individuals, thereby motivating employees and allocating resources. Reward structures have been grouped into two “pure” types (e.g., Deutsch, 1949b; Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Tjosvold, 1982): individual rewards (sometimes known as “competitive”) and joint or shared rewards (also known as “cooperative”). Individual rewards are more individual-focused and are based exclusively on the performance of one individual and are may be referred to as “competitive” because individuals are rewarded for outperforming others (e.g., Pearsall et al., 2010). Shared rewards are more group-focused and provide a common interest for individuals to work together and perform well because the reward depends on collective performance. In a department store, employees may be compensated based on individual or shared rewards. For example, when an individual employee in the furniture department receives an annual bonus of \$1,000 because she has exceeded her annual, personal sales target by 10%, this constitutes an individual reward. When all the employees in the furniture department receive a salary raise of 10% because the furniture department exceeded

their annual departmental profit goals by 5%, this constitutes a shared reward. In another example, Nucor, a steel production company, implements a shared reward system such that steelworkers making batches of steel receive a bonus tied to the production of defect-free steel during the group's entire shift (Hope, 2009). It follows, then, that individual rewards are classified as more individual-focused because members are rewarded for performance based on their individual achievements, whereas shared rewards are more group-focused because members are rewarded for joint contributions to the organization (e.g., Triandis, 1989).

Similar to organizational culture, in an individual-focused, individual reward structure, leaders may be more likely to focus on themselves and the maximization of their own achievements while disregarding or even minimizing the achievements of others. This type of reward structure is more congruent with the ego-defensive motive and the impression management motive, both of which have the objective of enhancing image in terms of either how a leader sees herself or how others perceive her, respectively. Conversely, in a group-focused, shared reward structure in which individuals are rewarded based on the performance of the group, leaders may be more likely to focus on the collective and the optimization of their behavior in an effort to bolster performance overall. The shared reward structure thus stresses a focus on collective outcomes and is more congruent with the implicit beliefs motive and the relationship building motive, both of which have the objective of enhancing performance through exhibiting the characteristics of an "ideal" leader and building relationships. Even though leaders will continue to harbor a particular motive(s), the reward system of their organization may change the tendency of that motive translating into certain blame and credit behaviors, rather than changing whether the individual continues to hold that motive.

As a result, when a leader's motive(s) is incongruent with the reward structure, the emphasis on individual or shared rewards may then effectively suppress the behavioral tendencies associated with this motive and instead activate behaviors that are more aligned with the reward system. Thus, the individual or shared nature of the reward structure will moderate the relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors.

Proposition 6. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors will vary based on reward structure.

- a) Under a shared reward structure, the relationship between the ego-defensive and impression motives and blame and credit behaviors is weaker than under an individual reward structure.*
- b) Under an individual reward structure, the relationship between the implicit beliefs and relationship building motives and blame and credit behaviors is weaker than under a shared reward structure.*

Together, the four motives outlined in this chapter – the ego-defensive, impression management, implicit beliefs, and relationship building motives – provide the most common reasons for leaders' blame and credit behaviors towards an internal audience following a diffuse outcome. Although other motives may exist, these four motives should be viewed as a set within which most other motivations fall. I proposed two contextual factors that contribute to this variation as well. The extent to which organizational culture or reward structure is more focused on the individual or on the collective may influence the relationship from motives to blame and credit behaviors. When a leader's motive is incongruent with the contextual factor of organizational culture or reward structure, she may enact blame and credit behaviors that are not predicted by her motive and instead are more aligned with the organizational culture or reward structure. In Chapter 3, I delineated a theoretical framework of the motives that explain why leaders express blame and credit in specific ways, as well as the impact of contextual factors. In Chapter 4, I conduct three studies that test elements of this theoretical model.

Chapter 4: Empirically Testing the Drivers of Blame and Credit Behaviors

In Chapter 3, the theoretical development of a model comprised of a set of four motives and two contextual moderators, organizational culture and reward structure, addressed what motivates leaders to engage in distinct types of blame and credit behaviors. In Chapter 4, I report a set of studies that empirically test the key theoretical elements introduced in Chapter 3. In Study 2, I collected field data using survey methods in order to provide preliminary evidence that links the four motives to blame and credit behaviors of leaders, as well as the moderating effect of organizational culture in terms of individualism and collectivism. Thus, this study aimed to confirm the main effects from the motives to blame and credit behaviors as outlined in the previously stated propositions. In addition, I conducted two laboratory experiments, Study 3 and Study 4, to test the hypothesized causal relationships between the motives and blame and credit behaviors, in addition to reward structure as a moderator. These studies involved tasks to be completed by the lab participant and a trained confederate, a motive manipulation, and reward structure manipulation. Together, the contribution of the studies in Chapter 4 serve as the extent of evidence supporting the theoretical model of motives driving blame and credit behaviors developed in Chapter 3.

4.1 Development of Hypotheses

4.1.1 Ego-defensive motive. As outlined in Chapter 3, individuals whose blame and credit behaviors are driven by the ego-defensive motive see their behaviors as ways to maintain a positive self-image. The ego-defensive motive is oriented internally towards one's own ego and self-esteem with the objective of enhancing self-image. Thus, the ego-defensive motive can be

operationalized by the construct of narcissism. As a concept, narcissism was introduced in the psychological literature by Ellis (1898) and influenced Freud's (1957) thinking, leading him to identify different indicators of narcissism, including self-admiration and a tendency to see others as an extension of one's self. Although narcissism has been viewed as a clinical mental disorder in the past, scholars have also maintained that narcissism can be conceptualized and measured as a personality dimension (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Terry, 1988). As a result, psychologists have developed a psychometric scale for measuring narcissism beyond its designation as a clinical syndrome (e.g., Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), Raskin & Hall, 1979). Clinicians focus on outliers, individuals who are narcissistic to a clinical, extreme level as to impair their social functioning in serious ways, whereas personality theorists focus on the full range of narcissistic expressions, which encompass the less extreme, subclinical manifestations of narcissism.

Research has suggested that narcissism is positively associated with self-esteem (Emmons, 1987; Morf and Rhodewalt, 1993) and biased self-enhancement (John and Robins, 1994), while it is negatively associated with the discrepancy between one's sense of self and one's sense of ideal self (Emmons, 1987). Research has also suggested that narcissists regulate their self-esteem by engaging in the defensive process of grandiose self-conceptualization as a way of reinforcing their sense of self-importance, for example by winning admiration (Raskin et al., 1991). Cognitively speaking, narcissism involves a belief that one possesses superior qualities. In terms of motivation, narcissists have a strong need to have one's superiority reaffirmed. The craving for further admiration may lead a narcissist to engage in both exhibitionism and the diminishment of others. Thus, leaders who are more narcissistic may be more likely to take credit (rather than assign credit) for successful outcomes and assign blame (rather than take blame) for unsuccessful outcomes.

Hypothesis 1a. There is a positive relationship between leader narcissism and blame behaviors toward others.

Hypothesis 1b. There is a positive relationship between leader narcissism and credit behaviors toward the self.

4.1.2 Impression management motive. Leaders driven by the impression management motive may enact blame and credit behaviors to uphold a sense of competency and authority. These individuals may attempt to shape others' views of them so that people believe them responsible for successes rather than failures because they are motivated to maintain their image in the eyes of others (i.e., external orientation, image objective). Although social psychologists developed the concept of impression management, organizational scholars have suggested that impression management research in social psychology can generalize to organizational settings (Wortman & Linsenmeier, 1977). Impression management is the process or set of strategies that people use to influence how others perceive them (i.e., the image that others have of them) (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995; Jones & Pittman, 1982).

The impression management motive can be linked to the concept of *impression motivation*, which represents the extent to which individuals are motivated to control how others see them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Research suggests that this motivation comes into play when an individual wishes to control how others perceive them when they have a goal and when presenting themselves in a certain way will help them attain that goal (Leary, 1995). Researchers have studied impression motivation in the context of personnel selection (e.g., Jansen et al., 2012; Ingold et al., 2015); for example, when trying to receive a job offer, job candidates may attempt to convey an impression that they perceive to be favorable to the potential employer. In a similar vein, a leader may be motivated to portray a favorable impression of herself in light of a failure or a success, as in the impression management motive.

Therefore, individuals with high levels of impression motivation may be likely to engage in blame and credit behaviors that emphasize their own abilities and competencies while denigrating those of others around them.

Hypothesis 2a. There is a positive relationship between impression motivation and blame behaviors toward others.

Hypothesis 2b. There is a positive relationship between impression motivation and credit behaviors toward the self.

4.1.3 Implicit beliefs motive. As outlined in Chapter 3, individuals hold stored conceptions or categorizations about leadership that inform their implicit leadership theories about what constitutes an ideal leader. When leaders exhibit “ideal” leader qualities, subordinates may show higher overall well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). The GLOBE project led to the development of a scale of 112 leadership behavior items that determines if an individual believes a behavior or characteristic greatly inhibits or greatly contributes to an individual being an outstanding leader (House et al., 1999). Positive ILTs, or qualities prototypical of an ideal leader, included characteristics such as being team-oriented, charismatic, participative, and humane, and excluded characteristics like being self-protective and autonomous.

Leaders themselves, as members of an organization, hold beliefs about ideal leader qualities that may prompt them to enact credit and blame behaviors in particular ways. They may want to communicate their desired identity as an ideal or effective leader so that others use these messages to make inferences about them (Belk, 1988, Berger and Heath, 2007). Furthermore, leaders who hold beliefs about an ideal leader prototype may be motivated to enact behaviors congruent with an effective leader in order to ultimately enhance their team’s performance. Specifically, leaders who hold implicit beliefs about ideal leadership (i.e., positive ILTs) that

align with House et al.'s (1999) prototype of effective leadership may be more likely to enact blame and credit behaviors that shift more blame towards themselves and more credit toward subordinates because such behaviors are perceived as more team-oriented, charismatic, participative, and humane, and less self-protective and autonomous.

Hypothesis 3a. There is a positive relationship between positive ILTs of an ideal (i.e., effective) leader prototype and blame behaviors toward the self.

Hypothesis 3b. There is a positive relationship between positive ILTs of an ideal (i.e., effective) leader prototype and credit behaviors toward others.

4.1.4 Relationship building motive. According to the relationship building motive, some leaders may be compelled to establish high quality relationships with subordinates, as high quality relationships have been linked to higher team performance. As described in Chapter 3, leaders who aim to establish a relationship with a subordinate may engage in interpersonal exchanges that reinforce norms of interdependence and reciprocity, and blame and credit behaviors may be viewed as one way of doing so.

Comparably, high quality relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995); whereas low quality relationships refer to those in which leaders instead engage in more contractual exchanges, for example, by allocating standard benefits in return for standard job performance. Although quality of a leader-member relationship conceptualized in the construct of leader-member exchange, or LMX, has often been measured from the perspective of a subordinate's perception of her relationship with a supervisor, leaders can also hold their own beliefs regarding the strength of LMX with certain subordinates (e.g., Cogliser et al., 2009; Sin et al., 2009). Furthermore, because not all subordinates may desire high quality LMX relationships (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2005), it is possible that not all leaders are inclined, either consciously or subconsciously, to establish and

maintain high quality LMX with subordinates. Some leaders may have a strong desire to strengthen LMX, whereas others might not; thus, the motivation to establish a quality relationship with subordinates can be conceptualized as a characteristic, or individual difference, which leaders hold. Leaders who wish to maintain high quality LMX relationships with subordinates thus might engage in distinct blame and credit behaviors in an effort to do so. It follows that leaders who are motivated to establish high LMX relationships may be more likely to engage in behaviors that shift blame toward themselves and shift credit toward subordinates because doing so builds trust and a sense of obligation with subordinates.

Hypothesis 4a. There is a positive relationship between motivation to establish high quality LMX relationships and blame behaviors toward the self.

Hypothesis 4b. There is a positive relationship between motivation to establish high quality LMX relationships and credit behaviors toward others.

4.1.5 The role of individual-focused and group-focused factors. Based on the theoretical model developed in Chapter 3, individuals may possess all four motives but one motive may be more salient and another more muted. Contextual factors proposed in the previous chapter may influence the activation or suppression of specific motives, including the emphasis the organization's culture places on individualistic or collectivistic values and the organization's reward structure.

In an organizational culture that emphasizes individualistic values, the pursuit and maximization of individual goals weighs more heavily than shared goals, and individuals tend to focus on their own and others' *unique* competencies and traits (Chatman & Barsade, 1995). This lies in direct contrast to collectivistic values. In an organization whose culture promotes collectivistic values, members focus more on *shared* objectives and interests. An individual's context can influence which whether she engages in certain blame or credit behaviors. A

contextual factor like the organizational culture's emphasis on individualistic or collectivistic values then shape the extent to which the motive-aligned behaviors manifest.

In an individualistic organizational culture, people are focused more on the optimization of their own goals, characteristics, and accomplishments, which is aligned with the objective of enhancing one's own image. If a leader is naturally inclined toward the two motives with the objective of enhancing group performance (i.e., implicit beliefs motive, relationship building motive), being in a context that is more individual-focused may change their inclinations toward certain blame and credit behaviors. In contrast, in a collectivistic organizational culture, members tend to be more focused on the optimization of shared objectives and group interests; as a result, collectivistic values are aligned with the objective of enhancing group performance. If a leader is naturally inclined toward the two motives with the objective of enhancing own image (i.e., ego-defensive motive, impression management motive), leading in a context that is more group-focused may change their tendencies toward certain blame and credit behaviors. Thus, I argue that emphasis on individualism or collectivism of an organization's culture will moderate the relationship between the motives and blame and credit behaviors.

Hypothesis 5a. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors is moderated by organizational culture such that in an organizational culture that emphasizes collectivistic values:

- i) The relationship between narcissism and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than in an organizational culture which emphasizes individualistic values.*
- ii) The relationship between impression management motivation and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than in an organizational culture which emphasizes individualistic values.*

Hypothesis 5b. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors is moderated by organizational culture such that in an organizational culture that emphasizes individualistic values:

- i) *The relationship between ILTs of an ideal leader prototype and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than in an organizational culture which emphasizes collectivistic values.*
- ii) *The relationship between motivation to establish high quality LMX relationships and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than in an organizational culture which emphasizes collectivistic values.*

A second contextual factor is the reward system within an organization. As described in Chapter 3, under an individual reward structure, members are rewarded for performance based on their individual achievements, and thus individuals may feel motivated to demonstrate individualistic behaviors (e.g., Deutsch, 1949b; Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Tjosvold, 1982). Under a shared reward structure, an organization's members are rewarded for joint contributions to the organization, and thus they may demonstrate more cooperative behaviors. Thus, individual and shared rewards may moderate the relationship between what leaders are naturally motivated by (i.e., the four motives) and various blame and credit behaviors. However, hybrid, or mixed, rewards, which are comprised of a combination of individual and shared rewards (e.g., Pearsall et al., 2010), may have less of an impact on the degree to which they change the activation or suppression of certain motives. An example of a hybrid reward is when an employee in the furniture department in a department store receive a salary raise because the department as a whole has exceeded their profit goals for the year, but she also receives an additional annual bonus because she exceeded her personal sales target. Because hybrid rewards are mixed, individuals may simply default to the motive that is most naturally activated, and motives that are generally suppressed may remain that way. I argue that the organization's reward structure moderates the relationship between motives and blame and credit behaviors.

Hypothesis 6a. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors is moderated by reward structure such that under a shared reward structure,

- i) *The relationship between narcissism and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than under an individual reward structure.*

- ii) *The relationship between impression management (i.e., self-promotion and intimidation) and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than under an individual reward structure.*

Hypothesis 6b. The relationship between motive and blame and credit behaviors is moderated by reward structure such that under an individual reward structure:

- i) *The relationship between ILTs of an ideal leader prototype and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than under a shared reward structure.*
- ii) *The relationship between motivation to establish high quality LMX relationships and blame and credit behaviors will have a lower correlation than under a shared reward structure.*

4.1.6 Attitudes toward the leader. Research on social exchange theory and reciprocity norms between two interacting parties suggests that individuals respond in kind to benefits they receive. Social exchange theory assumes that exchange relationships that follow expectations of reciprocity will “evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005: 875). Leaders who blame the employees without including themselves in the blame create a fragmented relationship, where the leader’s responsibility for the team’s output is unclear. Blaming employees implies that the leader is disconnected from the work, and therefore might create a psychological distance between the two parties such that the employees feel belittled or disgruntled. Conversely, when a leader takes the blame for subordinates, this gesture may be considered a high quality social exchange leading to greater levels of perceived organizational support. Additionally, a manager taking the blame for a negative event seemingly caused by her team can be categorized as an example of supervisory support. Supervisory support, in turn, has been shown to be associated with and potentially a cause of organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2002). Scholars suggest that perceived organizational support predicts organizational commitment, in that organizational commitment improves with increased perceptions of organizational support (Settoon et al, 1996; Masterson et al., 2000).

Whether a leader assigns blame to other actors in the organization, or takes the blame personally, will influence how employees feel about their leader. Trust in leadership – conceptualized as the expectation or belief that a leader has good intentions toward the group and that the team can rely on the leader’s actions or words – is positively related to team performance (Dirks, 2000). If a leader lays the blame for a diffuse failure on the members of the team, suggesting that her behavior is what led to the failure, this may demonstrate a fragmentation between the leader and the team that leads to reduced trust. Conversely, a leader who takes the blame after a diffuse failure sends the message that the failure was a result of poor leadership, not the result of the employee’s behavior. If a leader takes the blame for a negative event and the subordinates respond by matching the protection and helpfulness of the blame-taker, the act of blame-taking reflects a favorable social exchange. Favorable social exchanges are linked to the interpersonal construct of trust, wherein trust between two parties (e.g., an employee in the organization and her supervisor) increases with favorable social exchanges (Blau, 1964). By blaming her leadership instead of the behavior of the team members, the leader may be perceived as more trustworthy because they are fulfilling their role as a leader.

Because individuals are more likely to feel safer and more positive about a manager whom they perceive as trustworthy, trust in leadership is also positively related to organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Subordinates who perceive greater levels of supervisory support and have higher levels of trust in their leader may be more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), extra-role behaviors that are discretionary and not related to the formal reward system but still supportive of the organization’s functioning (Organ, 1988a). An example of an OCB would be willingly helping others who have work-related problems, even though doing so is neither a part of their job responsibilities nor helpful in

receiving extra formal rewards at work. Individuals who experience a great deal of blame may be less likely to engage in OCBs and may have lower levels of trust in the leader because they feel little supervisory support. Thus, subordinates with leaders who shift blame toward themselves and shift credit toward their subordinates are more likely to have higher levels of trust in their leader and to exhibit OCBs.

Hypothesis 7. There is a positive relationship between blame and credit behaviors and subordinate OCBs, such that

- a) Leader blame behaviors toward the self are associated with greater OCBs enacted by their subordinates.*
- b) Leader credit behaviors toward others are associated with greater OCBs enacted by their subordinates.*

4.2 Study 2: Studying the Motives behind Blame and Credit Behaviors of Managers

The purpose of this study was to provide evidence of a link between the four motives (ego-defensive, impression management, implicit beliefs, and relationship building) to blame and credit behaviors (Hypotheses 1 – 4). This study also aimed to test the effect of organizational culture (individualistic vs. collectivistic values) on those relationships (Hypothesis 5) and to test the relationship between leader behaviors (both blame and credit) and subordinate OCBs (Hypothesis 7).

4.2.1 Methods.

Participants. I recruited 210 working managers via Prolific Academic (known as Prolific) in exchange for \$2.06. Prolific Academic is an online platform that is explicitly designed for online participant recruitment by the scientific community (Palan & Schitter, 2018). The Prolific Academic platform has the ability to pre-screen participants on demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, employment status). A requirement to compensate participants an effective rate of \$6.50 per hour or more helps to maintain a high quality of response (Peer,

Brandimarte, Samat, & Acquisiti, 2017). Recent research provides evidence that higher quality data is collected because participants recruited through Prolific are more honest and naïve to common measures than other online platforms, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk (Peer et al., 2017). As a result, researchers have used Prolific Academic as an alternative to Amazon Mechanical Turk, especially when pre-screening participants on multiple specific demographic variables (e.g., Adam, Ku, & Lux, 2019; De Cremer et al., 2018; Kappes, Balcetis, & De Cremer, 2018; Matz & Gladstone, 2018; Zmigrod, Rentfrow, & Robbins, 2018).

I pre-screened participants via Prolific Academic to recruit only individuals who were currently in a managerial role at work, who had been in this role for over a year, and who had at least two direct reports (i.e., subordinates). I refer to these participants as “leader” participants in the study. Data from 16 participants who failed attention checks were excluded from the final sample. There were four attention check questions displayed randomly in the survey that instructed participants to select a specific response option (e.g., “If you are reading carefully, please select ‘Agree’.”). An incorrect response option was considered a failed attention check, and participants who failed any of the attention checks in the survey were dropped from the dataset. Thus, the final sample size was $N = 194$. Of the participants included in this study, 57% were female and 90% were white.

Procedure. The participants (“leaders”) were directed to an online Qualtrics survey with scales measuring their tendency toward each of the four motives and their perception of the organization’s culture in terms of individualism or collectivism, detailed below. The leader participant responded to items regarding their blame and credit behaviors following a past positive outcome and a past negative outcome.

Measures.

Ego-defensive motive. In order to assess the extent to which the ego-defensive motive was salient, leaders completed a measure of narcissism derived from the original, 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988): the NPI-16 (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2005). The NPI-16 measure is a widely used, validated, shorter, unidimensional measure derived from the set of items in the NPI-40, consisting of 16 pairs of statements for which participants select the statement that best reflects their personality. For example, a pair of statements is “I am more capable than other people” and “There is a lot that I can learn from other people.” Cronbach’s alpha for the 16 narcissism items was .75.

Impression management motive. To assess the extent to which the impression management motive was salient, leaders completed a measure of impression motivation adapted from three of seven items developed and validated by Jansen et al. (2012) and an additional three items. See Appendix B for the entire adapted scale. The adapted impression motivation scale was found to be highly reliable (6 items; $\alpha = .86$).

Implicit beliefs motive. To assess the extent to which the implicit beliefs motive was salient, leaders responded to 18 items based on findings from the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program (House et al., 1999). These 18 items were comprised of descriptive words or phrases taken from Javidan and colleagues’ (2006) conceptualization of the culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory of outstanding leadership. The items were presented to leader participants, who then rated to what extent they believed that the trait was characteristic of an effective leader, on a 7-point Likert scale from “Not at all characteristic” to “Extremely characteristic.” These items measured what characteristics and behaviors an individual believes an outstanding or effective leader possesses and enacts. Examples include “Involves other in making decisions,” “Self-protective,”

“Motivational,” “Emphasizes team building,” “Supportive,” and “Face-saving.” See Appendix B for the entire scale. The implicit beliefs measure of outstanding or effective leadership was found to be highly reliable (18 items; $\alpha = .83$).

Relationship building motive. To assess the extent to which the relationship building motive was salient, leaders completed items adapted from the multi-dimensional LMX-MDM, 12-item scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). Participants responded to the items on a 7-point Likert scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The original items in the 12-item scale are used to evaluate an individual’s feelings toward their immediate supervisor. I adapted these items to reflect to what extent a leader is or is not motivated to establish high quality LMX relationships with subordinates. For example, the original item “My manager would come to my defense if I were “attacked” by others” was modified to “I would come to a subordinate’s defense if they were “attacked” by others.” I then also added two items to the scale to reflect a desire to build relationships with subordinates and checked the reliability of this scale as a whole. See Appendix B for the entire adapted 14-item scale. Cronbach’s alpha for the 14 items was .82.

Individualistic versus collectivistic organizational culture. To assess the extent to which the participant perceived that his or her organization emphasizes individualism or collectivism, participants responded to items from the Organizational Culture scale developed by Chatman and Spataro (2005). The scale included seven words or phrases measuring organizational culture on a 7-point Likert scale from “most uncharacteristic” to “most characteristic” of the organization’s culture. The seven items were: team-oriented, collaborative, people-oriented, individually demanding, supportive, fair, and competitive. Cronbach’s alpha for the seven organizational culture items was .75.

Leader blame and credit behaviors. To assess each leader's blame and credit behaviors, participants were asked to think about how they generally react following an unsuccessful outcome (e.g., diffuse failure) at work, with a definition of such an event (e.g., "a negative outcome for which the cause is ambiguous"). Then, they were presented with a series of statements that reflect three different blame behaviors. The leader participants were asked to indicate which one of the three statements most closely reflects how they generally respond after that type of outcome. There were three sets of three statements each to form a composite item measuring blame behavior. They responded to these items twice, the first time with respect to their communication to their subordinates: assigning blame (e.g., "You made a mistake."), sharing blame (e.g., "We made a mistake."), and taking blame (e.g., "I made a mistake."). The second time, they responded with respect to their communication to their communication to their own superiors: assigning blame (e.g., "They made a mistake."), sharing blame (e.g., "We made a mistake."), and taking blame (e.g., "I made a mistake."). The full text of the three blame statements can be found in Appendix B, "Items Measuring Leader's Blame and Credit Behaviors." The composites were labeled "general blame behavior," with respect to an audience of subordinates (three items; $\alpha = .85$), as well as an audience of superiors (three items; $\alpha = .87$).

Then, participants were asked to recall a specific situation in which that type of unsuccessful outcome occurred at work, and to indicate on the same scales as above what their actual response was in the situation they recalled. These were labeled "situation-specific blame behavior," with respect to an audience of subordinates (three items; $\alpha = .93$), as well as an audience of superiors (three items; $\alpha = .93$).

The leader participants were also asked to think about how they generally react following a successful outcome (e.g., diffuse success) at work, with a definition of such an event (e.g., "a

positive outcome for which the cause is ambiguous”). Then, they were presented with a series of statements that reflect three different credit behaviors: assigning credit, sharing credit, and taking credit. Then, the leader participants were asked to indicate which one of the three statements most closely reflects how they generally respond after that type of outcome. Again, there were three sets of three statements each to form a composite item measuring credit behavior. They responded to these items twice, the first time with respect to their communication to their subordinates, and the second time with respect to their communication to their own superiors. The full text of the three credit statements can be found in Appendix B, “Items Measuring Leader’s Blame and Credit Behaviors. The composites were labeled “general credit behavior,” with respect to an audience of subordinates (three items; $\alpha = .85$), as well as an audience of superiors (three items; $\alpha = .88$).

Then, participants were asked to recall a specific situation in which that type of successful outcome occurred at work, and to indicate on the same scales as above what their actual response was in the situation they recalled. These were labeled “situation-specific credit behavior,” with respect to an audience of subordinates (three items; $\alpha = .94$), as well as an audience of superiors (three items; $\alpha = .89$).

The order in which they are asked to recall either the most recent diffuse failure or the most recent diffuse success was randomized. See Appendix B to see the statements associated with each type of blame and credit behavior.

Attitudes toward the leader. In this study, leaders completed a measure rating the organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) of their subordinates. The items in this scale, developed by Podsakoff and Mackenzie (1989; Podsakoff et al., 1990), included those based on the five dimensions of OCB described by Organ (1988a): altruism, sportsmanship, courtesy,

conscientiousness, and civic virtue. The measure of subordinate OCBs was found to be highly reliable (10 items; $\alpha = .86$).

Other variables and control variables. In addition to measuring demographic variables such as gender, age, and ethnicity, I also measured the leader's job insecurity as a control variable, as job insecurity may be linked to blame and credit behaviors. A leader with high job insecurity, in which they feel a "powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984: 438), may be more likely to enact credit behaviors toward the self and blame behaviors towards others because they fear that taking more blame could increase this insecurity. Conversely, a leader with low job insecurity may think that because they are not in a threatened job situation, they can afford to take some risks and instead enact blame behaviors toward the self and credit behaviors towards others. Job insecurity was assessed using Ashford, Lee, and Bobko's (1989) items measuring perceived threat to total job and powerlessness.

4.2.2 Results. I computed the means and standard deviations of the various individual difference and behavior measures collected in the study. These can be found in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, respectively. Histograms depicting the distributions of the measures can be seen in Appendix C, Figures C1 – C14. Additionally, the descriptive statistics and correlations between each of the measures are displayed in Table 4.3.

I conducted a series of regressions to examine the relationship between the motive measures and the leader's self-reported blame and credit behaviors. Then, I conducted regressions in which the leader's scores on each of the four motive measures (separately) served as the criterion (i.e., independent) variable, and the blame or credit behavior composites served as the predictor (i.e., dependent) variables. The behavior composites were further classified as

being 1) “situation-specific” or “general” and 2) for an audience of subordinates or an audience of superiors. A negative coefficient indicated behavior shifting blame or credit toward others, and a positive coefficient indicated a shift toward the self. Control variables included in the regression analyses were gender, age, ethnicity, role tenure, and job insecurity, unless otherwise noted. Descriptive statistics and correlations of the control variables are also included in Table 4.3.

Table 4.1 Study 2 – Means and Standard Deviations – Variables Measured

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max
Narcissism	0.23	0.19	0.00	0.94
Impression Motivation	6.22	0.68	3.00	7.00
ILT of Ideal Leadership	3.86	0.44	2.22	4.72
LMX Motivation	5.72	0.57	3.86	7.00
Organizational Culture	4.66	0.85	1.29	6.43
Subordinate OCBs	4.85	0.95	1.00	7.00

Note: $N=194$. Potential range for Narcissism was between 0 and 1. Impression Motivation, LMX Motivation, Organizational Culture, and Subordinate OCBs were on a 7-point Likert scale. ILT of Ideal Leadership was on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 4.2 Study 2 – Means and Standard Deviations – Blame and Credit Measures

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max
Blame - General; subordinate audience	4.43	0.93	2.00	7.00
Blame - General; supervisor audience	4.51	1.06	1.00	7.00
Blame - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	4.31	1.18	1.00	7.00
Blame - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	4.35	1.26	1.00	7.00
Credit - General; subordinate audience	3.66	0.88	1.00	7.00
Credit - General; supervisor audience	3.79	0.85	1.00	7.00
Credit - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	3.62	1.00	1.00	7.00
Credit - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	3.79	0.94	1.00	7.00

Note: $N=194$. All behaviors were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

Table 4.3 Study 2 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of All Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Role Tenure	Job Insecurity	Narcissism	Impression Motivation	ILT	LMX Motivation
Gender (Female = 1)	0.57	0.50	0	1									
Age	37.31	9.57	22.00	66.00	0.04								
Ethnicity (White = 1)	0.90	0.30	0	1	0.15*	0.08							
Role Tenure	5.15	4.47	1.00	30.00	0.03	0.44**	-0.10						
Job Insecurity	2.33	0.89	1.00	5.00	0.00	0.06	-0.18*	-0.01	$\alpha = .63$				
Narcissism	0.23	0.19	0.00	0.94	-0.14+	-0.06	-0.08	0.07	-0.02	$\alpha = .75$			
Impression Motivation	6.22	0.68	3.00	7.00	0.22**	-0.03	0.00	-0.05	0.04	0.08	$\alpha = .86$		
ILT of Ideal Leadership	3.86	0.44	2.22	4.72	0.19**	0.02	-0.05	-0.03	-0.04	-0.18*	0.35**	$\alpha = .83$	
LMX Motivation	5.72	0.57	3.86	7.00	0.09	0.09	-0.03	0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.53**	0.30**	$\alpha = .82$
Organizational Culture	4.66	0.85	1.29	6.43	0.09	-0.08	0.03	0.00	-0.18*	-0.04	0.17*	0.11	0.11
Subordinate OCBs	4.85	0.95	1.00	7.00	0.13+	-0.02	0.01	0.07	-0.26**	0.03	0.21**	0.24**	0.18*
Blame - General; subordinate audience	4.43	0.93	2.00	7.00	-0.02	0.07	-0.04	0.04	0.01	-0.09	0.18*	0.05	0.15*
Blame - General; supervisor audience	4.51	1.06	1.00	7.00	-0.05	0.09	-0.06	0.09	0.00	-0.10	0.14+	0.09	0.05
Blame - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	4.31	1.18	1.00	7.00	-0.11	0.04	-0.02	0.02	-0.05	-0.24**	0.05	0.08	0.03
Blame - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	4.35	1.26	1.00	7.00	-0.06	0.09	0.03	-0.02	-0.05	-0.25**	0.06	0.08	0.04
Credit - General; subordinate audience	3.66	0.88	1.00	7.00	-0.06	-0.01	-0.08	0.12+	0.07	0.10	0.00	-0.05	0.06
Credit - General; supervisor audience	3.79	0.85	1.00	7.00	-0.06	-0.03	-0.02	0.14+	0.04	0.17*	0.07	-0.05	0.02
Credit - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	3.62	1.00	1.00	7.00	-0.08	-0.05	-0.14*	0.15*	0.04	0.18*	0.06	-0.11	0.10
Credit - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	3.79	0.94	1.00	7.00	-0.14*	-0.01	-0.08	0.09	0.05	0.16*	0.10	-0.09	0.12+

Note: *N* = 194. Job insecurity was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Potential range for Narcissism was between 0 and 1. Impression Motivation, LMX Motivation, Organizational Culture, and Subordinate OCBs were on a 7-point Likert scale. ILT of Ideal Leadership was on a 5-point Likert scale. All Blame and Credit Behaviors were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

Table 4.3 (continued) Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of All Variables

	M	SD	Min	Max	Organizational Culture	Subordinate OCBs	Blame - Gen; subord	Blame - Gen; super	Blame - Situation; subord	Blame - Situation; super	Credit - Gen; subord	Credit - Gen; super	Credit - Situation; subord	Credit - Situation; subord
Gender (Female = 1)	0.57	0.50	0	1										
Age	37.31	9.57	22.00	66.00										
Ethnicity (White = 1)	0.90	0.30	0	1										
Role Tenure	5.15	4.47	1.00	30.00										
Job Insecurity	2.33	0.89	1.00	5.00										
Narcissism	0.23	0.19	0.00	0.94										
Impression Motivation	6.22	0.68	3.00	7.00										
ILT of Ideal Leadership	3.86	0.44	2.22	4.72										
LMX Motivation	5.72	0.57	3.86	7.00										
Organizational Culture	4.66	0.85	1.29	6.43	$\alpha = .75$									
Subordinate OCBs	4.85	0.95	1.00	7.00	0.63**	$\alpha = .86$								
Blame - General; subordinate audience	4.43	0.93	2.00	7.00	0.06	0.15*	$\alpha = .85$							
Blame - General; supervisor audience	4.51	1.06	1.00	7.00	0.03	0.18*	0.79**	$\alpha = .87$						
Blame - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	4.31	1.18	1.00	7.00	0.13+	0.19*	0.58**	0.57**	$\alpha = .93$					
Blame - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	4.35	1.26	1.00	7.00	0.14*	0.20*	0.56**	0.59**	0.88**	$\alpha = .93$				
Credit - General; subordinate audience	3.66	0.88	1.00	7.00	0.13+	0.06	-0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.01	$\alpha = .85$			
Credit - General; supervisor audience	3.79	0.85	1.00	7.00	-0.01	-0.03	0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.07	0.72**	$\alpha = .88$		
Credit - Situation-specific; subordinate audience	3.62	1.00	1.00	7.00	0.05	0.09	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.62**	0.59**	$\alpha = .94$	
Credit - Situation-specific; supervisor audience	3.79	0.94	1.00	7.00	-0.01	0.03	0.02	0.09	0.03	0.05	0.50**	0.67**	0.81**	$\alpha = .89$

Note: $N = 194$. Job insecurity was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Potential range for Narcissism was between 0 and 1. Impression Motivation, LMX Motivation, Organizational Culture, and Subordinate OCBs were on a 7-point Likert scale. ILT of Ideal Leadership was on a 5-point Likert scale. All Blame and Credit Behaviors were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

Demographic variables. I estimated regression models of gender (male, female), race (white, non-white), and role tenure predicting blame and credit behaviors. Controlling for race and role tenure, gender was not a significant predictor of general or situation-specific blame or credit behavior for both types of audiences. The same was found for race (controlling for the other two variables) and role tenure (controlling for the other two variables).

All four motives as criterion variables. I conducted regression analyses to examine how all four motives together were related to blame and credit behaviors. The leader's scores on all four of the motive measures served as the criterion variables and the blame or credit behavior composites served as the predictor variables. The regression model of all four motives predicting blame behaviors for both types of audiences is shown in Table 4.4, and the regression model of all four motives predicting credit behaviors for both types of audiences is shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4 All Four Motives Predicting Blame Behaviors

Audience Type:	Criterion: Blame Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Narcissism	-0.12+	-0.13+	-0.31**	-0.33**
Impression Motivation	0.18*	0.21*	0.13	0.11
Effective Leader ILT	-0.04	0.04	0.05	0.03
LMX Motivation	0.07	-0.07	-0.03	-0.005
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.07	-0.12	-0.20*	-0.14
Age	0.05	0.07	0.03	0.14
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.04	-0.05	-0.01	0.03
Role Tenure	0.03	0.08	0.03	-0.08
Job Insecurity	-0.02	-0.02	-0.06	-0.05
Constant	4.44**	4.51**	4.31**	4.35**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.09
Adjusted R ²	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.05
Residual Std. Error (df = 180)	0.93	1.06	1.16	1.23
F Statistic (df = 9; 180)	1.33	1.30	1.96*	2.03*

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.5 All Four Motives Predicting Credit Behaviors

Audience Type:	Criterion: Credit Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Narcissism	0.06	0.11+	0.11	0.08
Impression Motivation	-0.03	0.08	0.05	0.11
Effective Leader ILT	-0.04	-0.02	-0.13+	-0.11
LMX Motivation	0.10	-0.01	0.13	0.10
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.03	-0.05	-0.05	-0.13+
Age	-0.07	-0.08	-0.12	-0.05
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.05	0.03	-0.11	-0.03
Role Tenure	0.14+	0.16*	0.19*	0.11
Job Insecurity	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.03
Constant	3.67**	3.80**	3.62**	3.79**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.09
Adjusted R ²	0.0004	0.02	0.06	0.04
Residual Std. Error (df = 180)	0.89	0.85	0.98	0.92
F Statistic (df = 9; 180)	1.01	1.33	2.26*	1.87+

Note:+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

In terms of blame behavior, for an audience of subordinates, narcissism was a significant predictor of situation-specific blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.31$, $p < .001$, and a marginally significant predictor of general blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.12$, $p = .09$. For an audience of superiors, narcissism was also a significant predictor of situation-specific blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.33$, $p < .001$, and a marginally significant predictor of general blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.13$, $p = .10$. For an audience of subordinates, impression motivation was a significant predictor of general blame behavior toward the self, $b = 0.18$, $p = .04$. For an audience of superiors, impression motivation was also a significant predictor of general blame behavior toward the self, $b = 0.21$, $p = .03$. No other motives in this regression model were significant predictors of blame behaviors, regardless of behavior or audience type.

In terms of credit behavior, for an audience of superiors, narcissism was a marginally significant predictor of credit behavior toward the self, $b = 0.11$, $p = .09$. For an audience of subordinates, effective leader ILT was a marginally significant predictor of credit behavior toward others, $b = -0.13$, $p = .09$. No other motives in this regression model were significant predictors of credit behaviors, regardless of behavior or audience type.

In the following sections, I test each individual hypothesis and report the results of the regression analyses conducted by including each motive, separately, as the criterion variable.

Narcissism. In terms of blame behavior, for an audience of subordinates, narcissism was a significant predictor of situation-specific blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.30$, $p < .001$. For an audience of superiors, narcissism was also a significant predictor of situation-specific blame behavior toward others, $b = -0.32$, $p < .001$. See Table 4.6 for the regression models of narcissism predicting blame behavior. When reflecting on a specific past situation, for both an

Table 4.6 Narcissism Predicting Blame Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Blame Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Narcissism	-0.09	-0.12	-0.30**	-0.32**
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.03	-0.06	-0.16+	-0.11
Age	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.14
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.04	-0.06	-0.02	0.02
Role Tenure	0.01	0.07	0.02	-0.09
Job Insecurity	-0.004	-0.01	-0.05	-0.05
Constant	4.43**	4.50**	4.31**	4.35**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.08
Adjusted R ²	-0.02	-0.004	0.05	0.05
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.95	1.07	1.16	1.23
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	0.49	0.87	2.54*	2.77*

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

audience of subordinates and an audience of superiors, the more narcissistic an individual, the more likely they were to report shifting blame toward their subordinates. In terms of general blame behavior, narcissism was not a significant predictor for both types of audiences. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported for situation-specific blame for both types of audiences, but not supported for general blame.

In terms of credit behavior, for an audience of superiors, narcissism was a significant predictor of general credit behavior toward the self, $b = 0.12$, $p = .05$. For an audience of subordinates, narcissism was a marginally significant predictor of situation-specific credit behavior toward the self, $b = 0.14$, $p = .056$. For an audience of superiors, narcissism was a marginally significant predictor of situation-specific credit behavior toward the self, $b = 0.12$, $p = .089$. See Table 4.7 for the regression models of narcissism predicting credit behavior.

Table 4.7 Narcissism Predicting Credit Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Credit Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Narcissism	0.07	0.12*	0.14+	0.12+
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0.12+
Age	-0.06	-0.09	-0.11	-0.04
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.04	0.03	-0.09	-0.02
Role Tenure	0.13+	0.15*	0.19*	0.10
Job Insecurity	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.05
Constant	3.67**	3.80**	3.62**	3.79**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.05
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.02
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.89	0.85	0.99	0.93
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	1.21	1.79	2.47*	1.66

Note:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Narcissism was not a significant predictor of general credit behavior for an audience of subordinates. Thus, the data provide partial evidence supporting Hypothesis 1b, except for general credit in front of an audience of subordinates. See Table 4.8 for a summary of significant and non-significant findings related to narcissism.

Table 4.8 Narcissism Predicting Blame and Credit Behaviors: Summary of Findings

		Audience Type	
		Subordinate	Superior
Blame Behaviors			
<u>General</u>			
	Shift toward others	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>			
	Shift toward others	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001
Credit Behaviors			
<u>General</u>			
	Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>p</i> = .05
<u>Situation-specific</u>			
	Shift toward self	<i>p</i> = .056	<i>p</i> = .089

Impression motivation. For audiences of subordinates and of superiors, impression motivation significantly predicted general blame behavior in the direction opposite of what was predicted – general blame behavior was directed toward the self rather than toward others. Specifically, for an audience of subordinates, impression motivation was a significant predictor of general blame behavior toward the self, $b = 0.18$, $p = .01$. For an audience of superiors, impression motivation was a significant predictor of general blame behavior toward the self, $b = 0.17$, $p = .03$. When reflecting on their behaviors in general, for both an audience of subordinates and an audience of superiors, the more motivated an individual was to manage impressions, the more likely they were to report shifting blame toward themselves. In terms of situation-specific blame behavior, impression motivation was not a significant predictor for both types of audiences. Thus, the findings indicate results countering Hypothesis 2a. See Table 4.9 for the

regression models of impression motivation predicting blame behavior and Table 4.11 for a summary of findings related to narcissism and blame behavior.

Table 4.9 Impression Motivation Predicting Blame Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Blame Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Impression Motivation	0.18**	0.17*	0.09	0.08
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.06	-0.09	-0.14	-0.08
Age	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.18+
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.03	-0.05	-0.004	0.03
Role Tenure	0.01	0.07	-0.01	-0.12
Job Insecurity	-0.01	-0.02	-0.05	-0.05
Constant	4.43**	4.51**	4.30**	4.35**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.93	1.06	1.19	1.27
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	1.39	1.28	0.58	0.79

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

For an audience of superiors, impression motivation significantly predicted situation-specific credit behavior toward the self, as predicted, $b = 0.14$, $p = .05$. When reflecting on a specific past situation, for an audience of superiors, the more motivated an individual was to manage impressions, the more likely they were to report shifting credit toward themselves. Impression motivation did not significantly predict situation-specific credit behavior for an audience of subordinates. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was supported for situation-specific credit in front of an audience of superiors, but it was not supported for an audience of subordinates or for general credit in front of both types of audiences. See Table 4.10 for the regression models of impression motivation predicting credit behavior and Table 4.11 for a summary of findings related to impression motivation and credit behavior.

Table 4.10 Impression Motivation Predicting Credit Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Credit Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Impression Motivation	0.02	0.08	0.09	0.14*
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.05	-0.08	-0.09	-0.16*
Age	-0.07	-0.10	-0.13	-0.06
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.05	0.02	-0.10	-0.02
Role Tenure	0.14+	0.17*	0.21*	0.12
Job Insecurity	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.04
Constant	3.67**	3.80**	3.62**	3.79**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.06
Adjusted R ²	0.002	0.01	0.03	0.03
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.89	0.85	0.99	0.93
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	1.06	1.41	2.05+	1.85+

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.11 Impression Motivation Predicting Blame and Credit Behaviors: Summary of Findings

	Audience Type	
	Subordinate	Superior
Blame Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>p</i> = .01	<i>p</i> = .03
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
Credit Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>p</i> = .05

Note: Impression motivation led to blame behaviors that were in the direction opposite of what was predicted. In other words, for the results reported in this table, blame was shifted toward the self (taking blame) instead of toward others (assigning blame).

Implicit leadership theory. Implicit leadership theory of outstanding leadership was not a significant predictor of any type of blame or credit behavior for any types of audiences. In this study, there was no evidence supporting Hypotheses 3a and 3b. See Tables 4.12 and 4.13 for the regression models of effective leader ILT predicting blame and credit behaviors respectively, and see Table 4.14 for a summary of findings related to effective leader ILT and blame and credit behaviors.

Table 4.12 Effective Leader ILT Predicting Blame Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Blame Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Effective Leader ILT	0.06	0.11	0.13	0.11
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.03	-0.07	-0.15	-0.09
Age	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.17
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.03	-0.04	0.01	0.05
Role Tenure	0.0001	0.06	-0.01	-0.12
Job Insecurity	0.002	-0.002	-0.04	-0.04
Constant	4.43**	4.50**	4.30**	4.35**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03
Adjusted R ²	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01	-0.003
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.95	1.07	1.19	1.27
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	0.31	0.81	0.75	0.91

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.13 Effective Leader ILT Predicting Credit Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Credit Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
Effective Leader ILT	-0.03	-0.02	-0.10	-0.06
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.12+
Age	-0.07	-0.10	-0.12	-0.05
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.05	0.02	-0.11	-0.03
Role Tenure	0.14+	0.16*	0.20*	0.11
Job Insecurity	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.04
Constant	3.67**	3.80**	3.62**	3.79**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.04
Adjusted R ²	0.002	0.004	0.03	0.01
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.89	0.85	0.99	0.94
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	1.08	1.13	2.12+	1.28

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.14 Effective Leader ILT Predicting Blame and Credit Behaviors: Summary of Findings

	Audience Type	
	Subordinate	Superior
Blame Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
Credit Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward others	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward others	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>

LMX motivation. For an audience of subordinates, motivation to build a relationship was a significant predictor of general blame behavior toward the self, $b = 0.14$, $p = .04$. When reflecting on their behaviors in general, for an audience of subordinates, the more motivated an individual was to build relationships with their employees, the more likely they were to shift blame toward themselves. LMX motivation was not a significant predictor of general blame behavior in front of an audience of superiors. In terms of situation-specific blame behavior, LMX motivation was not a significant predictor for both types of audiences. See Table 4.15 for the regression models of LMX motivation predicting blame behavior and Table 4.17 for a summary of significant and non-significant findings related to LMX motivation and blame behavior. For all types of credit behaviors for both audiences, coefficients for credit behavior were not significant.

Table 4.15 LMX Motivation Predicting Blame Behaviors: Regression Models

	Criterion: Blame Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
LMX Motivation	0.14*	0.04	0.03	0.04
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.03	-0.05	-0.12	-0.07
Age	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.17
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.03	-0.05	-0.004	0.03
Role Tenure	0.01	0.06	-0.02	-0.13
Job Insecurity	-0.002	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04
Constant	4.44**	4.50**	4.30**	4.35**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02
Adjusted R ²	-0.003	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.94	1.07	1.20	1.27
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	0.90	0.53	0.44	0.71

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

See Table 4.16 for the regression models of LMX motivation predicting credit behavior and Table 4.17 for a summary of findings related to effective leader ILT and credit behaviors.

Table 4.16 LMX Motivation Predicting Credit Behaviors: Regression Models

Audience Type:	Criterion: Credit Behavior			
	General Behaviors		Situation-specific Behaviors	
	Subordinates	Superiors	Subordinates	Superiors
LMX Motivation	0.08	0.03	0.12+	0.13+
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.14*
Age	-0.08	-0.10	-0.14+	-0.07
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.04	0.02	-0.09	-0.02
Role Tenure	0.15*	0.17*	0.21*	0.12
Job Insecurity	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.04
Constant	3.68**	3.80**	3.62**	3.79**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.06
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.02
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.89	0.85	0.99	0.93
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	1.29	1.17	2.30*	1.78

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.17 LMX Motivation Predicting Blame and Credit Behaviors: Summary of Findings

	Audience Type	
	Subordinate	Superior
Blame Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>p</i> = .04	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
Credit Behaviors		
<u>General</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>
<u>Situation-specific</u>		
Shift toward self	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>n.s.</i>

Thus, Hypothesis 4a was supported only for general blame behavior in front of an audience of subordinates, but neither for an audience of superiors nor for situation-specific blame. Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

Organizational culture. I conducted a series of regressions to examine whether the relationships from the four different motives to blame and credit behaviors are moderated by organizational culture. The individualistic or collectivistic nature of the organizational culture appeared to shape some of the relationships between narcissism, impression motivation, and implicit beliefs and blame or credit behaviors, although not always in the predicted direction. For the regression models of each motive and their interaction with organizational culture predicting blame and credit behaviors in front of each audience type, see Tables 4.18 – 4.33.

For an audience of subordinates, managers who were more narcissistic tended to take more general credit in a more collectivistic organizational culture than in an individualistic culture. The coefficient for the interaction between narcissism and organizational culture was marginally significant, $b = 0.75$, $p = .05$. This marginally significant result ran counter to Hypothesis 5a. See Figure 4.1 for the interaction plot, and see Table 4.20 for the corresponding regression model. Other than this significant interaction term, for all other blame and credit behaviors and audience types, the coefficients for the interaction between narcissism and organizational culture were not significant. Specifically, the coefficients of the interaction between narcissism and organizational culture predicting the following behaviors were not significant at the $p < .05$ level: general credit behaviors for an audience of superiors, situation-specific credit behaviors for both audiences, and all types of blame behaviors in front of either audience. Thus, these results do not provide support for Hypothesis 5a. The regression models

for narcissism and organizational culture predicting all other blame and credit behaviors are displayed in Tables 4.18, 4.19, and 4.21.

Table 4.18 Narcissism and Organizational Culture Predicting General Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Narcissism	-0.43	-0.43	-0.54	-0.54
Organizational Culture	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.05
Narcissism × Organizational Culture		-0.07		-0.22
Constant	4.43**	4.43**	4.51**	4.51**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R ²	0.001	-0.004	0.0002	-0.004
Residual Std. Error	0.93 (df = 191)	0.93 (df = 190)	1.06 (df = 191)	1.06 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.11 (df = 2, 191)	0.75 (df = 3, 190)	1.02 (df =2, 191)	0.75 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.19 Narcissism and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Narcissism	-1.44**	-1.44**	-1.64**	-1.64**
Organizational Culture	0.17+	0.16+	0.20+	0.19+
Narcissism × Organizational Culture		0.26		0.32
Constant	4.31**	4.31**	4.35**	4.35**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.08
Adjusted R ²	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.07
Residual Std. Error	1.15 (df = 191)	1.15 (df = 190)	1.22 (df = 191)	1.22 (df = 190)
F Statistic	7.28** (df = 2, 191)	4.92** (df = 3, 190)	8.44** (df = 2, 191)	5.72** (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.20 Narcissism and Organizational Culture Predicting General Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Narcissism	0.48	0.47	0.76*	0.75*
Organizational Culture	0.14+	0.11	-0.006	-0.02
Narcissism × Organizational Culture		0.75+		0.38
Constant	3.67**	3.67**	3.80**	3.80**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02
Residual Std. Error	0.87 (df = 191)	0.87 (df = 190)	0.84 (df = 191)	0.84 (df = 190)
F Statistic	2.66+ (df = 2, 191)	3.05* (df = 3, 190)	2.82+ (df = 2, 191)	2.22+ (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

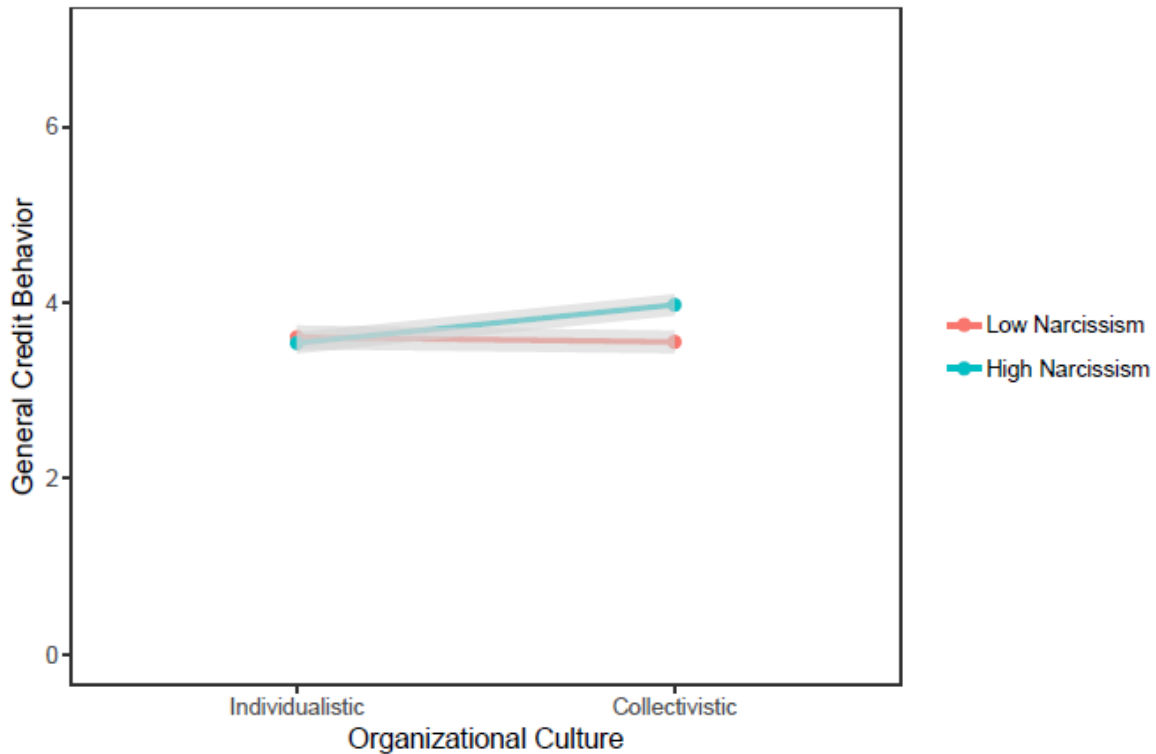


Figure 4.1. Interaction between Narcissism and Organizational Culture on General Credit Behavior for an Audience of Subordinates (*Note:* Lower values on the Credit Behavior scale indicate credit-giving behavior, and higher values indicate credit-taking behavior.)

Table 4.21 Narcissism and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Narcissism	0.94*	0.94*	0.78*	0.78*
Organizational Culture	0.07	0.07	-0.004	-0.01
Narcissism × Organizational Culture		0.09		0.11
Constant	3.62**	3.62**	3.79**	3.79**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
Residual Std. Error	0.99 (df = 191)	0.99 (df = 190)	0.93 (df = 191)	0.93 (df = 190)
F Statistic	3.37* (df = 2, 191)	2.25+ (df = 3, 190)	2.43+ (df = 2, 191)	1.64 (df = 3, 190)

Note: + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Similarly, for an audience of subordinates, managers who scored higher on impression motivation took more situation-specific credit in a more collectivistic organizational culture than in an individualistic culture. The coefficient for the interaction between impression motivation and organizational culture was significant, $b = 0.30$, $p = .01$. See Figure 4.2 for the interaction plot, and see Table 4.25 for the corresponding regression model. This result ran counter to the prediction made in Hypothesis 5a. For all other blame and credit behaviors and audience types, the coefficients for the interaction between impression motivation and organizational culture were not significant. Specifically, the coefficients of the interaction between impression motivation and organizational culture predicting the following behaviors were not significant at the $p < .05$ level: situation-specific credit behaviors for an audience of superiors, general credit behaviors for both audiences, and all blame behaviors in front of all audience types. Thus, these results do not provide support for Hypothesis 5a. The regression models for impression motivation and organizational culture predicting all other blame and credit behaviors are displayed in Tables 4.22 – 4.24.

Table 4.22 Impression Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting General Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Impression Motivation	0.24*	0.27*	0.22+	0.26*
Organizational Culture	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.002
Impression Motivation × Organizational Culture		0.09		0.15
Constant	4.43**	4.42**	4.51**	4.49**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
Residual Std. Error	0.92 (df = 191)	0.92 (df = 190)	1.05 (df = 191)	1.05 (df = 190)
F Statistic	3.30* (df = 2, 191)	2.44+ (df = 3, 190)	1.92 (df = 2, 191)	1.75 (df = 3, 190)

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.23 Impression Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Impression Motivation	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.03
Organizational Culture	0.18+	0.17+	0.21+	0.21+
Impression Motivation × Organizational Culture		0.09		-0.09
Constant	4.31**	4.30**	4.35**	4.36**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.005	0.01	0.01
Residual Std. Error	1.18 (df = 191)	1.18 (df = 190)	1.26 (df = 191)	1.26 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.81 (df = 2, 191)	1.33 (df = 3, 190)	2.12 (df = 2, 191)	1.52 (df = 3, 190)

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.24 Impression Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting General Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Impression Motivation	-0.03	-0.007	0.09	0.13
Organizational Culture	0.14+	0.13+	-0.03	-0.03
Impression Motivation × Organizational Culture		0.07		0.11
Constant	3.67**	3.66**	3.79**	3.78**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.020	0.02	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R ²	0.010	0.004	-0.01	-0.004
Residual Std. Error	0.88 (df = 191)	0.88 (df = 190)	0.85 (df = 191)	0.85 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.66 (df = 2, 191)	1.26 (df = 3, 190)	0.50 (df = 2, 191)	0.74 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.25 Impression Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Impression Motivation	0.07	0.17	0.15	0.21
Organizational Culture	0.05	0.03	-0.03	-0.05
Impression Motivation × Organizational Culture		0.30*		0.18
Constant	3.62**	3.59**	3.79**	3.77**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.03
Adjusted R ²	-0.01	0.02	0.001	0.01
Residual Std. Error	1.00 (df = 191)	0.99 (df = 190)	0.94 (df = 191)	0.93 (df = 190)
F Statistic	0.48 (df = 2, 191)	2.46* (df = 3, 190)	1.09 (df = 2, 191)	1.61 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

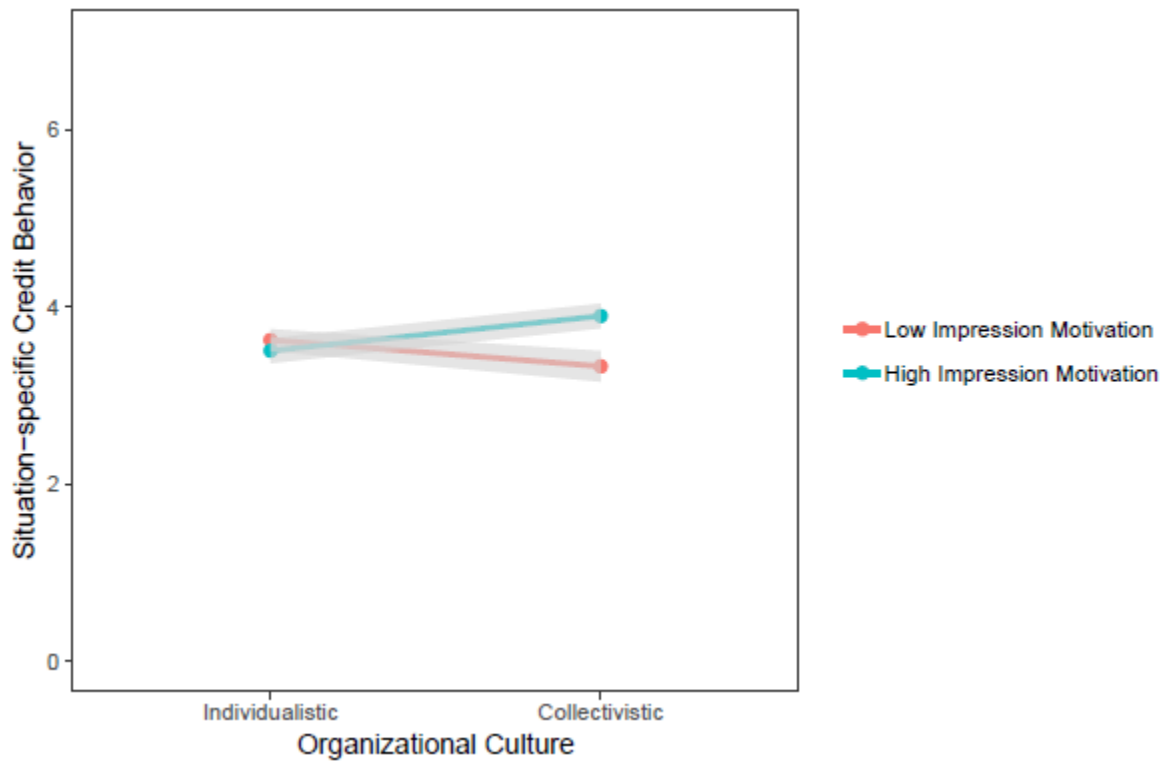


Figure 4.2. Interaction between Impression Motivation and Organizational Culture on Situation-specific Credit Behavior for an Audience of Subordinates. (Note: Lower values on the Credit Behavior scale indicate credit-giving behavior, and higher values indicate credit-taking behavior.)

Furthermore, for an audience of subordinates, managers who scored lower on the implicit beliefs measure about leadership took more situation-specific blame in a more collectivistic organizational culture than in an individualistic one. The coefficient for the interaction between implicit beliefs and organizational culture was significant, $b = -0.52, p = .03$. The same pattern was detected for an audience of superiors, and the coefficient for the interaction was significant, $b = -0.53, p = .04$. See Figures 4.3 and 4.4 for the interaction plots, and see Table 4.27 for the corresponding regression models. These findings provide support for Hypothesis 5b with respect to situation-specific blame behavior.

Table 4.26 Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture Predicting General Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Effective Leader ILT	0.10	0.08	0.22	0.21
Organizational Culture	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.03
Effective Leader ILT × Organizational Culture		-0.22		-0.04
Constant	4.43**	4.44**	4.51**	4.51**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R ²	-0.004	-0.002	-0.001	-0.006
Residual Std. Error	0.93 (df = 191)	0.93 (df = 190)	1.06 (df = 191)	1.06 (df = 190)
F Statistic	0.58 (df = 2, 191)	0.85 (df = 3, 190)	0.89 (df = 2, 191)	0.60 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

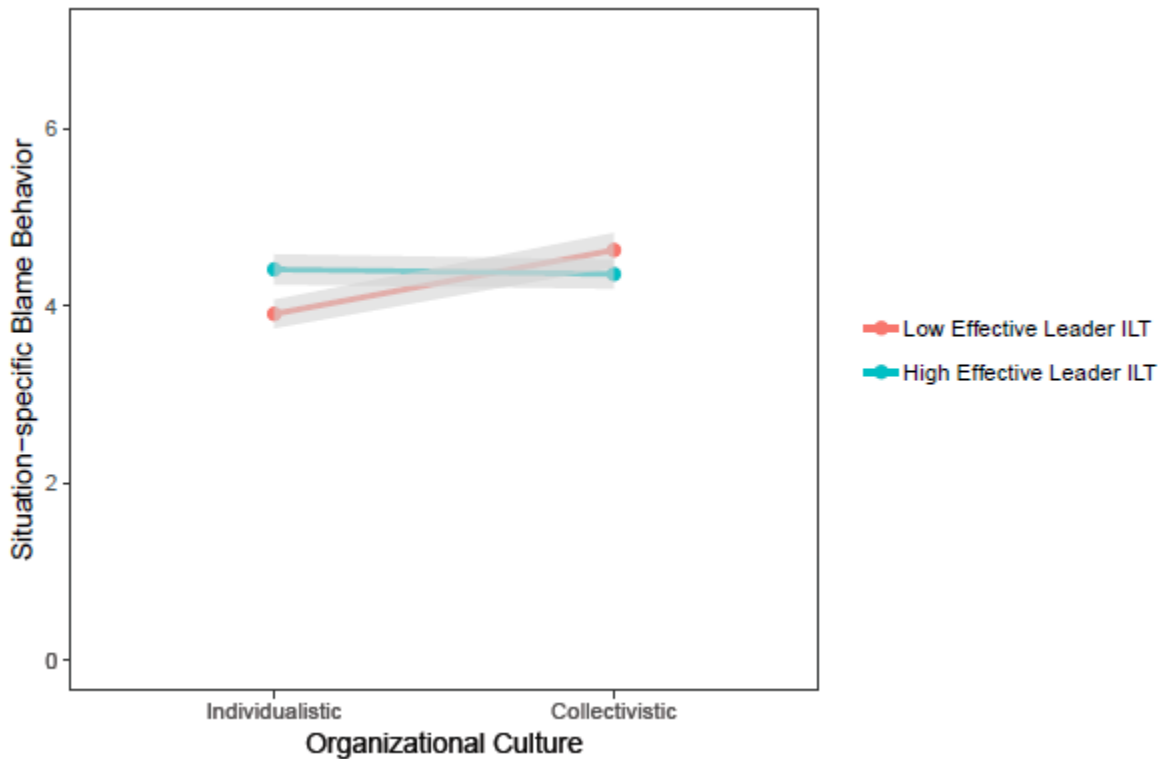


Figure 4.3. Interaction between Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture on Situation-specific Blame Behavior for an Audience of Subordinates. (Note: Lower values on the Blame Behavior scale indicate blame-giving behavior, and higher values indicate blame-taking behavior.)

Table 4.27 Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Effective Leader ILT	0.19	0.13	0.18	0.12
Organizational Culture	0.18+	0.20+	0.20+	0.23*
Effective Leader ILT × Organizational Culture		-0.52*		-0.53*
Constant	4.31**	4.33**	4.35**	4.37**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.05
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.03
Residual Std. Error	1.18 (df = 191)	1.17 (df = 190)	1.26 (df = 191)	1.24 (df = 190)
F Statistic	2.22 (df = 2, 191)	3.09* (df = 3, 190)	2.41+ (df = 2, 191)	3.11* (df = 3, 190)

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

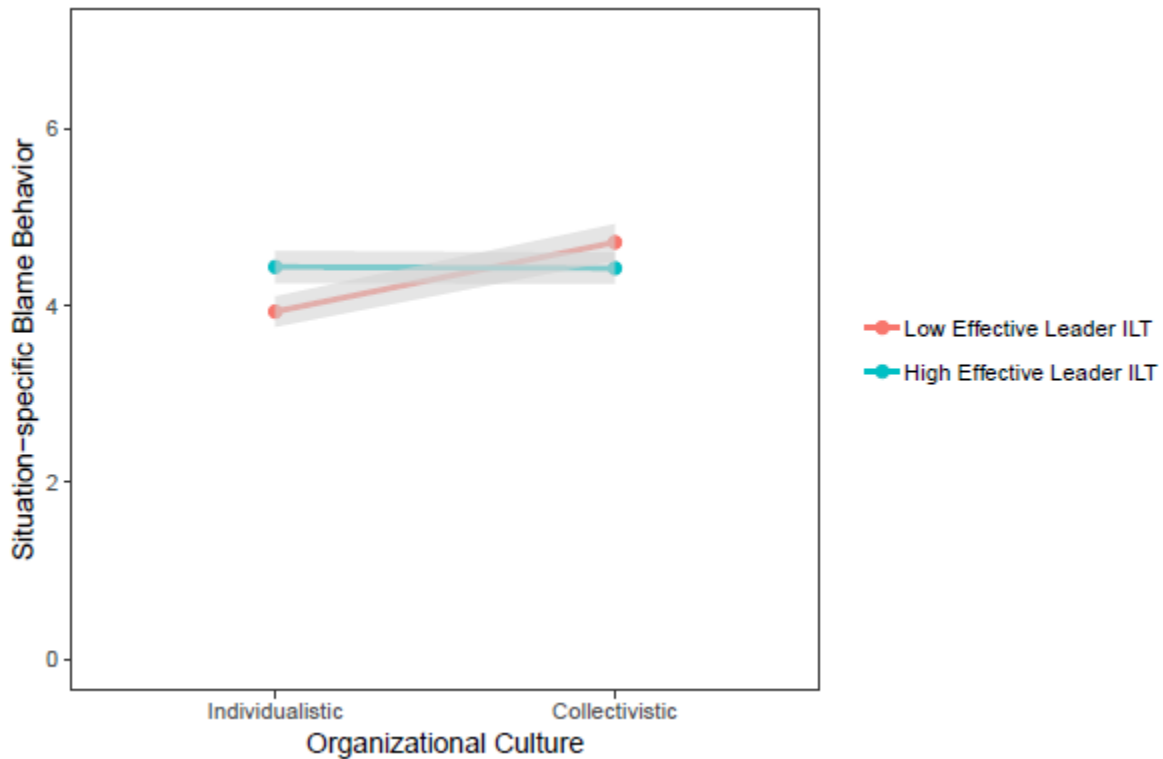


Figure 4.4. Interaction between Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture on Situation-specific Blame Behavior for an Audience of Superiors. (Note: Lower values on the Blame Behavior scale indicate blame-giving behavior, and higher values indicate blame-taking behavior.)

For an audience of subordinates, however, managers who scored lower on the implicit beliefs measure took more general credit in a more collectivistic organizational culture than in an individualistic culture. In this case, the coefficient for the interaction between implicit beliefs and organizational culture was significant, $b = -0.55$, $p = .002$, and this finding runs counter to Hypothesis 5b with respect to general credit behavior. See Figure 4.5 for the interaction plot, and see Table 4.28 for the corresponding regression model. For all other blame and credit behaviors and audience types, the coefficients for the interaction between implicit beliefs and organizational culture were not significant. Specifically, the coefficients of the interaction between an effective leader ILT and organizational culture predicting the following behaviors were not significant at the $p < .05$ level: general blame behaviors for both audiences, general credit behaviors for an audience of superiors, and situation-specific credit behaviors for both audience types. Thus, these results do not provide support for Hypothesis 5b. The regression models for implicit beliefs and organizational culture predicting the other blame and credit behaviors are displayed in Tables 4.26 and 4.29.

Table 4.28 Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture Predicting General Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Effective Leader ILT	-0.13	-0.19	-0.09	-0.12
Organizational Culture	0.14+	0.16*	-0.01	0.003
Effective Leader ILT × Organizational Culture		-0.55**		-0.26
Constant	3.67**	3.69**	3.79**	3.80**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.07	0.002	0.01
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.06	-0.01	-0.001
Residual Std. Error	0.88 (df = 191)	0.86 (df = 190)	0.85 (df = 191)	0.85 (df = 190)
F Statistic	2.00 (df = 2, 191)	4.73** (df = 3, 190)	0.22 (df = 2, 191)	0.93 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

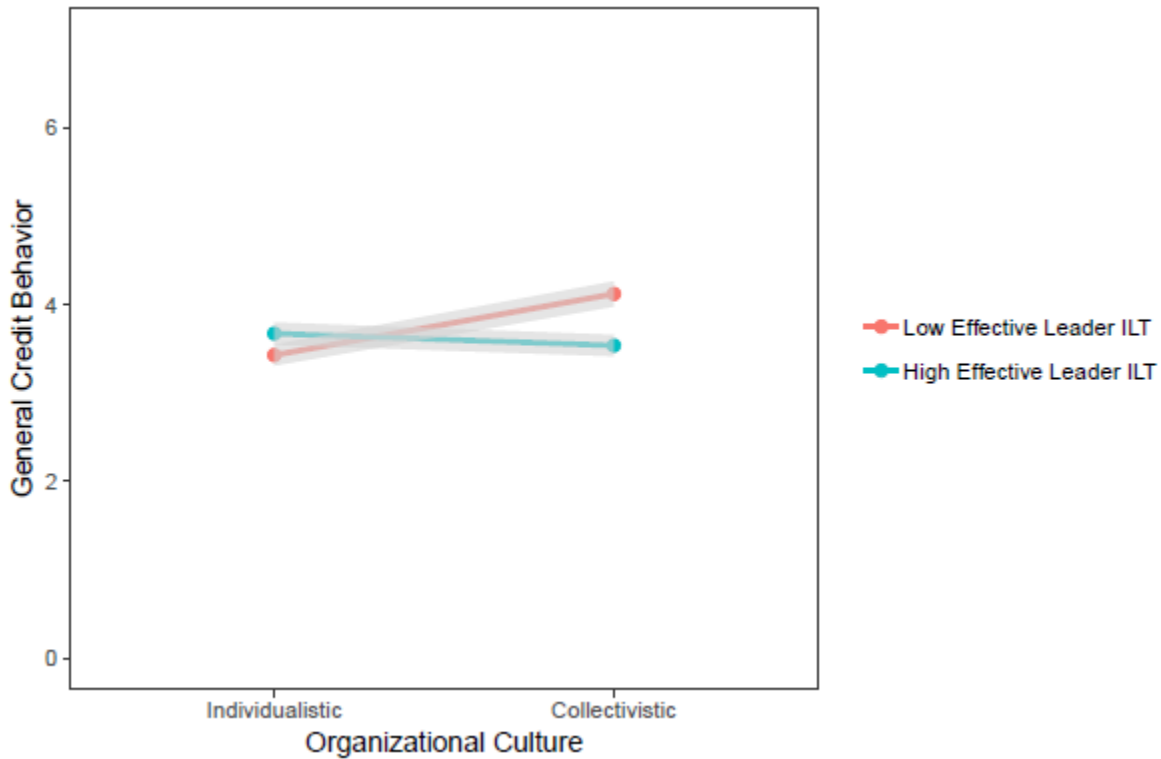


Figure 4.5. Interaction between Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture on General Credit Behavior for an Audience of Subordinates. (Note: Lower values on the Credit Behavior scale indicate credit-giving behavior, and higher values indicate credit-taking behavior.)

Table 4.29 Effective Leader ILT and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Effective Leader ILT	-0.27	-0.29+	-0.20	-0.20
Organizational Culture	0.08	0.08	0.0005	0.001
Effective Leader ILT × Organizational Culture		-0.15		-0.01
Constant	3.62**	3.62**	3.79**	3.79**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.004	-0.002	-0.01
Residual Std. Error	1.00 (df = 191)	1.00 (df = 190)	0.94 (df = 191)	0.94 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.60 (df = 2, 191)	1.24 (df = 3, 190)	0.83 (df = 2, 191)	0.55 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

No significant interaction effects of organizational culture on the relationship between LMX motivation and blame or credit behaviors were found in this data, for either type of audience, at the $p < .05$ level. The regression models for LMX motivation and organizational culture predicting the various blame and credit behaviors are displayed in Tables 4.30 – 4.33. Thus, there was no evidence to support Hypothesis 5b regarding LMX motivation.

Table 4.30 LMX Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting General Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
LMX Motivation	0.24*	0.24*	0.08	0.08
Organizational Culture	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04
LMX Motivation × Organizational Culture		-0.06		0.04
Constant	4.43**	4.43**	4.51**	4.51**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.03	0.03	0.003	0.003
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Residual Std. Error	0.92 (df = 191)	0.93 (df = 190)	1.06 (df = 191)	1.06 (df = 190)
F Statistic	2.41+ (df = 2, 191)	1.64 (df = 3, 190)	0.30 (df = 2, 191)	0.22 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 4.31 LMX Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Blame Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Blame Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
LMX Motivation	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.08
Organizational Culture	0.18+	0.19+	0.21+	0.22*
LMX Motivation × Organizational Culture		-0.03		-0.19
Constant	4.31**	4.31**	4.35**	4.36**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.002	0.01	0.01
Residual Std. Error	1.18 (df = 191)	1.18 (df = 190)	1.26 (df = 191)	1.26 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.73 (df = 2, 191)	1.16 (df = 3, 190)	2.10 (df = 2, 191)	1.70 (df = 3, 190)

Note:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 4.32 LMX Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting General Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: General Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
LMX Motivation	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.03
Organizational Culture	0.13+	0.13+	-0.02	-0.01
LMX Motivation × Organizational Culture		-0.13		-0.02
Constant	3.67**	3.67**	3.79**	3.80**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.02	0.02	0.001	0.001
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.02
Residual Std. Error	0.88 (df = 191)	0.88 (df = 190)	0.85 (df = 191)	0.86 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.86 (df = 2, 191)	1.53 (df = 3, 190)	0.05 (df = 2, 191)	0.04 (df = 3, 190)

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 4.33 LMX Motivation and Organizational Culture Predicting Situation-specific Credit Behavior: Regression Models

	Criterion: Situation-specific Credit Behavior			
	Audience: Subordinates		Audience: Superiors	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
LMX Motivation	0.17	0.16	0.20+	0.19
Organizational Culture	0.05	0.04	-0.03	-0.03
LMX Motivation × Organizational Culture		0.08		0.14
Constant	3.62**	3.61**	3.79**	3.78**
Observations	194	194	194	194
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Adjusted R ²	0.001	-0.002	0.004	0.004
Residual Std. Error	1.00 (df = 191)	1.00 (df = 190)	0.94 (df = 191)	0.94 (df = 190)
F Statistic	1.14 (df = 2, 191)	0.85 (df = 3, 190)	1.43 (df = 2, 191)	1.23 (df = 3, 190)

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Subordinate organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Leaders completed measures indicating their perceptions of their subordinates' OCBs. Regression analyses reveal that a leader's blame behavior toward the self has a significant relationship with subordinate OCBs when controlling for gender, age, race, role tenure, and job insecurity. See Table 4.34 for the regression models of blame behaviors predicting subordinate OCBs.

Table 4.34 Blame Behavior Predicting Subordinate OCBs: Regression Models

	DV: Subordinate OCBs			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Audience: Subordinates				
General Blame	0.15*			
Situation-specific Blame		0.19**		
Audience: Superiors				
General Blame			0.17**	
Situation-specific Blame				0.21**
Gender (Female = 1)	0.13*	0.15*	0.14*	0.14*
Age	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.07
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	-0.07
Role Tenure	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.10
Job Insecurity	-0.26**	-0.25**	-0.26**	-0.25**
Constant	4.86**	4.86**	4.86**	4.86**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.14
Adjusted R ²	0.09	0.11	0.10	0.11
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.91	0.90	0.91	0.90
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	4.16**	4.75**	4.47**	5.05**

Note:

+p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01

Specifically, for an audience of subordinates, general blame behavior toward the self was a significant predictor of subordinate OCBs, $b = 0.15$, $p = .02$. For audience of subordinates, situation-specific blame-taking behavior was a significant predictor of subordinate OCBs, $b = 0.19$, $p = .004$. For audience of superiors, general blame behavior toward the self was a significant predictor of subordinate OCBs, $b = 0.17$, $p < .009$. For audience of superiors, situation-specific blame behavior toward the self was a significant predictor of subordinate OCBs, $b = 0.21$, $p = .002$.

In this study, credit behaviors, both general and situation-specific and toward either type of audience, did not explain subordinate OCBs, regardless of audience type. The coefficients of credit behaviors predicting subordinate OCBs were all not significant at the $p < .05$ level. See Table 4.35 for the regression models of credit behaviors predicting subordinate OCBs. Thus, there is support for Hypothesis 7a but not for Hypothesis 7b.

Table 4.35 Credit Behavior Predicting Subordinate OCBs: Regression Models

	Criterion: Subordinate OCBs			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Audience: Subordinates				
General Credit	0.07			
Situation-specific Credit		0.09		
Audience: Superiors				
General Credit			-0.02	
Situation-specific Credit				0.05
Gender (Female = 1)	0.14*	0.14*	0.13+	0.14*
Age	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03
Ethnicity (White = 1)	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06
Role Tenure	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.08
Job Insecurity	-0.26**	-0.26**	-0.26**	-0.26**
Constant	4.85**	4.86**	4.86**	4.86**
Observations	190	190	190	190
R ²	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Adjusted R ²	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Residual Std. Error (df = 183)	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92
F Statistic (df = 6; 183)	3.39**	3.50**	3.23**	3.28**

Note:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

4.2.3 Discussion. Taken together, these results provide mixed support for the main effects hypotheses proposed in this chapter. No effect was observed for the relationship between the implicit beliefs motive and blame or credit behaviors. While the implicit beliefs motive had

limited effects on blame and credit behaviors, the results demonstrate some evidence for the other three motives. With respect to the effects of these motives on leader blame or credit behavior, the effects varied with the type of audience (e.g., subordinate or superior) and the type of blame or credit behavior (e.g., behavior in general or behavior tied to a specific situation).

The findings regarding narcissism and impression motivation in the regression models that include all four motives as criterion variables indicate that narcissism (i.e., the ego-defensive motive) and impression motivation (i.e., the impression management motive) are strong drivers of blame behaviors in particular. These findings reinforce the link between the ego-defensive motive and blame-assigning behaviors in the predicted direction. In addition, the findings reinforce the (unexpected) link between the impression management motive and blame-taking behaviors, which ran counter to the blame-assigning predictions in the theoretical model.

Specifically, the results illustrate that a leader with an ego-defensive motive may be more likely to shift blame toward their subordinates in front of various audiences, which provides evidence for the predicted link between an ego-defensive motive and blame behaviors toward others. Although no significant effect was detected when examining credit behaviors, this may indicate that leaders motivated to defend their ego are more likely to shift blame away from themselves rather than take credit for successes.

The results of the regression analyses for each individual motive also provide evidence counter to the predictions regarding the impression management motive and blame behaviors. Namely, the data demonstrate that the more motivated a leader is to manage impressions, the more likely they may be to take blame instead of blame others after an unsuccessful outcome, regardless of whether the audience is comprised of subordinates or superiors. This is interesting given that the proposed theoretical model links the impression management motive to behaviors

that shift blame *away* from the self in order to maintain an image of being competent. It is possible that leaders may view blame-giving behaviors as *in*competent leader behaviors, and thus may view blame-taking behaviors as a way to portray themselves as a “good” leader in the stereotypical sense, similar to the implicit beliefs motive. However, with respect to credit behaviors, the data showed that an impression management motive may drive a leader to take credit after a successful outcome in front of an audience of superiors. This was not the case for an audience of subordinates. This evidence may indicate that after a successful outcome, leaders who are motivated to manage impressions may communicate differently to an audience of superiors than to an audience of subordinates. In front of superiors, taking credit may strengthen their image as a leader while not appearing as though credit is being taken *away* from subordinates. Conversely, in front of subordinates, the leader may refrain from taking credit, as they might realize that the subordinates have a more accurate understanding with respect to where credit is due.

Organizational culture. Moreover, in general, the results for organizational culture did not support Hypotheses 5a and 5b, which predicted that the individualistic or collectivistic nature of the organization’s culture would influence the relationship between motive and blame or credit behaviors. In most cases, the findings did not provide support for Hypothesis 5, and in some cases, the findings ran counter to Hypothesis 5. The main exception was that of a manager whose implicit beliefs about leadership did not match that of the culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory of outstanding leadership (Javidan et al., 2006). For these managers, when recalling a specific past situation and communicating to an audience of subordinates, they reported taking more blame when recalling on a specific situation in their past in an organizational culture that was more collectivistic than individualistic. This aligns with

Hypothesis 5b because managers who did not tend to share the widely endorsed beliefs regarding effective leadership and perceived their organizational context to be collectivistic took more blame than those who perceived their organizational context to be more individualistic.

However, with respect to credit, the results showed that these managers, whose implicit beliefs did not match the widely endorsed beliefs regarding effective leadership and perceived their organizational culture to be more collectivistic, took more general credit (i.e., not reflecting on a specific situation) than those who perceived a more individualistic organizational culture. Additionally, there was a lack of significant findings for the relationship building motive, and the results for the ego-defensive motive and impression management motive (operationalized by narcissism and impression motivation, respectively) were contrary to Hypothesis 5 as a whole. For leaders who were naturally inclined to be more ego-defensive (i.e., narcissistic) or more motivated to impression manage (i.e., impression motivation), working in a culture that was more collectivistic and group-focused did not appear to change their tendencies toward certain blame and credit behaviors. In fact, the findings reveal that being in a more collectivistic rather than individualistic organizational culture appeared to intensify credit-taking behaviors. The unusual findings that ran counter to Hypothesis 5 may be related to measurement errors and should be explored in future studies. A possible source of error may be tied to limitations in how leader behaviors and organizational culture were measured, because the leaders themselves completed the scales for leader behavior and organizational culture. Leaders may report enacting certain behaviors that they believe they enact in general or have enacted in specific situations, but their subordinates may report that their leader enacted slightly different behaviors. If measures of leader behavior and organizational culture were collected from multiple other sources, such as from subordinates, the data might be more accurate and less prone to bias.

Subordinate OCBs. The findings in Study 2 demonstrate that blame behaviors, and not credit behaviors, are more strongly linked to subordinate OCBs, as reported by leaders in this dataset. Thus, the findings provide support for Hypothesis 7a but not 7b. For both audiences of subordinates and superiors, a leader who shifts blame more toward themselves and less toward their subordinates may be more likely to observe subordinate OCBs. The results provide correlational evidence of a relationship between leader blame-taking behaviors and subordinate OCBs. Conversely, no relationships were observed between credit behaviors and subordinate OCBs for either type of audience, as reported by the leader participant. Therefore, it is possible that a leader's behaviors with respect to blame hold more weight compared to a her behaviors with respect to credit. For example, a subordinate may be more likely to engage in OCBs when their leader takes blame rather than when their leader gives them credit.

Limitations. The data in Study 2 are single source and self-reported: the measures of leader blame and credit behaviors as well as motives were taken from only one source – the leaders themselves. Because online Prolific Academic participants self-reported their blame and credit behaviors on the online questionnaire, a discrepancy might exist between their self-perceptions of their own blame and credit behaviors and their subordinates' perceptions of the leader's blame and credit behaviors. Leaders may report enacting certain behaviors that they believe they in general enact or have enacted in specific past situations, but their subordinates may report slightly different general and specific behaviors. Because the measures of motives and behaviors were self-reported, individuals may be biased in reporting their own blame and credit behaviors, whereas multi-source data may provide a more accurate measure of behaviors (e.g., subordinates reporting their leader's blame and credit behaviors). Future research should collect data from multiple sources, as reports of leader behavior from multiple subordinates

would provide a more accurate measure of the leader's behavior, which may not perfectly match to the leader's self-reported behavior. In addition, these participants self-reported the OCBs of their subordinates, which reflects their own perceptions of their subordinates' behaviors but may not reflect the actual behaviors or perceptions of the subordinates themselves.

Furthermore, the validity of the organization's emphasis on individualistic versus collectivistic values may, at first glance, seem weak because these measures were only taken from the participants themselves: they reported on their organization's culture, and the perceptions of organizational culture across other members in the organization were not measured. The perception of individualistic versus collectivistic values across the organization as a whole, however, may not be as important here. How a leader herself perceives the organization's cultural emphasis on individualistic or collectivistic values may matter more, because her perception is what directly influences blame and credit behaviors, not necessarily the general perception of organization culture across all members in the organization.

Lastly, the data and results collected in this study established certain correlational patterns but could not test for causal links from motives to blame and credit behaviors.

4.3 Study 3: Examining the Relationship between Motives and Blame Behaviors

The objective of Study 3 was to examine the hypothesized relationships regarding blame behaviors in a laboratory setting that enables randomization and precision of measurement. Study 3 tested the causal link from the four motives to blame (Hypotheses 1a – 4a) by conducting an experiment in which motive is manipulated. This study focused exclusively on diffuse failure and blame behaviors, and thus, all study participants perceived their performance on the experimental team task to be well below average (i.e., an unsuccessful outcome).

Study 3 was a between-subjects experimental design with five treatment conditions that varied motive (i.e., ego-defensive vs. impression management vs. implicit beliefs vs. relationship building motives) in addition to a control condition. It addresses the main effects from the four drivers to blame behaviors.

4.3.1 Methods.

Participants. I recruited 240 undergraduate lab participants through the Olin Research Subject Pool. The final sample consisted of $N = 191$ participants. The average age of the participants was 19.3 years, and the sample was 52% female and 64% white. I dropped 49 participants from the dataset who failed attention checks, failed manipulation checks, or who had previously done the Moon Survival Task (the first task, as described below). Attention and manipulation checks included questions that evaluated whether the participant had read and understood the instructions, including the motive information relayed during the task and the negative performance feedback on the Moon Survival Task. I removed the data of any participants who failed to select the correct responses to any of these questions (e.g., if a participant selected a motive condition that did not correspond to their randomly assigned motive, or if they reported that they had performed above average on the Moon Survival Task). In all, 49 participants failed at least one of these checks, and therefore they were excluded from the final sample.

The participants were told that they were randomly assigned to be the leader of a two-person team (i.e., dyad), and that their partner (i.e., subordinate) would interact with them from another room in the lab via a computer chat interface. This partner was a research assistant serving as a confederate, posing as a study participant. Each participant was randomly assigned to a treatment (four motive conditions or control condition). For their participation, students

received 0.5 course credits for participating in subject pool research, with the opportunity to earn a cash prize. All participants had an equal chance of winning the cash prize, and those who performed in the top 10% of all study participants received a prize of \$10.00 based on task performance.

Tasks. Participants were instructed to complete two tasks. The first task was completed once solo and a second time with their partner. The second task was completed once only and with their partner. The first task was a survival scenario task adapted for this study: the moon survival task (Hall & Watson, 1970; e.g., Bottger & Yetton, 1988; Ferrin & Dirks, 2003), in which participants must work together to prioritize a set of items necessary for survival. The second task was a brainstorming task, in which participants worked together with their partner to generate a list of uses for a brick. This brainstorming task is commonly used in creativity research as a dependent measure of creativity (Frick et al., 1959; Guilford, 1975).

Two tasks were used in this experiment, instead of one, in order to create a more realistic working environment. Individuals in organizations engage in repeated interactions under the assumption that their blame behaviors in one situation may influence their relationships and work dynamics over time. Therefore, informing the participants that they will work with the same individual on a second task following the first task provides stakes that are more realistic with respect to maintenance of working relationships and opportunities for repeated interaction as observed in organizational settings outside of the laboratory. More specifically, the two-task design increases the likelihood that a participant's blame behaviors following the first task may be more realistic in light of the fact that he or she will be interacting with their subordinate partner again soon.

In the moon survival task, individuals are presented with a scenario in which they are stranded on the moon with a set of items (e.g., water, compass, oxygen, rope) that may help them survive. The objective of the task is to rank order the items based on their importance for survival; to do so, the participants in each dyad must work together to determine which items are most important. I adapted the task so that only the leader of each dyad would be able to edit the list of items and submit the final solution (see Appendix D for details regarding the situation, the task, and the list of items). This task gave the leader (i.e., the study subject) the opportunity to problem solve, communicate, and analyze information with their subordinate (i.e., the confederate partner).

The moon survival task was selected because this type of exercise has been shown to be an effective method of studying group problem solving in previous research (e.g., Bottger & Yetton, 1988; Ferrin & Dirks, 2003). Those studies indicated that participants become highly involved in these types of tasks. To further encourage engagement, an additional monetary incentive was provided in the study. Because I wanted to manipulate the perception of performance (i.e., failure of the team's performance), the survival scenario task is useful because pre-determined negative feedback can be given to the participants to manipulate their perceptions of their dyad's performance on the task. I also wanted to manipulate reward structure in subsequent Study 4, so these tasks provide an opportunity for the dyad members to perform the task individually and as a team. In addition, regardless of what performance feedback the participants receive, the dyad's actual performance on the task can be measured objectively.

Procedure. All participants performed the same two tasks and underwent the same procedure, with the exception of the manipulation of the leader motive. Participants were told that they were the leader of their "team" (i.e., dyad), blind to the fact that the other dyad member

was actually a trained confederate. They were informed that they would work on two tasks with the same partner. Each dyad received the same amount of time to rank the items in the first task (6 minutes) and brainstorm uses for a brick in the second task (3 minutes). They were seated at a computer workstation, communicating through a custom-built web-based computer program (see Appendix D, Figure D1 for screenshot of the program) that allowed them to chat with each other and submit their solution to the tasks. I chose to use virtual communication via computer in order to reduce possible confounds that might occur, such as judgments of similarity, attractiveness, liking, and other nonverbal signals about their partner (Byrne, 1971; Frank, 1988). These could independently induce cooperative (or non-cooperative) behavior.

The participant received information about the potential to earn a cash prize of \$10.00, their role as a leader, the scoring system, and task instructions. They were also informed during the instructions and on the task page itself that success on the moon survival task was strongly tied to specific leader ability, which served as the motive manipulation (see *Manipulation of motives* section for more details, below). First, the participant was given 6 minutes to submit their own, individual rankings for the items in the moon survival task. Then, the participant and confederate had another 6 minutes to work together as a team on the moon survival task and then submit a shared ranking of the items. At this point, each participant was given feedback regarding their performance as a team that their performance was well below average (i.e., diffuse failure): “Based on your team rankings, you and your partner performed “**well below average**”.”

Next, the leader communicated his or her thoughts about their pair’s performance, based on the feedback received, to the other participant (i.e., the confederate) by selecting from a range of response options assessing who was to blame for the below average performance (i.e., blame

behaviors). These response options can be found in the *Measures – Leader blame behavior* section, as well as in Appendix D. Then, they answered three questions that they were told would be seen by the lab administrator (i.e., superior); they measured the extent to which the leader believed they were to blame for the poor performance. See *Measures – Leader blame behavior* for more details.

Next, the participants were told that they would work with the same person to complete another task – the brick uses brainstorming task. Each dyad was given 3 minutes to brainstorm as many non-redundant uses of a brick as possible. Finally, the participants completed a post-study questionnaire including manipulation checks, attention checks, and leader self-assessment. To complete the session, the lab administrator debriefed all participants regarding the existence of a confederate and the contrived performance feedback. Participants were then informed that an average score of their performances on the solo and team Moon Survival Task would be used to calculate their final score. If they achieved a score that fell within the top 10% of all study participants, they would receive an email with information about when and where to receive their \$10.00 cash prize (for more details, see *Participant compensation* section).

Perceived performance. Following the completion of the moon survival task, the participants were given feedback on their performance as a dyad. All participants were displayed the same message on the screen: “Based on your team rankings, you and your partner performed **“well below average”**.”

Manipulation of motives. The participant (i.e., the leader) was randomly shown one of four statements in order to activate one specific motive. The leader of the dyad was informed that success in the moon survival task is strongly tied to the leader’s ability to (1) think highly of himself or herself (*ego-defensive motive*); (2) shape the way they are seen by the lab

administrator (*impression management motive*); (3) act in ways that fit the stereotype of an ideal leader (*implicit beliefs motive*); or (4) develop strong relationships with their partner and earn their trust (*relationship building motive*). They were then instructed: “as the leader, you must do your best to act in a way that is consistent with a leader whose role requires him or her to [motive condition] as you complete the tasks in this study. In the control condition, no information was given regarding the successful behaviors of a leader.

Pilot test of the manipulation of motives. The wording of the manipulations was pilot tested prior to the lab study. The purpose of the pilot test was to test and confirm that the manipulations in the experimental study induced the desired motive and none of the other motives being tested. $N = 150$ subjects were recruited via the online research platform Prolific participated in an online survey, and three subjects were dropped due to failed attention checks. The participants were 53% female and 90% white. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four motive conditions. They first read about a specific type of leader, and then answered questions about how this particular type of leader might act in the workplace. The wording of these instructions changed based on the motive condition to which the participant was assigned. For example, participants in the ego-defensive motive condition saw the following text:

“Leaders often find themselves in situations where it is important that they think highly of themselves as leaders.

As you answer the questions in this survey, respond in a way that would be consistent with a leader who thinks highly of himself/herself as a leader. In other words, as you answer the questions in this survey, take the perspective of a leader whose role requires that he or she thinks highly of himself/herself.”

Next, the pilot test participants responded to six multiple-choice questions, indicating which one of four options most closely resembled how they would act or behave when taking the

perspective of a certain type of leader. Each one of the four options to the survey questions corresponded directly to each one of the four motives. An example of a question is:

- “When a goal is successfully reached by the team, the leader is most likely to:
- (a) Express that their leadership led to the successful outcome
 - (b) Hope that the successful outcome will boost their reputation with their supervisor
 - (c) Express that they believe the team effectively worked together and can achieve future successes
 - (d) Take time to individually let each employee know their contribution is valued”,

where (a) corresponded to the ego-defensive motive, (b) to the impression management motive, (c) to the implicit beliefs motive, and (d) to the relationship building motive.

I conducted one-way ANOVAs to compare the effect of the motive manipulation on the survey question responses for each of the four motive conditions. These ANOVA analyses tested if participants in a specific motive condition most often selected the corresponding behavioral response in the follow-up survey questions. This was based on a count of the number of responses that were congruent with motive condition, and counts were averaged across all participants within that condition. For example, I counted the number of times a participant in the relationship building condition most often selected the relationship building leader behaviors in the survey questions over the other three, non-relationship-building behaviors. Then, I found the average of this count across all participants in the relationship-building condition.

In addition to ANOVA analyses, I conducted a Tukey’s honest significance (HSD) multiple pairwise comparisons test to examine whether individuals in each condition most often selected items corresponding to that motive or another one of the four motives. For example, I conducted Tukey’s HSD test would check whether participants in the relationship building condition most often selected the relationship building items over the ego-defensive items (in addition to comparisons with the impression management items and the implicit beliefs items).

For each motive condition, there was a significant effect of motive condition on the participants' responses corresponding to their assigned motive at the $p < .01$ level. For the ego-defensive motive, there was a significant effect of the ego-defensive motive on whether or not participants selected the ego-defensive leader behavior versus the other three behaviors [$F(3, 144) = 20.23, p < .001$]. For the impression management motive, there was a significant effect of the impression management on whether or not participants selected the impression management behavior versus the other three behaviors [$F(3, 152) = 17.63, p < .001$]. For the implicit beliefs motive, there was a significant effect of the implicit beliefs motive on whether or not participants selected the implicit beliefs leader behavior versus the other three behaviors [$F(3, 132) = 56.77, p < .001$]. For the relationship building motive, there was a significant effect of the relationship building motive on whether or not participants selected the relationship building leader behavior versus the other three behaviors [$F(3, 144) = 69.47, p < .001$].

Taken together, the pilot test results indicated that the wording for each motive manipulation was effective in directing a participant to visualize and think like the type of leader who would be motivated to act in alignment with each of the four motives.

Scoring of moon survival task. Performance was evaluated based on the accuracy of the ranking of the twelve items in the moon survival task. For each item ranked, the number of ranks that each ranking differs from the corresponding correct ranking is calculated as a difference score. For example, if the participant ranks a map in first place and a first aid kit in second place, but the expert-assigned rankings are third place and seventh place correspondingly, the difference score calculated for these two items equals 7. Thus, a lower difference score indicates greater accuracy, or higher achievement. The achievement score is then assigned based on the difference score.

Participant compensation. Participants were told that their final score would be determined by two different scores: the *achievement score* and the *contribution score*. The achievement score was described above. Participants were also informed that their contribution score would be based on the lab administrator's evaluation of the extent to which they, the leader, contributed to the pair's success or failure. As the "supervisor" and "superior" figure, the lab administrator's evaluation was based on the participant's blame behavior as the leader (see "*Measures – Leader blame behavior*"), which was comprised of three items visible to the lab administrator regarding their dyad's (poor) performance on the task.

As a performance incentive, participants were informed that they would win a cash prize of \$10.00 if they achieved a score that fell within the top 10% of study participants, and that they would be contacted via email within two weeks of study completion if they earned this prize.

Participants were informed that their compensation would be based equivalently on two scores, the achievement score and the contribution score, in order to create a more realistic balance of their final score on both dimensions of motive objective: performance and image. The achievement score captures the *performance* aspect of completing the task and accounts for half of their possible high score. On the other hand, the contribution score captured the *image* aspect of completing the task as the dyad leader. A score that was based solely on task performance would not allow for any impression management or self-defense through the blame behavior. By equally balancing their composite score between achievement and contribution, participants would also be more balanced between the performance and image dimensions of motive objective, across all four motives.

During the study debriefing, however, I informed participants that only their achievement score (i.e., score corresponding to task performance) on the Moon Survival Task would be used

to calculate their final score, and compensation would be awarded accordingly based on the average of their solo and team performance on the Moon Survival Task.

Measures.

Manipulation checks. The effectiveness of the manipulations and comprehension of the study parameters was determined by having the participants complete a set of survey questions at the end of the lab session. To ensure that the participants understood that their performance was a failure, I asked each participant to select whether or not their team performed below or above average. The effectiveness of the motive manipulation was assessed by asking the participants to indicate which of four statements reflected what type of leader behavior was linked to success on the moon survival task. Another question determined whether participants understood that their total score was comprised of two types of scores, the achievement score and contribution score.

Leader blame behavior. Following the completion of the moon survival task, the leader saw a set of response options and was asked to select one of these messages to send to their partner in light of their below average performance on the task. The options were: (1) You are to blame for this outcome, (2) You are somewhat to blame for this outcome, (3) We are equally to blame for this outcome, (4) I am somewhat to blame for this outcome, and (5) I am to blame for this outcome (see Appendix D). The leader then selected one of these statements with the knowledge that their partner (i.e., the confederate) would see the message. The message was framed as a response or feedback to the other team member. This variable represented the blame observed by a subordinate audience.

Next, the leader responded to three items assessing their beliefs regarding who was to blame for the performance on the team task. These measures were framed as the extent to which the leader contributed to the pair's relative failure on the task on a 5-point Likert scale, and the

participant was told that the lab administrator would be able to view their responses to these items. These items were then viewed as communications to the lab administrator, who participants believed to be evaluating the them, as the leader participant, and assigning the *contribution* score, the level of their contributions to the pair’s overall achievement, or performance. See Appendix D for full items measuring these blame behaviors. Cronbach’s alpha for the three items measuring the participant’s beliefs regarding who was to blame was .84. This measure represented the blame observed by an audience of superiors, as it indicated the leader’s communication to the supervisor (i.e., superior) regarding their beliefs as to who was the blame for the team’s unsuccessful performance.

4.3.2 Results. Descriptive statistics and correlations between each of the measures are displayed in Table 4.36 and Table 4.37. For the blame that the study participants, as the leader, communicated to their subordinate, on a 5-point Likert scale, the average blame behavior was 3.64 (*SD* = 0.98). For the blame that the study participants, as the leader, communicated to their superior, on a 5-point Likert scale, the average blame behavior was 3.84 (*SD* = 0.66). Histograms showing the distribution of these two measures are depicted in Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7.

Table 4.36 Study 3 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	Age	Gender	Blame communicated to subordinate	Blame communicated to superior
Age	19.27	1.17	18.00	23.00				
Gender (Female = 1)	0.52	0.50	0	1	-0.07			
Blame communicated to subordinate	3.64	0.98	1	5	0.13+	0.01		
Blame communicated to superior	3.84	0.66	1	5	0.05	-0.15*	0.68*	$\alpha = .84$

Note: *N*=191. Blame measures were on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 4.37 Study 3 – Motive conditions: Means and SDs

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
<u>Blame communicated to subordinate</u>					
Ego-defensive motive	37	3.51	1.17	1.00	5.00
Impression management motive	33	3.55	1.09	1.00	5.00
Implicit beliefs motive	36	3.72	0.94	1.00	5.00
Relationship building motive	44	3.70	0.85	2.00	5.00
Control group	41	3.68	0.88	1.00	5.00
<u>Blame communicated to superior</u>					
Ego-defensive motive	37	3.72	0.93	1.00	5.00
Impression management motive	33	3.91	0.64	2.67	5.00
Implicit beliefs motive	36	3.93	0.56	2.67	5.00
Relationship building motive	44	3.78	0.66	2.00	5.00
Control group	41	3.89	0.46	2.67	5.00

Note: All blame behaviors were measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

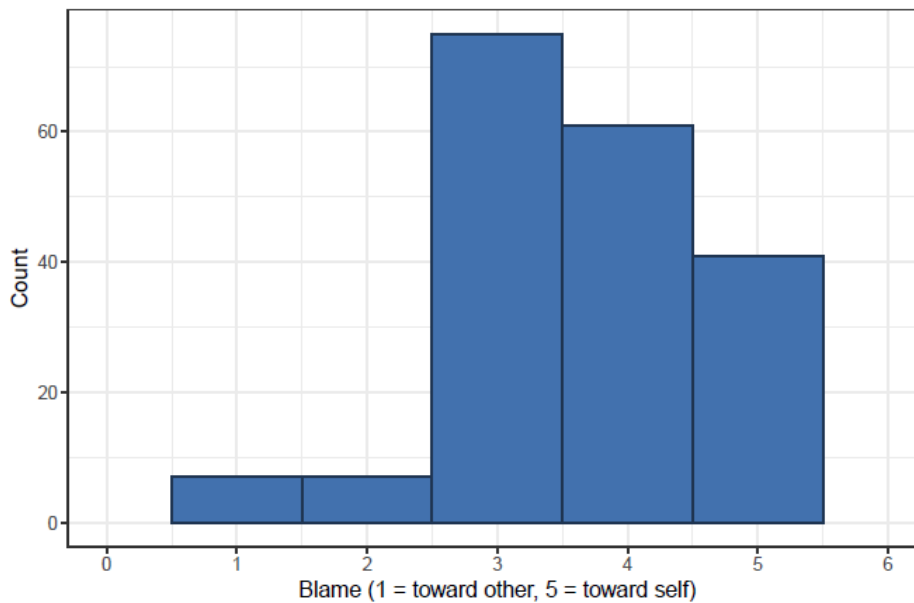


Figure 4.6. Study 3 – Distribution of Blame Communicated to Subordinate.

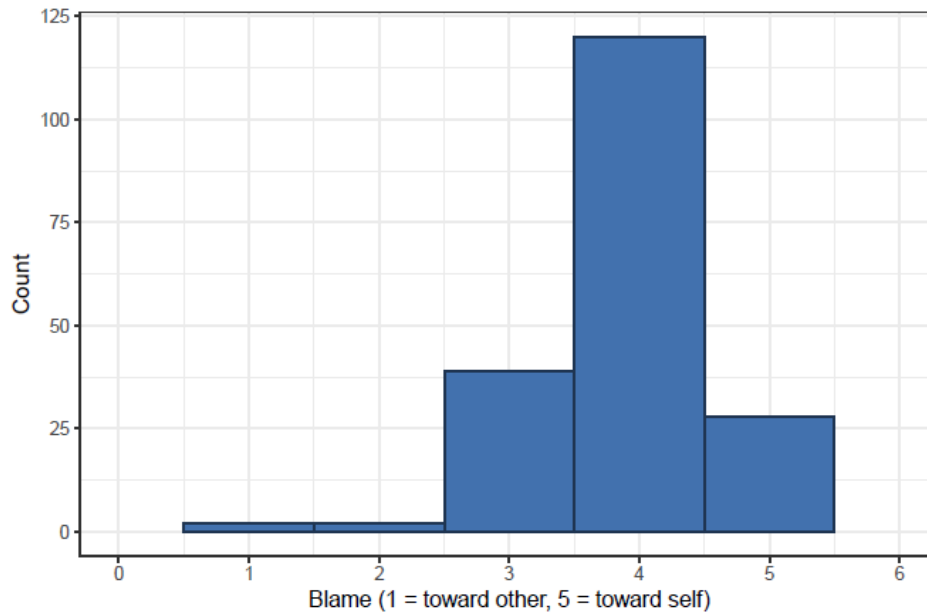


Figure 4.7. Study 3 – Distribution of Blame Communicated to Superior.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA compared the effect of leader motive on blame behavior in ego-defensive, impression management, implicit beliefs, and relationship building motive conditions, as well as the control condition. Two ANOVAs were conducted, one where the dependent variable was the blame observed by subordinate audience and a second where the dependent variable was the blame observed by an audience of superiors. There was no significant effect of motive condition on blame behavior, for blame behavior observed by either an audience of subordinates or an audience of superiors at the $p < .05$ level. For the blame observed for a subordinate audience, the effect of motive was not significant when comparing the blame communication across motive conditions, $F(4, 186) = .357, n.s.$ For the blame observed for a superior audience, the effect of motive was not significant when comparing the blame communication across motive conditions, $F(4, 186) = .671, n.s.$ Therefore, the data in this study do not support Hypotheses 1a – 4a. See Table 4.36 for means.

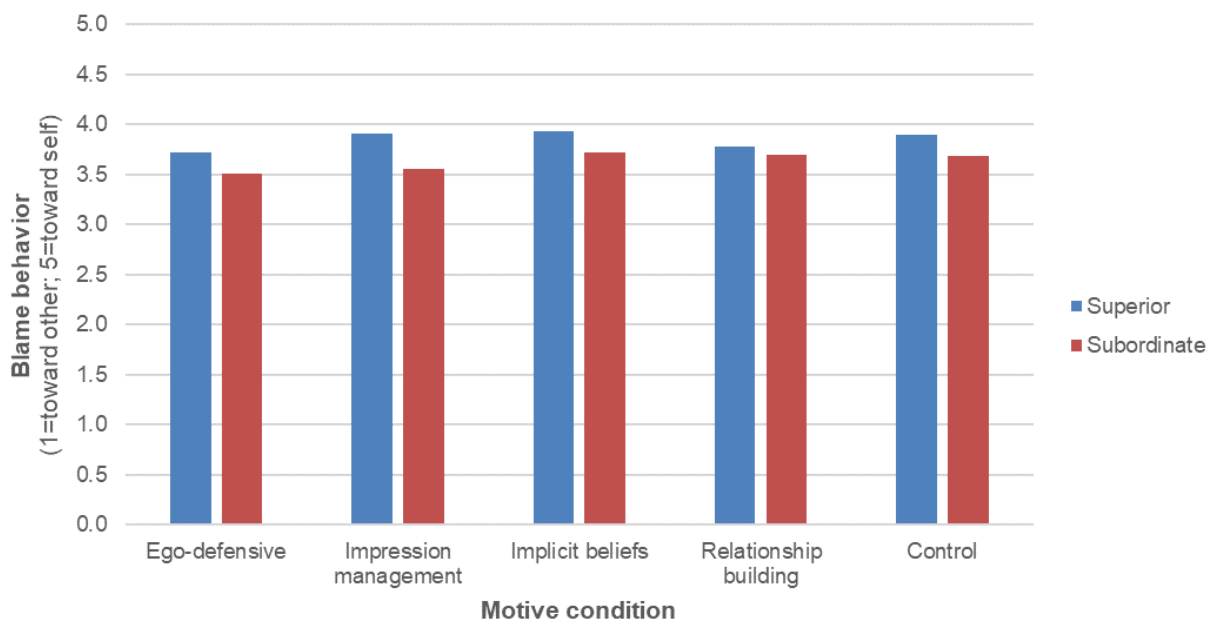


Figure 4.8. Study 3 – Average Response to Blame Items Sent to Superior versus Subordinate. (Note: Lower values on the Blame Behavior scale indicate blame-giving behavior, and higher values indicate blame-taking behavior.)

A one-way ANOVA examined whether there were any differences in blame behavior as a message sent to the partner (i.e., blame observed by a subordinate audience) versus the communication sent to the lab administrator (i.e., blame observed by an audience of superiors) in each motive condition. Within each of the four motive conditions, as well as in the control condition, there were no significant differences regarding the audience of the blame behavior, subordinate or superior at the $p < .05$ level, $F(9, 372) = 1.019, n.s.$ See Figure 4.8 for a chart comparing the average blame communicated to a subordinate compared to a superior.

4.3.3 Discussion. Findings from this experiment testing the link from the four motives to blame behaviors in a laboratory setting did not provide causal evidence for the hypothesized relationships. Similarly, compelling evidence was not found for differences between communications of blame with a superior versus a subordinate. The lack of significant findings in this study could be partially attributed to certain weaknesses in the study design. First, it is

possible that the effects of the manipulation were not strong enough or were dulled while participant worked on the moon survival task such that the effects disappeared during the time the participant progressed through the tasks in the study. By the time the participant was instructed to respond to the blame measures, they had worked on the moon survival task solo and then a second time with their partner, and the manipulation may have lost its effect.

Second, the study design may have been weak with respect to the extent to which the participants perceived their partner (i.e., the confederate posing as the follower) as having contributed enough to the task to warrant being blamed for an unsuccessful performance. The lab participants may not have perceived their follower to have much potential for blame because there was no clear opportunity for their follower to make a substantial contribution to the task solution. As a result, there may have been neither enough variance in the blame behavior measure nor a justified reason for some lab participants to feel as though the unsuccessful outcome was the confederate's fault.

Lastly, given the compact nature of the student subject pool, it may have been possible that word of the deception regarding performance on the Moon Survival Task (i.e., that all participants were told that they performed below average) leaked through the subject population. If this occurred, it may have comprised the manipulation and data.

4.4 Study 4: Examining the Effects of Motives and Reward Structures on Blame Behaviors

The objective of Study 4 was to examine the hypothesized relationships regarding blame behaviors in a laboratory setting, in addition to the effects of reward structures, which were not examined in Study 3. Study 4 focused specifically on the ego-defense motive and the implicit beliefs motive and their relationships with blame behavior (Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 3a). These two motives were selected for examination because they reflect opposite ends of the

motive objective but still have the same inward (instead of outward) direction. The ego-defensive motive objective is focused on image in an inward direction, while the implicit beliefs motive objective is focused on performance in an inward direction. These two motives are also of specific interest because they are linked to opposite predictions regarding blame behavior. Study 4 also tested the moderating effect of reward structure on the relationship from these two motives to blame (individual vs. shared rewards, Hypothesis 6a(i) and Hypothesis 6b(i)).

Thus, Study 4 was a between-subjects experimental study with a hanging control group design: a 2 (*motive*: ego-defensive motive vs. implicit beliefs motive) x 2 (*reward structure*: shared rewards vs. individual rewards) + 1 (control group) design. Like Study 3, Study 4 focused exclusively on diffuse failure and blame behaviors, and thus, participants perceived their performance on the experimental task to be well below average (i.e., a failure).

4.4.1 Methods.

Participants. I recruited 315 undergraduate lab participants through the Olin Research Subject Pool to participate in the study. Before analysis, 58 participants were dropped due to failed attention and manipulation checks, resulting in a total of $N = 257$. The average age of the participants was 19.26, and the sample was 50% female and 54% white.

A participant's data was dropped from the sample if the participant failed attention checks, failed manipulation checks, or had previously completed the Moon Survival Task. As in Study 3, attention and manipulation checks included questions that evaluated whether the participant had read and understood the instructions, including both the motive and reward information relayed during the task and the negative performance feedback on the Moon Survival Task. I removed the data of any participants who failed to select the correct responses to any of these questions (e.g., if a participant selected a motive condition that did not correspond to

their randomly assigned motive, or if they reported that they had performed above average on the Moon Survival Task). As a new addition in Study 4, participants were asked to reflect on their experience as a leader and specifically how what it meant to them to act in accordance with the motive condition to which they had been randomly assigned (see “Additional Instructions” section, below). Participants who reported that they had not acted or felt in a way consistent with their randomly assigned motive condition were considered manipulation check failures. Thus, 58 participants were excluded from the final sample ($N = 257$).

As in Study 3, the participants were told that they had been randomly assigned as the leader of a two-person team (i.e., dyad). Each participant was randomly assigned to a group – treatment (with randomly assigned motive condition and reward structure) or control (no motive condition and no reward structure specified). The students received 0.5 course credits for participating in subject pool research, with the opportunity to earn a cash prize. All participants had an equal chance of winning the cash prize, and those who performed in the top 10% of all study participants received a prize of \$10.00 based on task performance.

Procedure, scoring, and compensation. Study 4 was identical to Study 3 except for five key changes. These changes involved the number of motive manipulations, the inclusion of a reward structure manipulation, additional instructions for the study participant acting as the leader, and expanding the blame behavior measure. Each change is described in the following sections.

Manipulation of motives. In Study 4, there were only two motive manipulations instead of four, although a control condition was still included. As mentioned above, the two motive manipulations included the ego-defensive motive and the implicit beliefs motive. The implementation and wording of these manipulations remained exactly the same as in Study 3.

Manipulation of reward structure. Before the task begins, the participant read information about how the moon survival task would be scored. The manipulation of two reward structures, *individual* and *shared*, was derived from definitions accepted in the literature (e.g., see Rosenbaum et al., 1980). Participants were given different descriptions of reward structure, or the basis upon which their scores for the task were assessed, in the different conditions. Individuals in both conditions were told that their total score would be a composite of two different scores: an *achievement score* and a *contribution score*. The manipulation of reward structure directly affects only the *achievement score*.

Prior to starting the moon survival task, participants in the shared reward condition were told that their achievement score was based upon the *team's* performance in the moon survival task – their score was determined by the ranking of items that they, as the leader, and their partner determine together. Participants in the individual reward condition were told that their achievement score was determined by their *individual* performance on the moon survival task – their score was determined by the ranking that they determine on their own, and not with their partner. Of note, in the individual reward condition, participants' achievement score was not based on their performance relative to their partner because this would effectively pit the participant against their partner. If a purely competitive reward system was instituted, then under this type of reward structure, the participant would have no motivation to collaborate with their partner to submit a joint ranking of items.

Additional instructions. In Study 4, the study participant received two new instructions on top of the existing instructions in Study 3. These changes were added to the study design in order to address two potential weaknesses in the design of Study 3 – the dulling of the motive manipulation over time and the lack of meaningful contribution on part of the subject's partner

(i.e., the confederate). First, when the participant began working on the moon survival task with their partner, they were given additional instructions to ask their partner (i.e., the confederate “subordinate” partner) to send them an initial draft of the item rankings. These instructions were added to Study 4 in order to increase the likelihood and potential for blame to be allocated to the partner in addition to (or instead of) oneself. This study also included these new instructions in order to increase the participant’s feeling that they are the leader in the situation, by delegating a task to their follower. The new wording included in Study 4 was as follows:

“As the leader of the team, please use the chat window to instruct your partner to work on and send you a draft of the list of items ranked from most important to least important.

If you approve of their work, you can arrange the items in the proposed order and submit the list. If you believe certain changes need to be made, please make suggestions and chat with your partner about them until you are satisfied.”

In response to the study participant requesting this initial draft, the research assistant posing as the participant’s partner then sent a pre-determined ranking of the fifteen items to the participant. The same ranking of items was sent to every study participant, with the more obviously important and not important items placed accordingly in the list, as follows: “oxygen, 20 L water, food concentrate, 50 ft of nylon rope, signal flares, dehydrated milk, stellar map, portable heating unit, parachute silk, first aid kit, the two pistols, FM receiver/transmitter, life raft, matches, compass.”

With respect to the second addition, for participants in the ego-defensive motive condition and the implicit beliefs motive condition, a new set of instructions and short reflection task was added. Immediately after the participant viewed their performance feedback on the moon survival task completed with their partner (i.e., “Based on your team rankings, you and your partner performed “well below average”), they were instructed to reflect on their experience

as a leader. Specifically, they were instructed: “Reflect back on the team task you just completed. In 3-4 sentences, what did it mean to you to act like a leader who [thinks highly of himself or herself / acts in ways that fit the stereotype of an ideal leader]?” They were then required to type a response of a minimum 200 characters into a text box. To detect whether the manipulation was getting “lost” over time during the study, I asked participants to reflect in this way in order to get a sense of what they were thinking or feeling based on their experience during the moon survival task and on the information they had previously read regarding leader behavior linked to success on the task. Participants who reported that they did not act or did not feel consistently with the motive condition to which they had been randomly assigned were dropped from the final sample.

Leader blame behavior. As in Study 3, following the completion of the moon survival task, the leader saw a set of response options and was asked to select one of these messages to send to their partner in light of their below average performance on the task. However, the response options were expanded from a 5-point Likert scale to a 7-point scale. The revised options were: (1) You are to blame for this outcome, (2) You are somewhat to blame for this outcome, (3) You are slightly to blame for this outcome, (4) We are equally to blame for this outcome, (5) I am slightly to blame for this outcome, (6) I am somewhat to blame for this outcome, and (7) I am to blame for this outcome (see Appendix D). The leader then selected one of these statements with the knowledge that their partner (i.e., the confederate) would see the message. The message was framed as a response or feedback to the other team member. This variable represented the blame observed by a subordinate audience.

As in Study 3, the leader also responded to three items assessing their beliefs regarding who was to blame for the performance on the team task. These measures were framed as the extent to which the leader contributed to the pair’s relative failure on the task, and the participant

was told that the lab administrator would be able to view their responses to these items. Again, this measure was expanded from a 5-point Likert scale to a 7-point Likert scale. See Appendix D for full items. Cronbach's alpha for the three items measuring the participant's beliefs regarding who was to blame was .80. This measure represented the blame observed by an audience of superiors, as it indicated the leader's communication to the superior regarding their beliefs as to who was the blame for the team's unsuccessful performance.

Measures. Regarding the post-lab survey items including manipulation checks, attention checks, and self-assessment, the exact same measures administered in Study 3 were administered in Study 4. One additional item was a comprehension (i.e., attention) check regarding reward structure, in which the participant was instructed to indicate if their moon survival task score was based on their team's performance, their individual performance, or an average of both tasks combined.

Participant compensation. As in Study 3, participants were told that their final score would be determined by two different scores: the *achievement score* and the *contribution score*. However, in Study 4, participants were told that their achievement score was based on the reward structure manipulation (shared rewards, individual rewards, or control – average of both individual and team tasks). A participant assigned to the shared reward structure condition was told they would be scored on the Moon Survival Task completed with a partner, while a participant assigned to the individual reward structure condition was told they would be scored based on their solo performance.

However, during the study debriefing, I informed participants that compensation would be awarded accordingly based on the average of their solo and team performance on the Moon

Survival Task. Participants performing in the top 10% of all participants in this study were rewarded \$10.00 in cash for their performance.

4.4.2 Results. Descriptive statistics and correlations between each of the measures are displayed in Table 4.38 and Table 4.39. For the blame that the study participants, as the leader, communicated to their subordinate, the average blame behavior was 5.08 ($SD = 1.31$) (on a 7-point Likert scale). For the blame that the study participants, as the leader, communicated to the superior, the average blame behavior was 5.19 ($SD = 0.91$). Histograms showing the distribution of these two measures are depicted in Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10.

Table 4.38 Study 4 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	Age	Gender	Motive	Reward structure	Blame communicated to subordinate	Blame communicated to superior
Age	19.34	1.05	18	22						
Gender (Female = 1)	0.50	0.50	0	1	-0.10					
Motive (ego-defensive = 0; implicit beliefs = 1)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	0.12+	-0.16*				
Reward structure (individual = 0; shared = 1)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	0.12+	0.09	0.00			
Blame communicated to subordinate	5.08	1.31	1.00	7.00	-0.01	-0.13+	0.24**	0.01		
Blame communicated to superior	5.19	0.91	1.00	7.00	0.1	-0.15*	0.22**	0.14+	0.73**	$\alpha = .80$

Note: $N=257$. Blame measures were on a 7-point Likert scale.

Table 4.39 Study 4 – Motive and Reward conditions: Means and SDs of Blame Communications

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
<u>Blame communicated to subordinate</u>					
Ego-defensive motive	97	4.78	1.36	1.00	7.00
Implicit beliefs motive	105	5.45	1.29	1.00	7.00
Individual reward structure	98	5.11	1.32	1.00	7.00
Shared reward structure	104	5.14	1.42	1.00	7.00
Control group	55	4.89	1.06	4.00	7.00
<u>Blame communicated to superior</u>					
Ego-defensive motive	97	5.03	0.98	1.00	7.00
Implicit beliefs motive	105	5.45	0.88	3.00	7.00
Individual reward structure	98	5.12	0.90	2.33	7.00
Shared reward structure	104	5.38	0.98	1.00	7.00
Control group	55	4.97	0.73	3.33	6.67

Note: All blame behaviors were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

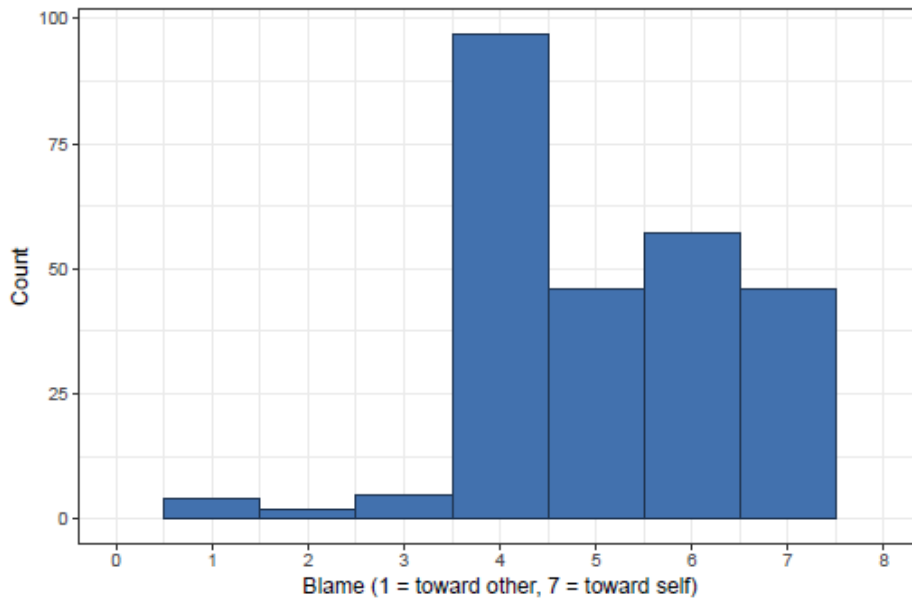


Figure 4.9. Study 4 – Distribution of Blame Communicated to Subordinate.

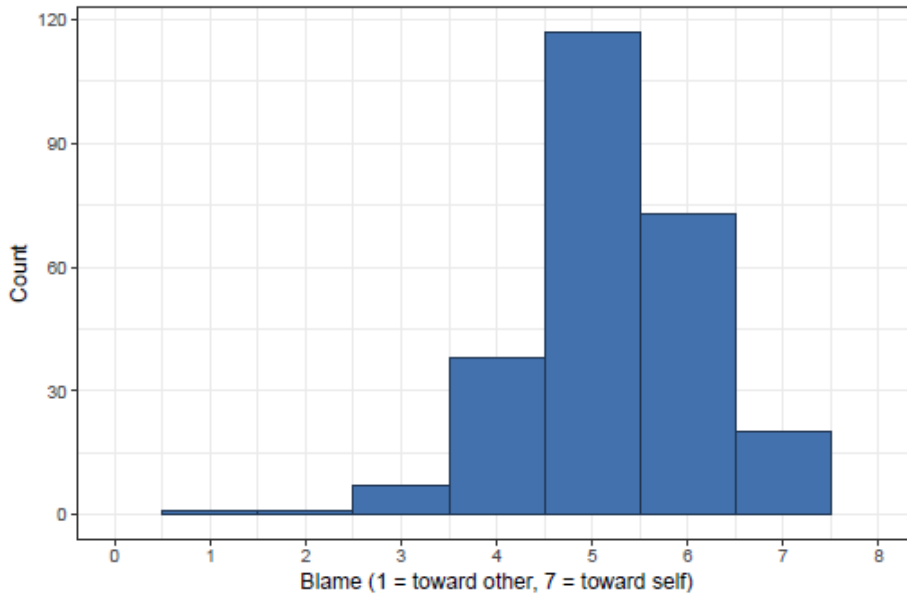


Figure 4.10. Study 4 – Distribution of Blame Communicated to Superior.

I considered whether participants internalized the motive manipulation or if they were simply responding in line with how they thought they should respond (i.e., an experimenter demand effect). If participants completed the measures due to cues about appropriate behavior, a

demand effect would lead participants in the ego-defensive motive condition to provide very low blame behavior scores (e.g., the extreme blame-giving end of the scale), but the mean blame behavior was above 4.5 out of 7.0, instead of closer to 2.0 (see Table 4.39). Additionally, participants in the implicit beliefs motive condition would provide very high blame behaviors scores (e.g., the extreme blame-taking end of the scale), but the mean blame behavior was below 5.5 out of 7.0, instead of closer to 6.0 (see Table 4.39). The results, therefore, are not consistent with an experimenter demand effect.

I computed ANOVAs to determine if there were differences in blame communications to both the subordinate and the superior across the 5 cells (ego-defensive motive/individual reward, ego-defensive motive/shared reward, implicit beliefs motive/individual reward, implicit beliefs motive/shared reward, and control condition), as well as an ANOVA comparing 4 cells (without the control condition). Both sets of analyses yielded the same results regarding the effects of the motive and reward manipulations, and therefore I chose to drop the control condition in subsequent analyses (see Table 4.39 for means of blame communicated to subordinate and superior in each condition, including the control group).

A two-way ANOVA (leaving out the control group) with an interaction was conducted to compare the effects of motive and reward structure on blame communicated to the *superior* in the ego-defensive motive and implicit beliefs motive conditions, as well as the individual reward structure and shared reward structure conditions. See Figure 4.11 for boxplot comparisons of blame communicated to the superior across the four motive-reward conditions. A main effect of motive was found for blame message sent to the superior, $F(1, 198) = 10.779, p = .001$. Participants in the ego-defensive motive condition ($M = 5.03, SD = .98$) took significantly less blame for the unsuccessful outcome on the Moon Survival Task than did participants in the

implicit beliefs motive condition ($M = 5.45, SD = .88$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 3a were both supported for blame behaviors communicated to a superior. A main effect of reward structure was also found for blame communicated to the superior, $F(1, 198) = 4.005, p = .047$. Participants in the individual reward condition ($M = 5.12, SD = .90$) took significantly less blame for the unsuccessful outcome on the Moon Survival Task than did participants in the shared reward condition ($M = 5.38, SD = .98$). See Table 4.39 for means in each motive condition and reward condition. The interaction effect of motive and reward structure on blame communicated to the subordinate was not significant at the $p < .05$ level, $F(1, 198) = .372, n.s.$

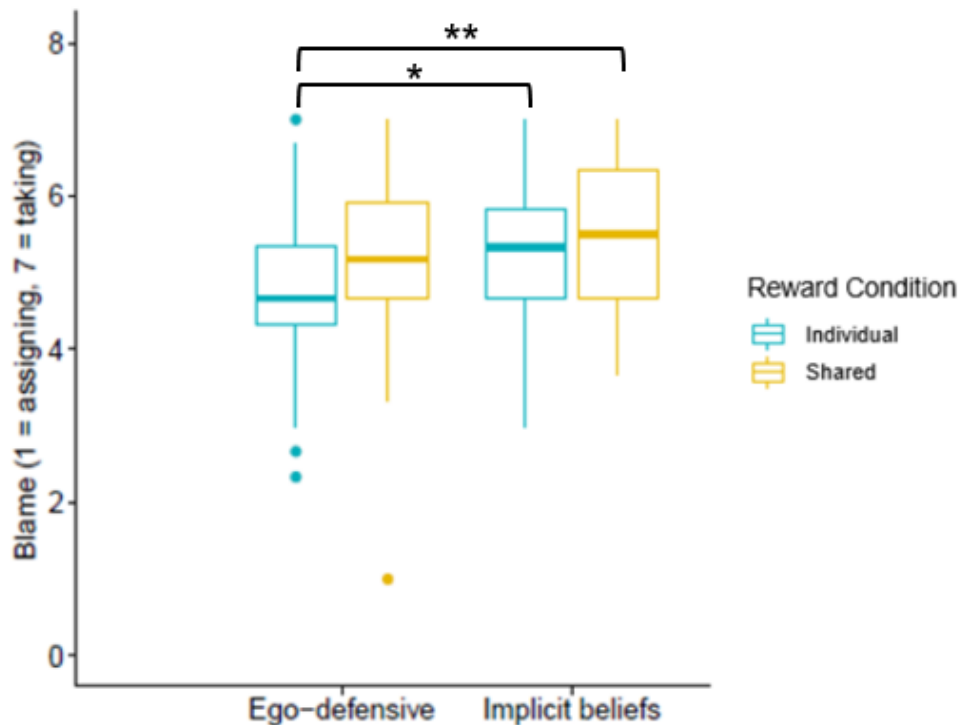


Figure 4.11. Study 4 – Boxplot Comparisons – Blame Communicated to Superior.

Because of the statistically significant results in this ANOVA, I computed a post hoc test. I selected the Tukey's honest significance (HSD) multiple pairwise comparisons test, which is

designed to compare each of the conditions to every other conditions. I conducted a Tukey’s HSD test to compare the ego-defensive motive and implicit beliefs motive conditions in addition to the individual reward and shared reward conditions. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey’s HSD test indicated that implicit beliefs participants in the shared reward condition took significantly more blame ($M = 5.54, SD = .96$) at the $p < .01$ level when communicating to the superior compared to ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition ($M = 4.85, SD = .96$).

		<u>Motive condition</u>	
		Ego-defensive motive	Implicit beliefs motive
<u>Reward condition</u>	Individual rewards	$M = 4.85, SD = 0.96$	$M = 5.36, SD = 0.78$
	Shared rewards	$M = 5.19, SD = 0.98$	$M = 5.54, SD = 0.96$

Figure 4.12. Study 4 – Blame Communicated to Superior – Means and SDs.

The post hoc comparisons test further indicated that implicit beliefs participants in the individual reward condition took significantly more blame ($M = 5.36, SD = .78$) at the $p < .05$ level when communicating to the superior compared to ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition ($M = 4.85, SD = .96$). The ego-defensive participants in the shared reward condition did not exhibit significantly different blame behaviors compared to all other participants (i.e., ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition, implicit beliefs

participants in either reward condition). In addition, the implicit beliefs participants did not exhibit significantly different blame behaviors across the two reward conditions. While there was minimal support for Hypotheses 6a(i) and 6b(i), there was support for some individual comparisons across cells in line with these predictions. See Figure 4.12 for each cell's mean and standard deviation for blame communicated to the superior.

Next, a two-way ANOVA with an interaction was computed to compare the effects of motive and reward structure on blame communicated to the subordinate in the ego-defensive motive and implicit beliefs motive conditions, as well as the individual reward and shared reward structure conditions. See Figure 4.13 for boxplot comparisons of blame communicated to the subordinate across the four motive-reward conditions. A main effect of motive was found for blame message sent to the subordinate, $F(1, 198) = 12.637, p < .001$. Participants in the ego-defensive motive condition ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.36$) took significantly less blame for the unsuccessful outcome on the Moon Survival Task than did participants in the implicit beliefs motive condition ($M = 5.45, SD = 1.29$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 3a were both supported for blame behaviors communicated to a subordinate. The main effect of reward structure on blame communicated to the subordinate was not significant at the $p < .05$ level, $F(1, 198) = .031, n.s$. Participants in the individual reward structure condition and participants in the shared reward structure condition did not differ significantly on the blame they communicated to their subordinate. See Table 4.39 for means in each motive condition and reward condition. The interaction effect of motive and reward structure on blame communicated to the subordinate was not significant at the $p < .05$ level, $F(1, 198) = 2.230, n.s$.

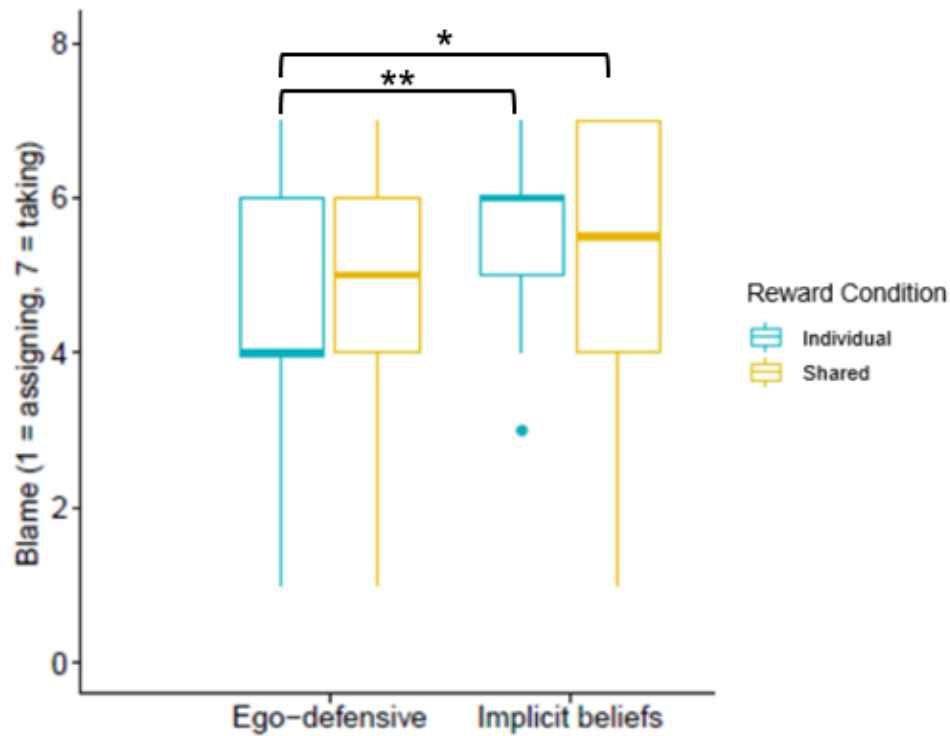


Figure 4.13. Study 4 – Boxplot Comparisons – Blame Communicated to Subordinate.

I conducted a Tukey’s HSD test to compare all conditions to every other condition. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey’s HSD test indicated that implicit beliefs participants in the shared reward condition took significantly more blame ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.45$) at the $p < .05$ level when communicating to the subordinate compared to ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.36$). The post hoc comparisons test further indicated that implicit beliefs participants in the individual reward condition took significantly more blame ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.10$) at the $p < .01$ level when communicating to the subordinate compared to ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.36$). Again, similar to communication to a superior, for communication to a subordinate, the ego-defensive participants in the shared reward condition did not exhibit significantly different blame behaviors compared

to all other participants (i.e., ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition, implicit beliefs participants in either reward condition) at the $p < .05$ level. In addition, the implicit beliefs participants did not exhibit significantly different blame behaviors across the two reward conditions at the $p < .05$ level. Again, while there was minimal support for Hypotheses 6a(i) and 6b(i), there was support for some individual comparisons across cells in line with these predictions. See Figure 4.14 for each cell's mean and standard deviation for blame communicated to the subordinate.

		<u>Motive condition</u>	
		Ego-defensive motive	Implicit beliefs motive
<u>Reward condition</u>	Individual rewards	$M = 4.62, SD = 1.36$	$M = 5.57, SD = 1.10$
	Shared rewards	$M = 4.94, SD = 1.36$	$M = 5.33, SD = 1.45$

Figure 4.14. Study 4 – Blame Communicated to Subordinate – Means and SDs.

4.4.3 Discussion. The results reveal that motive affects blame communicated to a subordinate and to a superior. Specifically, the results indicate that participants in the implicit beliefs motive condition took more blame when communicating to either subordinates or superiors than participants in the ego-defensive condition. With respect to blame communicated to either audience type, the results illustrate that both motive and reward structure have an effect

on the blame communicated. Specifically, ego-defensive participants in the individual reward condition took significantly less blame than participants in the implicit beliefs motive condition subject to either individual or shared reward structures. However, ego-defensive participants in the shared reward condition exhibited no significant differences in blame behavior communicated to a superior compared to all other participants, and that when examining all participants within the implicit beliefs motive condition, there was no difference in blame communicated to a superior when comparing between individual and shared reward structures.

Taken together, these findings show that the two motives examined in this study matter for blame behaviors in the direction predicted. Namely, people driven by the implicit beliefs motive tend to take more blame for an unsuccessful outcome than people driven by the ego-defensive motive. This pattern appeared for blame communicated to both a subordinate and a superior. Reward structure did not have a main effect on blame communicated to a subordinate, but there was a main effect of reward structure on blame communicated to a superior. When communicating blame to a superior, individuals in the shared reward condition took significantly more blame for the unsuccessful outcome than individuals in the individual reward condition. It is possible that individuals who were informed that their score on the task would be computed based on their team performance believed that as the leader of a team, they were accountable and thus shifted more blame toward themselves when their team fell short in the lab exercise. Conversely, perhaps participants who were informed that their score on the task would be dependent on their solo performance on the task were not as invested in the task because their partner's score would rest on their performance as a leader, and thus they refrained from taking as much blame for their performance in the lab exercise.

Envisioning the motive condition and reward structure conditions in a 2 x 2 design, the effect of the two conditions together was most powerful on the diagonal, where the motive is “congruent” with the reward structure. An individual with an ego-defensive motive in a context with an individual reward structure tends to shift blame away (i.e., assign more blame) compared to individuals with an implicit beliefs motive in a context with a shared reward structure. When looking at the opposite diagonal, in which the motive is incongruent with the reward structure (i.e., ego-defensive motive with a shared reward structure, and implicit beliefs motive with an individual reward structure), the differences seem to wash out and counteract each other. However, the ego-defensive motive appears to be particularly powerful, in that the effect lasts beyond reward condition. Individuals driven by an ego-defensive motive in an individual reward structure still assign more blame compared to individuals with an implicit beliefs motive in an individual reward structure. The differences observed in this study appear to be driven by the combination of an ego-defensive motive in a context with individual rewards.

As with any study, the findings are limited by the design of the experiment. One limitation with respect to the theoretical model is that this study examines two of the four motives proposed – the ego-defensive and implicit beliefs motive. While blame behaviors linked to these two motives appear to be significantly different in this sample, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the other two motives in the model – the impression management motive and the relationship building motive – because they were not examined here. In addition, the study was conducted in a sample of undergraduates in a laboratory setting. As with any study of this kind, the sterility of a laboratory environment and the nature of a student subject pool sample must be noted as limitations of the study’s overall ecological validity. This limitation itself may have contributed to the lack of a strong effect observed for reward structure. As participants,

students may not have been motivated enough by the \$10.00 cash prize, either due to \$10.00 as an insufficiently large prize or by the low probability of earning. All participants were informed that 320 students would be participating in the study (although only 315 were ultimately recruited), and that participants who performed in the top 10% of all participants would receive a \$10.00 cash prize, while the other 90% would receive no prize.

4.5 Key Takeaways

Taken together, results from the studies in this chapter indicate that the ego-defensive motive and the implicit beliefs motive have very different effects on leader blame behavior in particular. The ego-defensive motive is linked to behaviors that shift blame away from the leader, while the implicit beliefs motive is linked to behaviors that shift blame toward the leader.

4.5.1 Ego-defensive motive and blame-assignment. Together, the findings from a study of an online sample of managers and an experimental study demonstrate that an ego-defensive motive is strongly related to blame assignment. Leaders driven by the ego-defensive motive tend to assign more blame than take blame. Based on the data collected, I argue that this behavioral tendency persists in front of an audience of subordinates and an audience of superiors. This falls in line with the predictions and the literature indicating that individuals who are inclined to defend a positive self-image will shift blame away from rather than towards themselves (e.g., Ross, 1977). Although the laboratory study examined only blame behaviors and not credit behaviors, findings from the online sample of managers indicate that ego-preserving tendencies may be more apparent when it comes to blame than when it comes to credit, as no effect was observed for self-reported credit behaviors.

Perhaps it is the case that individuals are more likely to shift blame away for unsuccessful outcomes than shift credit towards themselves for successful outcomes, such that people perceive

blame, which typically has a negative connotation, as being more negative than they see credit as being positive. This is related to the notion in prospect theory that, with respect to a leader's reference point, the effect of a loss is much larger than that of a gain (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Loss aversion may partly explain the strong relationship between the ego-defensive motive and blame behaviors. That the link between the ego-defensive motive and blame behaviors towards others was observed across two studies (Study 2 and Study 4) demonstrates that the ego-defensive motive has a particularly powerful effect on blame behaviors. While no interaction between ego-defensive motive, operationalized by narcissism, and organizational culture was observed in Study 2, the contextual factor of individual reward structure in the lab study seemed to emphasize the difference in blame behaviors between ego-defensive individuals and individuals who are driven by implicit beliefs of an ideal leader. This shows that contextual factors do matter, as they may augment the link between motive and blame behavior, but that the strength of the motive may at times outweigh the influence of one's context.

4.5.2 Implicit beliefs and blame-taking. Furthermore, findings from Study 4 reveal that the implicit beliefs motive has a main effect on blame-taking behaviors, regardless of reward structure. There were negligible differences in blame behavior between the implicit beliefs motive participants in the individual versus shared reward conditions. However, in the online sample of managers, main effects were not observed between the implicit beliefs motive and blame behaviors. Yet, within this sample, individuals who scored low on the implicit beliefs measure of an ideal leader took more blame in the context of a collectivistic culture than in an individualistic culture, which may indicate that organizational culture is a strong contextual factor, perhaps stronger than reward structure, in shaping the link from the implicit beliefs motive to blame behaviors. Reward structure can be viewed as a signal of organizational culture;

for example, the existence of an individual reward structure in an organization is an aspect of the organization that signals a more individualistic culture. Organizational culture as a whole, with reward structure as one component, may have a deeper influence on the link between the implicit beliefs motive and blame behavior, and perhaps the other motives and blame behavior.

4.5.3 Impression management and blame-taking. The findings from Study 2 reveal that the impression management motive may be linked to blame behaviors opposite that predicted by the theoretical model proposed in Chapter 3. The findings reveal that a leader who is highly motivated to manage impressions is more likely to report taking blame instead of blaming others after an unsuccessful outcome, regardless of whether they are communicating this blame to a group of subordinates or superiors. As discussed previously, leaders who take blame may perceive these types of behaviors as a way to manage others' impressions of them as a "good" leader, which ties into the implicit beliefs motive. However, the implicit beliefs motives is directed inward, in that leaders who are driven by the implicit beliefs motive behave congruently with their personal beliefs regarding good leadership in an attempt to behave consistently with their own self-concept (e.g., Lord & Brown, 2001) and their implicit theories regarding ideal leadership. On the other hand, the impression management motive is directed outward, in that individuals driven by the impression management motive are driven to shape their image in the eyes of others, and they may view blame-taking behaviors as a way of shaping how others perceive them as a leader. With respect to credit behaviors, leaders may take credit in front of a group of superiors in order to strengthen their image as a leader. But in front of subordinates, a leader driven by the impression management motive may not take the credit for a successful outcome, as their subordinates are closer to the circumstances surrounding the outcome and have an accurate evaluation of to whom credit is due.

4.5.4 Link between blame-taking and subordinate OCBs. While subordinate OCBs were not included in the experimental studies, from the online sample of managers, it appears that leaders who shift blame more toward themselves and less toward their subordinates may be more likely to observe subordinate OCBs. This paper provides correlational evidence of a relationship between leader blame-taking behavior and subordinate OCBs. No relationships were observed between credit behaviors and subordinate OCBs. Therefore, it is possible that a leader's blame behaviors hold more weight compared to a leader's credit behaviors. For example, a subordinate may be more likely to engage in OCBs when their leader takes blame rather than when their leader gives them credit. Perhaps subordinates perceive their leader's blame-taking actions as protecting the subordinate from harm whereas credit-giving behaviors are perceived as giving them the credit they are due. Social exchange theory argues that reciprocity norms between two parties signify that if one party supplies a benefit (e.g., a leader takes the blame for an unsuccessful outcome), the receiving party should respond correspondingly in the future (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As a result, based on reciprocity norms, subordinates may indeed repay a supportive, blame-taking leader who has protected them from potential harm by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors.

In Chapter 4, three studies were conducted to empirically examine selected elements in the theoretical model. Field data was collected from an online sample of managers, followed by two experimental studies in a population of undergraduates that focused specifically on blame behaviors. The studies in this chapter provide evidence for some of the hypotheses and key propositions in the theoretical model posed in Chapter 3, with more support for the connections between a leader's motive and their blame behaviors than for their credit behaviors.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I examine how and why leaders communicate accountability by addressing blame and credit, thus generating and establishing the conversation about blame and credit behaviors in the workplace in three distinct ways. First, this dissertation evolves the current state of thought regarding blame and credit by acknowledging the existence and importance of unexplored blame and credit behaviors. Second, it introduces a theoretical framework of the motives driving the blame and credit behaviors of leaders, including the effects of two contextual factors on such behaviors. Third, the empirical work conducted provides some evidence for the validity of the theoretical model. As a whole, this dissertation brings to the forefront the importance of various blame and credit behaviors in organizations and explains why leaders enact these behaviors following diffuse positive or negative outcomes.

5.1 Contributions

The existing literature has operated on the assumption that individuals want to reduce the blame assigned to them and increase the credit they receive – they more often take credit for successful outcomes than take blame for unsuccessful ones because of a desire to avoid threats to self-esteem (Shaver 1985; Gioia & Sims, 1985; Greenwald, 1980). Only a few researchers have provided scientific analysis, including Crant and Bateman (1983), who found that individuals strategically use self-handicapping tactics and casual accounts in order to shift blame away and shift credit towards themselves in order protect or enhance the self. Gunia (2011) was the first to introduce the notion of blame-taking, by studying the incidence and effectiveness of blame-taking, as compared to remorse and evasion. Beyond this, the conversation regarding blame and credit behaviors involves primarily anecdotal evidence, such as in the popular news media or in

accounts of U.S. Navy SEAL training (e.g., Bregman, 2013; Cannon & Cannon, 2003; Sharer, 2014; Suddath, 2012).

Therefore, the first main contribution of this dissertation is that it identifies a new area of research and generates new conversation regarding the existence and importance of various blame and credit behaviors. It acknowledges, explains, and examines other types of blame and credit behaviors beyond blame assignment and credit-taking, such as blame-taking and credit-giving. Other researchers in the blame and credit literature, such as Crant and Bateman (1983) and Gunia (2011), have yet to acknowledge and examine the comprehensive map of blame and credit behaviors. Thus, the theoretical framework developed in this paper serves as an initiating and propelling force to strengthen and compound our current understanding of a wide variety of blame and credit behaviors, their antecedents, and subsequent outcomes. Furthermore, practitioners, such as Bregman (2013), Sharer (2014), and Suddath (2012), have provided anecdotal evidence illustrating instances of blame-taking and the benefits of blame-taking in the workplace, but a major shortcoming of this conversation stems from its reliance on unscientific speculation. Therefore, the empirical work presented in this dissertation comprises the scientific, empirical evidence to date regarding a more comprehensive range of leader blame and credit behaviors. As a result, this dissertation is the first paper of its kind to provide both theory on and empirical evidence for various blame and credit behaviors, their drivers, and a potential downstream outcome. In effect, this dissertation pushes the boundaries of the current knowledge space that comprises the blame and credit literature.

This dissertation discerns blame and credit behaviors as two separate spectrums of behavior. Blame or credit is shifted toward others on one end and toward the self on the opposite end, while the middle of the spectrum denotes the sharing of either blame or credit (see Figure

3.1). In the first two chapters, I highlight the importance of blame and credit behaviors and the salience of such behaviors in leaders' thoughts and statements. I conducted two studies to map out leader blame and credit behaviors beyond blame-assignment and credit-taking, creating a more comprehensive view of the various types of blame and credit behaviors and what they look like. In the Pilot Study interviews, coaches conveyed that, as leaders of sports teams, they attempt to think carefully about their communications regarding blame or credit toward the athletes on the team because they believe that these behaviors can have positive or negative consequences on their relationships with the athletes and on the athletes' performance. Study 1, which involved canvassing and analyzing statements in NFL coaches' press conferences, illustrated that expressions of blame and credit occur asymmetrically in a public context. In this study, I examined blame and credit behaviors directly, without the measurement error that sometimes occurs when assessing memories, perceptions, or hypothetical scenarios.

The second main contribution of this dissertation is that it integrates four unique perspectives in the literature to create a theoretical framework of the motives driving blame and credit behaviors. The framework also includes a classification scheme that categorizes each motive by its objective and direction. Drawing from the psychology literature on self-image and ego-defensiveness bias (e.g., Greenwald, 1980; Ross, 1977) and the impression management literature (e.g., Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Salancik and Meindl, 1984; Staw, McKechnie, and Puffer, 1983; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971), the theoretical model links the ego-defensive and impression management motives to blame behaviors toward others and credit behaviors toward the self. Stemming from the literature on implicit leadership theory (e.g., Eden & Leviatan, 1975; House et al., 1999; Nye & Forsyth, 1991) and theories in LMX and social exchange (e.g., Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Cropanzano &

Mitchell, 2005), the model links the implicit beliefs and relationship building motives to blame behaviors toward the self and credit behaviors toward others. By tying together these four unique perspectives, this dissertation contributes a theoretical model of four motives that drive blame and credit behaviors.

In addition to these four motives, the theoretical model also integrates the role of contextual factors. Previous literature has considered organizational cultures that emphasize individualistic or collectivistic values (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Chatman and Jehn, 1994). The model in this dissertation argues that when a leader's motive is incongruent with the organization's culture, the emphasis on individualistic or collectivistic values may attenuate the behavioral tendencies associated with this motive. As a result, the leader's blame or credit behaviors become more compatible (or less incongruent) with the organizational culture. Drawing from the literature on reward structures (e.g., Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Tjosvold, 1982; Triandis, 1989), individual and shared reward structures will have a similar influence on the relationship between motive and blame or credit behavior. By introducing these two contextual factors, the theoretical model proposes that leader blame and credit behaviors are shaped not only by a leader's motives but also by the environment in which they lead.

Lastly, the empirical work in this dissertation contributes by providing partial evidence for the theoretical model. The evidence presented in this dissertation reveals that the ego-defensive motive is particularly powerful in driving leader blame behaviors. In line with the theoretical model, the ego-defensive motive was linked to behaviors that shifted blame away from the leader, while the implicit beliefs motive was linked to behaviors that shifted blame toward the leader (i.e., toward the self). There was evidence of a strong relationship between the ego-defensive motive and blame assignment; leaders driven by the ego-defensive motive tended

to assign more blame than take blame. This behavioral tendency was observed regardless of whether the audience was comprised of subordinates or superiors, which parallels the predictions in the model drawn from literature arguing that individuals who are inclined to defend a positive self-image will shift blame away from rather than towards themselves (e.g., Ross, 1977).

The empirical work in this dissertation reinforces the difference in blame behaviors between ego-defensive leaders and leaders who are driven by implicit beliefs of an ideal leader with respect to the contextual factor of reward structure. The relationship between the ego-defensive motive and blame behaviors was stronger under an individual reward structure but was also observed under a shared reward structure. The implicit beliefs motive was related to blame-taking behaviors, regardless of reward structure. Together, these results comprise the current evidence of the validity of the model.

The evidence in Study 2 illustrates, however, that the impression management motive may be more complex than currently proposed. The empirical evidence links the impression management motive to blame behaviors toward the self, opposite to the prediction in the theoretical model. Instead, leaders highly motivated to manage impressions were more likely to report taking blame instead of assigning blame after an unsuccessful outcome. One explanation is that blame-taking may be perceived as a way to manage others' impressions of them as a "good" leader. For a leader who is highly motivated to manage impressions, this motivation may translate into a desire to be viewed as an "ideal" leader or as a leader who builds relationships. The unexpected pattern regarding the impression management motive observed in the online sample of managers should be explored in future research, as it seems that taking blame may be a way to manage a specific type of impression.

While the theoretical model focuses on the motives of blame and credit behaviors, the empirical work in this dissertation speaks to one consequence of blame-taking behaviors: subordinate OCBs. This dissertation provides evidence for a correlational link between leader blame-taking behaviors and subordinate OCBs, but not credit-giving behaviors and subordinate OCBs. Subordinates may perceive their leader's blame-taking actions as protecting them from harm. According to reciprocity norms (e.g., Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), subordinates may be spurred to repay a supportive, blame-taking leader who has protected them from potential harm by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors. In addition, subordinates may view an act of blame-taking as part of a favorable social exchange, which is related to trust and organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Supervisory support, in the form of blame-taking, may lead to subordinates to engage in OCBs because they feel more supported by both their supervisor and the organization.

5.2 Practical Implications

This dissertation argues that leaders will engage in blame and credit behaviors not yet examined by the literature. Their behaviors are partly explained by their motives and by the environment in which they operate. The theoretical model in Chapter 3 proposes that there are four motives that drive leaders' behaviors in shifting blame and credit towards or away from themselves. Moreover, there are certain contextual factors that may work to shape these behaviors. The empirical work in Chapter 4 provides mixed support for the predictions derived from the model. Based on this evidence, I offer three key practical implications.

First, the theory and evidence in this dissertation demonstrate that managers have tendencies that stem from their motives, manifesting as blame and credit behaviors. Therefore, it is important for managers to understand that they may possess individual characteristics that

push them to enact certain types of behaviors. Having an awareness of one's behavioral tendencies stemming from one's natural motivations might help an individual, in a managerial role, think more deliberately regarding their actions and reactions following a successful or an unsuccessful diffuse outcome. Being particularly mindful of the context (for instance, whether individualistic or collectivistic values and reward structures are a part of the environment) may help managers better understand their own behaviors and tendencies. Given the correlational evidence linking blame-taking behaviors to increased reports of subordinate OCBs, managers may be motivated to build strong relationships with their subordinates by taking blame in order to establish organizational and supervisory support. This may be especially helpful for managers working in individualistic contexts or who are aware that they are driven by the ego-defensive motive, for example.

Second, from an employee or subordinate perspective, it may be helpful and important to recognize that a manager's behaviors may be a result of long-lasting motives and their link to blame and credit behaviors, and that these links may be difficult to weaken or eliminate. Furthermore, a manager's behaviors could be driven not only by individual characteristics but also by the situation and context in which she works. For example, from a subordinate's perspective, they may observe a manager shifting blame toward their subordinates, which they may in turn interpret as the manager lashing out against subordinates following an unsuccessful outcome. Then, the subordinate may take a moment to consider that perhaps their manager may be driven by the ego-defensive motive, a long-lasting state, as well as being in an organization that values individual performance or has implemented an individual (or even a competitive) reward structure. In this type of situation, it could be helpful to take an alternate perspective by considering their manager's internal motives and the external context. Perspective-taking can be

productive, not necessarily as a means of absolving the manager of any unproductive behaviors or actions, but as an employee's strategy of mitigating her own unproductive reactions or behaviors to a manager's blaming behaviors (or other potentially damaging behaviors). Then, the employee might be able to effectively engage in a more productive sequence of events following the unsuccessful outcome and the manager's undesirable response.

Lastly, there may be practical implications from this line of research at the organizational design level. Organizations themselves can be mindful about creating and fostering an organizational culture, or reward structure, to counteract leaders' motives and tendencies. For example, if decision-makers of an organization wish to establish an organization that values leaders who take blame, or a leader who shares and disperses credit, they can refer to the theoretical model in this paper or some of the findings from the empirical studies regarding individual- and group-focused contextual factors. Developing and fostering an organizational culture that values collectivism and implements a shared reward structure may lead managers to shift blame towards themselves and credit towards others, whereas developing an individualistic organizational culture with an individual reward structure may lead to the opposite behaviors. Organizations that are interested in promoting particular blame and credit behaviors might benefit from being mindful about the values, norms, and beliefs espoused in the workplace.

5.3 Future Research

The development of a theoretical framework explaining the motives driving blame and credit behaviors was a necessary first step to understand blame and credit behaviors and their consequences. There is more work to be done. To begin, from a theoretical standpoint, the current model can be extended by considering other factors, such as the magnitude of the outcome and the hierarchical position of the audience.

With respect to magnitude, positive or negative outcomes can have varying effects on an organization. The ramifications of certain outcomes may be contained within a particular team or department, whereas other outcomes may threaten the viability of an organization. The degree to which an outcome impacts an organization may change the magnitude of blame or credit that is allocated, as well as the way in which blame or credit is communicated (e.g., Cornelissen, 2008). For example, the effects of a negative outcome of a small magnitude may be confined within a team, and the blame communicated may be toward an internal, intra-team audience and the effects temporary. However, if the negative outcome is of a large magnitude, the leader may want or need to communicate blame to an external audience as well as an internal audience, and the effects may be more permanent and severe (e.g., an individual(s) may lose their job). The relationships theorized by the model proposed in this dissertation may be more fitting for outcomes that are smaller in magnitude, and the model may evolve when the assumption of the homogeneity of outcome magnitude is relaxed. A larger, more threatening failure, because of its extreme nature compared to a more trivial failure, could warrant and trigger a more extreme response from a leader. For example, if the company faces a multibillion-dollar lawsuit because of a large diffuse failure, the magnitude of this failure may impact the relationship between a leader's motives and subsequent behavior, and perhaps directly impact the behaviors themselves. For example, the relationship between the motives and behaviors could be washed out if a leader responding to and managing a legal crisis must act in accordance with the law or may enact behaviors under the advisement of their general counsel.

With respect to hierarchical positioning of an audience, future research should continue to tease apart the upward and downward (and lateral) communication of blame and credit. Given that leaders may communicate blame and credit to different audiences, it would be interesting to

explore the discrepancies (or similarities) between communications to superiors versus subordinates. Individuals may differ in their communications to separate audiences (e.g., Celsi & Gilly, 2010; Cornelissen, 2008), and research in this area should continue to parse the reasons behind differences in blame and credit communications as well as the impact of these discrepancies on organizational outcomes. While this paper included audiences comprised of subordinates and superiors, it is important to consider audiences of a laterally equivalent hierarchical position. Furthermore, individuals may not only communicate blame and credit differently to unique audiences, but the relationships they seek to establish may be different across their subordinates, their peers, and their own superiors. The relationship building motive in the current theoretical model focuses only on relationships in a hierarchically downward direction, from a leader to a subordinate. Future research should examine the relationship building motive by incorporating relationships in multiple directions – not only downward to a subordinate, but also upward to a supervisor, across to a peer, or outward to the public. In practice, managers simultaneously juggle multiple relationships, and how this juggling factors into the relationship building motive and the resulting blame or credit behaviors is important to understand.

Based on the findings in this dissertation, the theoretical model can be further refined in future research. The empirical evidence illustrates a discrepancy between the impression management motive and its proposed blame behaviors. Individuals who were highly motivated to manage impressions reported taking blame following a diffuse failure. Researchers should investigate what image an impression-managing leader wishes and attempts to convey by blame-taking, and why. Future research should also explore the impression management motive with respect to perceptions of a leader's competence, benevolence, and/or integrity. Because

individuals “have an ongoing interest in how others perceive and evaluate them” (Leary & Kowalski, 1990: 34), they may want to control how they are perceived in terms of their competence, benevolence, and integrity, specifically. If a leader is driven by the impression management motive, she may enact credit behaviors in line with her desire to be perceived as being competent – for example, by taking credit for a successful outcome. If she wants to be perceived as being benevolent, she may take blame for an unsuccessful outcome, as blame-taking might be perceived as protecting subordinates from blame or as a generous act of taking the fall for the team. A leader who wishes to manage an impression of integrity may enact behaviors that uphold her moral principles or that are in line with what she believes is the truth, which lends additional complexity to the already complex link between the impression management motive and blame and credit behaviors. Future research should study the effects of the impression management on perceptions of competence, benevolence, and integrity, as well as examine whether the desire to be seen as a leader of competence, benevolence, or integrity is an accurate reflection of a genuine desire to *be* competent, benevolent, or a leader of integrity, rather than merely seeming like one.

Furthermore, the scope of the current theoretical model excludes deflecting behaviors (i.e., deflecting blame, deflecting credit). While deflection does not exist on the spectrum of blame or credit behaviors established in this dissertation (see Figure 3.1) because it is not directed toward others, toward the self, or to anyone in between, deflection of blame or credit does indeed occur in the workplace. While observations of deflection were noted in Study 1, future research should explore deflection by expanding the theoretical model to include deflecting behaviors and the motives that potentially drive these behaviors.

Furthermore, the empirical work completed in this dissertation involved an online field sample of managers and two experimental lab studies. Future research should turn to a field context to examine the connection between the four motives proposed in this dissertation. A field study with multi-source data, rather than only single-source, self-reported data, that explores the drivers of blame and credit behaviors, as well as the potential individual and team outcomes of these behaviors, would extend the credibility of the theoretical framework proposed. Linking a leader's motives (which are self-reported) to blame and credit behaviors as reported by her own subordinate(s) would not only provide more conclusive and compelling evidence for the model, but would also provide more insight into the potential practical implications of this area of research. In addition, a field study of working managers would strengthen the ecological validity of the findings in this paper.

Additionally, further research should be conducted regarding credit behaviors. The experimental studies in this paper focus on blame rather than credit behaviors, and while there is undoubtedly room to continue exploring the drivers and consequences of blame behaviors, by comparison, our current understanding of credit behaviors is limited. Future research can determine whether there are benefits to blame-taking that outweigh credit-giving, or compare the effects of blame-assignment to those of credit-taking. By probing into the drivers and consequences of blame and credit behaviors, research may uncover unique patterns in blame behaviors that are different than those in credit behaviors. Future work should also delve into the consequences of blame and credit behaviors beyond subordinate OCBs. Examining the effects of leader behaviors on their employees, as well as on the teams they lead, could have substantial practical implications. Such research could reveal that certain types of behaviors are conducive

to positive individual and team outcomes, whereas others may be counterproductive and provoke dysfunctional team outcomes.

Lastly, future research should commit to examining differences in gender and in national culture. Researchers should explore gender differences with respect to how and why leaders enact blame and credit behaviors and whether contextual factors shape the leadership behaviors of men and women differently. While significant gender differences were not detected in the studies conducted for this dissertation, it is possible that being driven by a particular motive(s) has divergent effects in different contexts or industries for female leaders compared to male leaders. Researchers should also consider not only the gender of the leader enacting the blame or credit behavior, but also the gender of the subordinates who are the receiving end of those behaviors. The leadership literature has explored differences in gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness (e.g., Eagly et al., 1992; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Future work should delve deeper into whether men and women, as employees, react or perceive a manager's blame and credit behaviors differently and evaluate their managers differently as a result, whether these differences in perception have varying effects on performance, attitudes toward work, or other outcomes. Research should also investigate whether there is an interaction between the gender of the employee and that of the manager.

The theoretical model in this dissertation acknowledges differences in organizational culture (e.g., individualism versus collectivism), but it does not speak to national cultural differences. When considering the cultural dimension of power distance, the propositions, as well as the empirical results, may not hold for countries that have higher power distance as compared to the United States. Power distance refers to the distribution of power and strength of social hierarchy (Hofstede, 1984). In societies of low power distance, individuals attempt to

distribute power more equally to minimize inequality, whereas in high power distance societies, this is not the case, and individuals are more inclined to adapt to a hierarchy. Countries that have low power distance include the United States and Australia, whereas countries with high power distance include India and China. In high power distance cultures where leaders are expected to be more autocratic and opposition to authority is less accepted, there may be different norms with respect to leader blame and credit behaviors. It may be more appropriate (or less inappropriate) for leaders to blame subordinates for failures and to take credit for successes compared to leaders in low power distance cultures. Subordinates may not question such behaviors or feel mistrust towards leaders who blame them because hierarchy generally goes unquestioned.

In addition to the individualistic or collectivistic nature of an organization's culture, national cultural differences with respect to individualism and collectivism must also be examined. In collectivistic national cultures, people are interdependent within their groups and tend to be more concerned with relationships (e.g., Mills & Clark, 1982; Triandis, 1996). In individualistic national cultures, however, people are more independent from their group and prioritize their personal goals, and their social behaviors and interactions can be predicted by social exchange (Triandis, 2001). Therefore, the degree to which a leader operates in a society that is more individualistic or collectivistic may shape how a leader's motives translate into blame and credit behaviors, as well as which motives are more likely to drive their behavior. In a more collectivistic nation, perhaps relationship building is a higher priority than in an individualistic nation.

There is an interesting dynamic to explore with respect to the individualism or collectivism of society and the high or low power distance of a nation's culture. Researchers

should study these differences in national culture, taking into account that there could be different values associated with leader-follower relationships in different countries. These societal elements may influence blame and credit dynamics with respect to the implicit beliefs held about leaders, as well as attitudes towards relationship building between leaders and followers. Leaders may hold vastly different implicit beliefs regarding ideal leadership in countries that have collectivistic values and high power distance, as these societies operate differently than in the United States, which has low power distance and more individualistic norms (Hofstede, 1984). The relationships built between leaders and followers in countries dissimilar from the United States on these dimensions may look different as well. For example, a strong relationship between a leader and follower in China might be established not only through social exchanges as a relationship might be in the United States, but also by other factors such as kinship relations, shared birthplace, shared acquaintances, and even the exchange of gifts or banquets (Nie & Lämsä, 2015). These factors are not as relevant in building Western relationships. Different ILTs may also inform the ways in which leaders are trained to act, for example, in press conferences. Leaders may receive training according to their society's implicit beliefs about ideal leaders, which are shaped by their national culture, to communicate blame and credit in a normatively appropriate way, although they might occasionally be prone to deviate from these normative behaviors when under stress (e.g., Coach Mark Rivera taking credit in Study 1). Future research should examine national culture and ILTs alongside the media training of leaders in response to crises.

The international growth of many companies may serve as an interesting backdrop to further our understanding of leader blame and credit behaviors with respect to national cultural differences. Leaders of globalized organizations will need (and likely already need) to navigate

relationships and communicate with individuals who do not share their national culture.

Exploring the impact of power distance and individualism versus collectivism on motives and their relationship with blame and credit behaviors will be important with the continued globalization of the economy.

5.4 Final Note

The key contributions of this dissertation include (1) evolving our understanding of the communication and variety of blame and credit in organizations, (2) establishing a theoretical model delineating the motives driving leader blame and credit behaviors, and (3) providing empirical evidence that speaks to the validity of the theoretical model. This is the first paper of its kind to theorize, categorize, and empirically examine the motives behind blame and credit behaviors of leaders. While Crant and Bateman (1993) and Gunia (2011) have provided scientific analysis, the conversation regarding the possible spectrum of leader blame and credit behaviors has rested primarily on unscientific explanation and anecdote, predominantly in the popular business news media. Therefore, this dissertation breaks new ground for the blame and credit literature by delivering both theory and empirical evidence.

Through the integration of four separate literatures, I establish a categorization of those motives and present evidence that illustrates that leaders with disparate motives may act differently in light of unsuccessful outcomes in particular. Specifically, the ego-defensive motive appears to be a strong driver of blame behaviors toward others (i.e., blame-assignment), which lay in contrast to the blame-taking behaviors linked to the implicit beliefs motive. The findings from this dissertation also support the notion that a leader's motive is more important than the context they operate in, but that contextual factors still remain a possible means of shaping or even reversing the links from the proposed motives to blame and credit behaviors. Contextual

factors that are congruent with the nature of the leader's motive may heighten the tendency for a leader to enact certain types of behaviors. It will be important to continue developing research and extending the theoretical model of motives driving blame and credit behaviors, their connection to contextual factors, and key downstream consequences, in order to tease apart the link between motives and behaviors and to uncover potential interventions that discourage or reduce behaviors that are harmful to individuals and teams.

The findings in this dissertation reveal that there are unique, underexplored blame and credit behaviors, that there are key theoretical drivers of blame and credit behaviors, and that there are contextual factors that shape leader behaviors. While this paper looks primarily at subordinate OCBs, blame and credit behaviors may be linked to other individual- and team-level outcomes. By initiating a dialogue of the drivers of leader blame and credit behaviors, this paper serves to stimulate future research on the consequences of blame and credit behaviors. In examining these motives of leader behaviors, as well as the individual- and group-focused contextual factors, we can better understand why there is variation across leader behaviors. Investigating the drivers of these behaviors matters as we seek to discern their consequences as well as how to improve managerial behaviors and team dynamics. In order to move towards a more comprehensive understanding, future research must be conducted regarding leader blame and credit behaviors given the salience, relevance, and importance of blame and credit in the workplace. Through this dissertation work, I aim to inspire other researchers to explore this area of research, so that we can work together to improve the ways leaders manage their subordinates and the way teams operate.

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Appendix A

Boxplot Comparisons of Various Acknowledgments of Blame and Credit

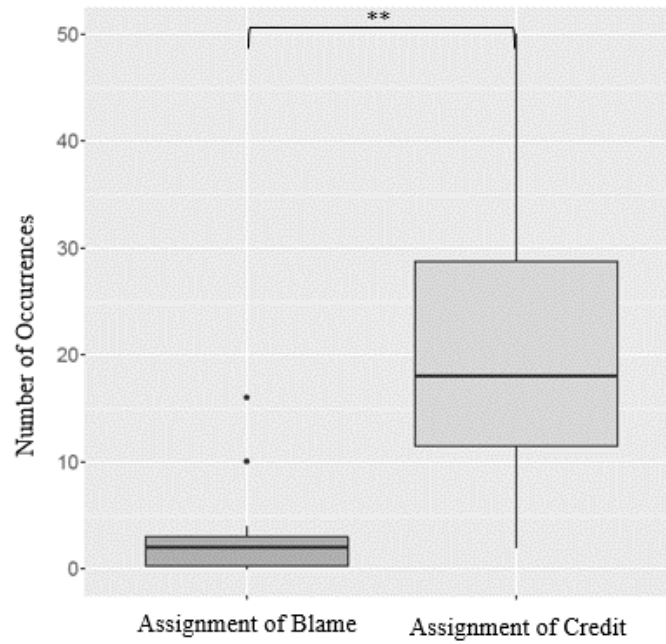


Figure A1. Blame-assignment vs. Credit-assignment, Across All Coaches for 2015 Season.

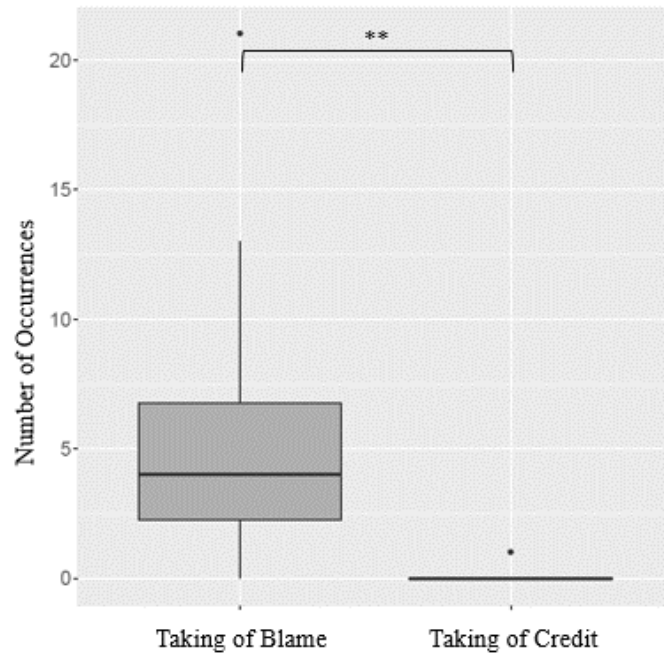


Figure A2. Blame-taking vs. Credit-taking, Across All Coaches for 2015 Season.

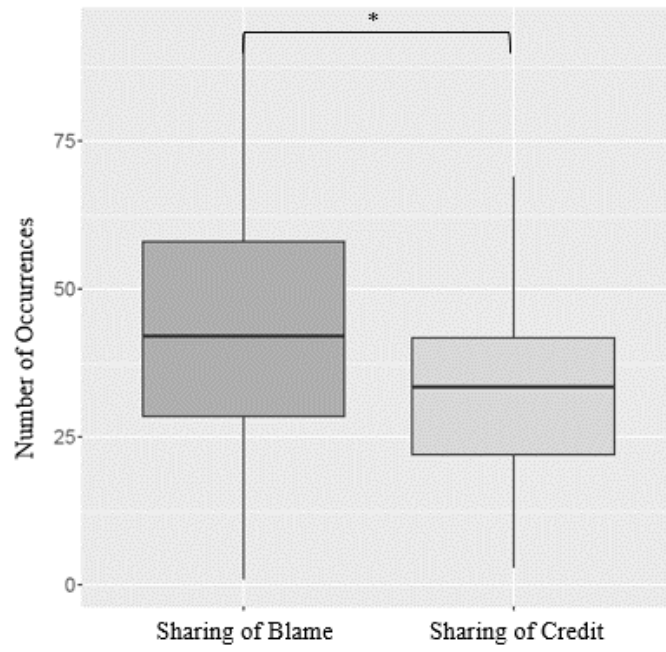


Figure A3. Blame-sharing vs. Credit-sharing, Across All Coaches for 2015 Season.

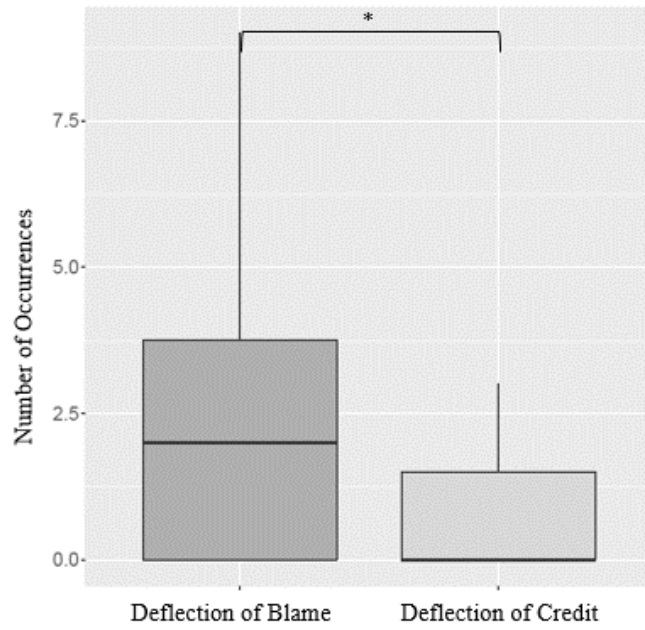


Figure A4. Blame-deflection vs. Credit-deflection, Across All Coaches for 2015 Season.

Appendix B

Measures Used in Study 2

Items Adapted from Impression Motivation Scale (Jansen et al., 2012) and Additional Items

In the following set of questions, please think about the extent to which each statement is true for you, as a leader. Then select your response from the 7-point scale below, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Additional items are designated with *.

1. It is important to me to present myself positively in my job.
2. I am very motivated to present myself as optimally as possible in my job.
3. My ambition to present myself at my best is very high.
4. I want people at work to see me in a positive light.*
5. I want people at work to think that I am very good at my job.*
6. It is very important to me to be seen as a high performer.*

Items Adapted from Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory of Outstanding Leadership (Javidan et al., 2006)

For each word below, please rate how characteristic you believe this trait is of an effective leader, from “not at all characteristic” to “extremely characteristic.” Reverse coded items are designated with (R).

1. Charismatic
2. Team-oriented
3. Involves others in making decisions
4. Involves others in implementing decisions
5. Humane
6. Autonomous
7. Self-protective (R)
8. Inspirational
9. Motivational
10. Emphasizes team building
11. Emphasizes team purpose or goals
12. Allows others to offer opinions
13. Supportive
14. Considerate
15. Independent (R)
16. Individualistic (R)
17. Self-centered (R)
18. Face-saving (R)

Items Adapted from LMX-MDM Scale (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) and Additional Items

Please think about the extent to which each statement is true for you. Then select your response from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Additional items are designated with *.

1. I would like my subordinates to respect my knowledge of and competence on the job.
2. I would like to defend my subordinates to others in the organization if they made an honest mistake.
3. I would like to be the kind of person my subordinates would like to have as a friend.
4. I would like my subordinates to not mind working their hardest for me.
5. I would like to come to a subordinate’s defense if they were “attacked” by others.
6. I would like my subordinates to like me very much as a person.
7. I would like my subordinates to do work for me that goes beyond what is specified in their job descriptions.
8. I would like my subordinates to admire my professional skills.
9. I would like to defend my subordinates’ work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.
10. I would like to be a lot of fun for my subordinates to work with.
11. I would like my subordinates to be willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my work goals.
12. I would like my subordinates to be impressed with my knowledge of my job.
13. I would like to strengthen my working relationship with subordinates.*
14. I would like to build positive working relationships with my subordinates.*

Items Measuring Leader’s Blame and Credit Behaviors

Instructions for leader participants: Please carefully read the following statements. Then, indicate which one of the three statements most closely reflects your actual response in the situation you were asked to imagine. (When asked about communication to a superior audience (i.e., the leader’s own superiors), all instances of “you” or “yours” were replaced with “they” or “theirs.”)

Blame Items: (communicating to subordinate audience)

1. “You made a mistake.” // “We made a mistake.” // “I made a mistake.”
2. “The fault is yours.” // “The fault is ours.” // “The fault is mine.”
3. “You are responsible for this outcome.” // “We are responsible for this outcome.” // “I am responsible for this outcome.”

Credit Items: (communicating to subordinate audience)

1. “You made this a success.” // “We made this a success.” // “I made this a success.”
2. “The win is yours.” // “The win is ours.” // “The win is mine.”
3. “You are responsible for this outcome.” // “We are responsible for this outcome.” // “I am responsible for this outcome.”

Appendix C

Distributions of Measures in Study 2

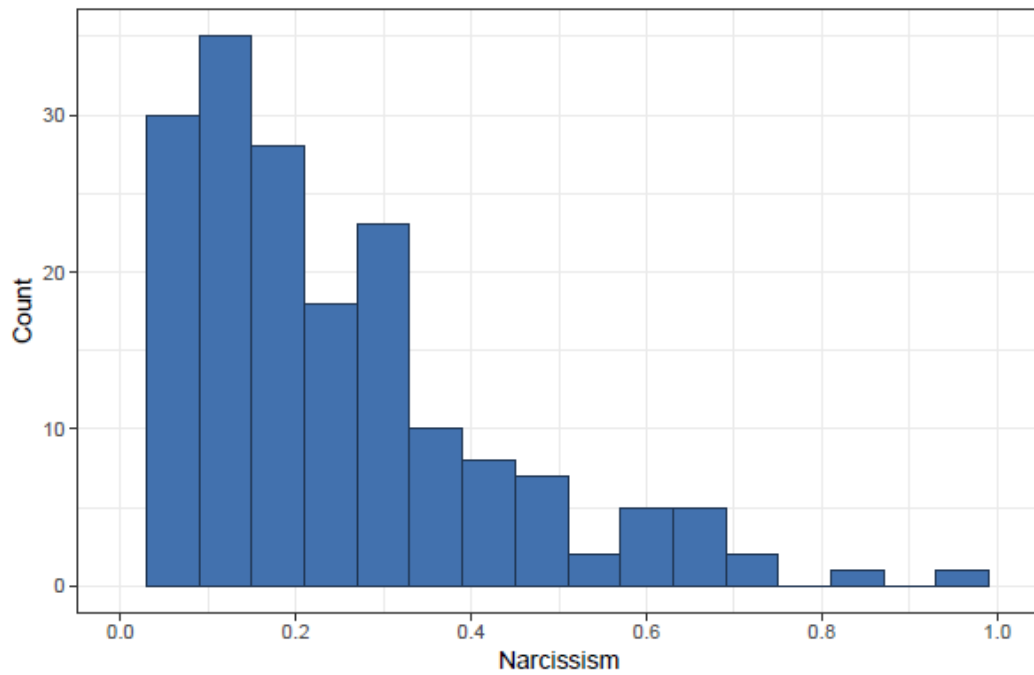


Figure C1. Distribution of Narcissism Measure.

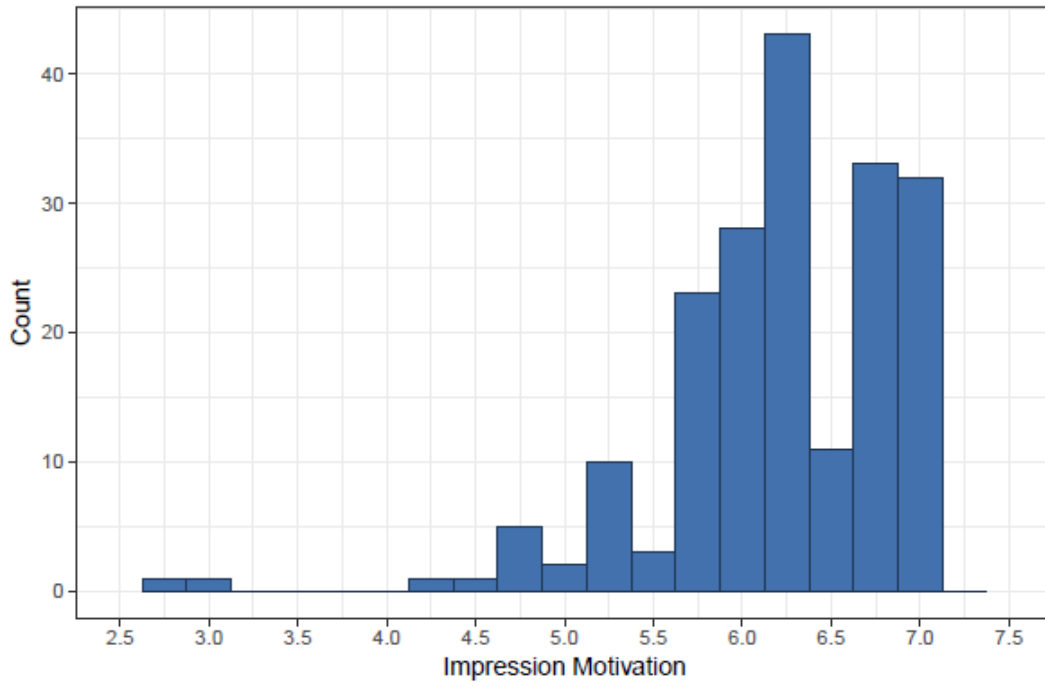


Figure C2. Distribution of Impression Motivation Measure.

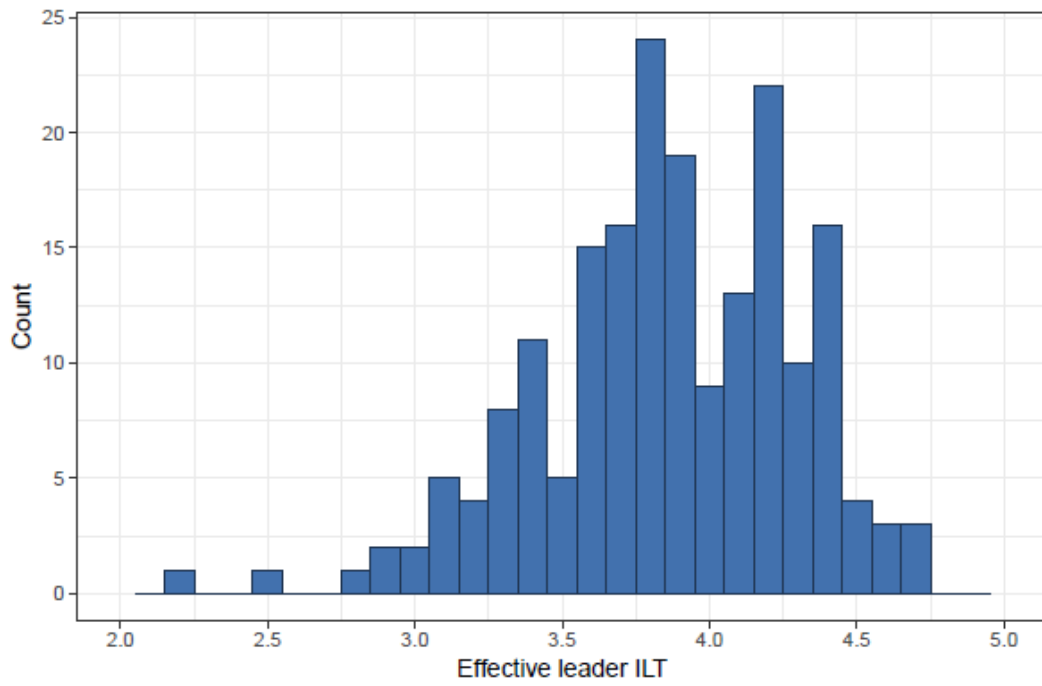


Figure C3. Distribution of Effective Leader ILT Measure.

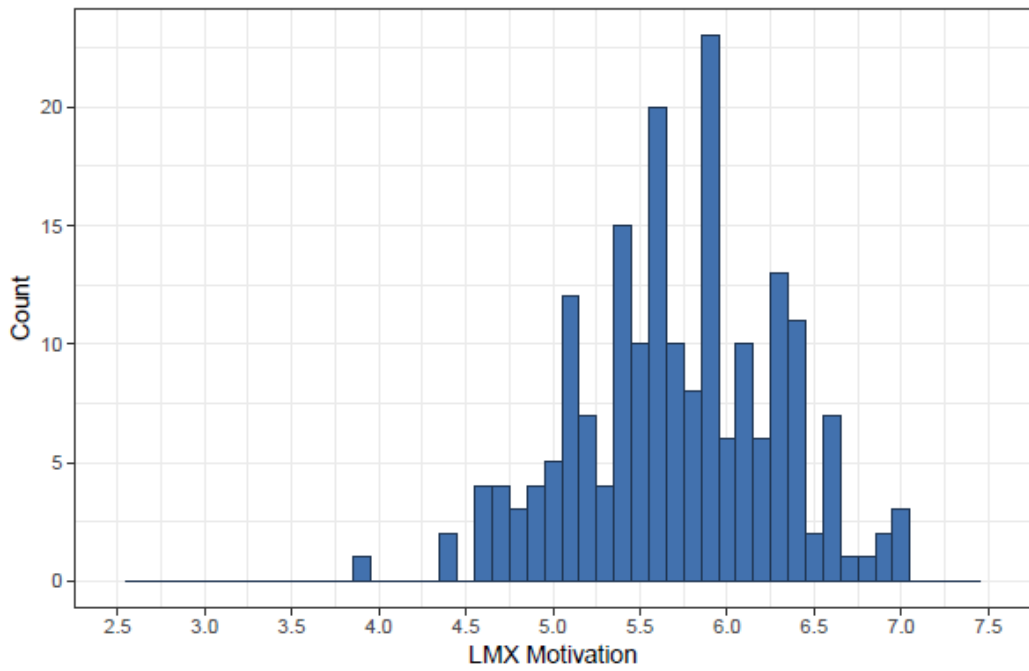


Figure C4. Distribution of LMX Motivation Measure.

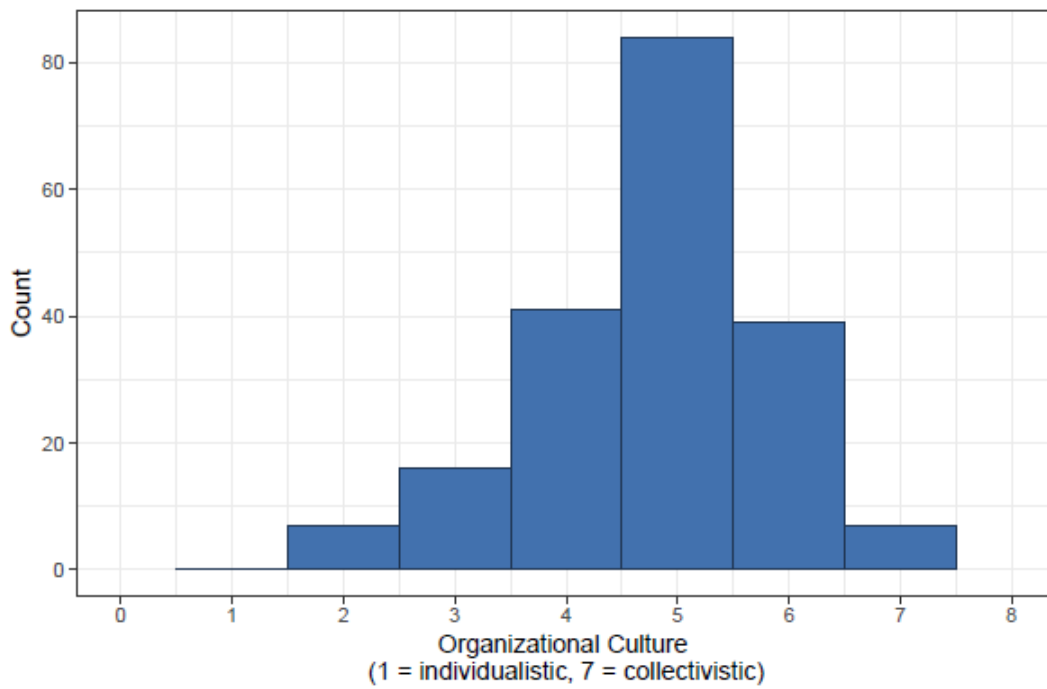


Figure C5. Distribution of Organizational Culture Measure.

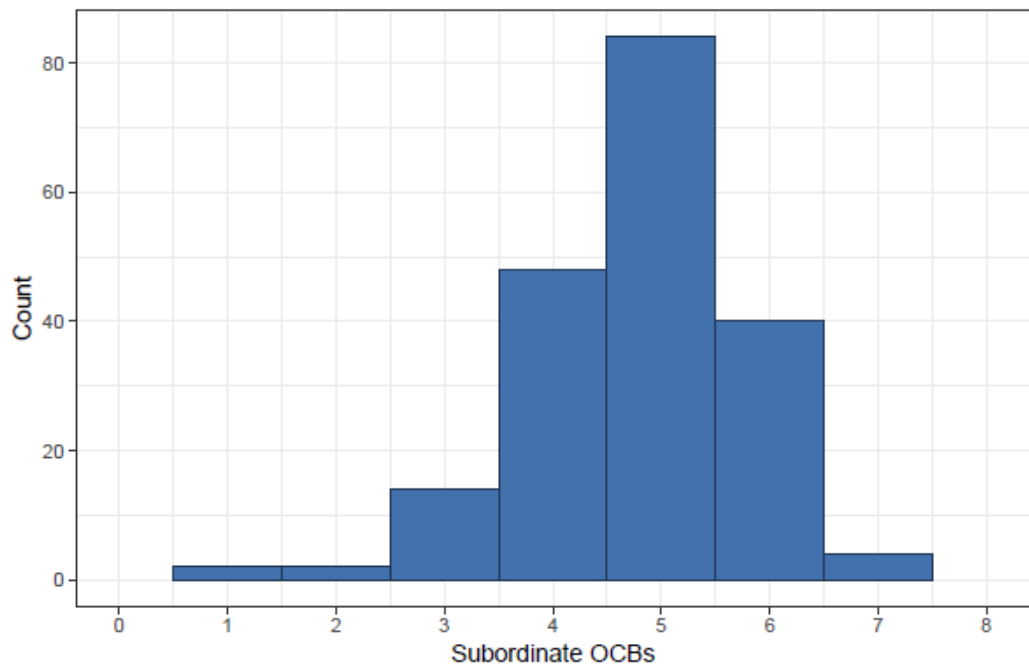


Figure C6. Distribution of Subordinate OCBs Measure.

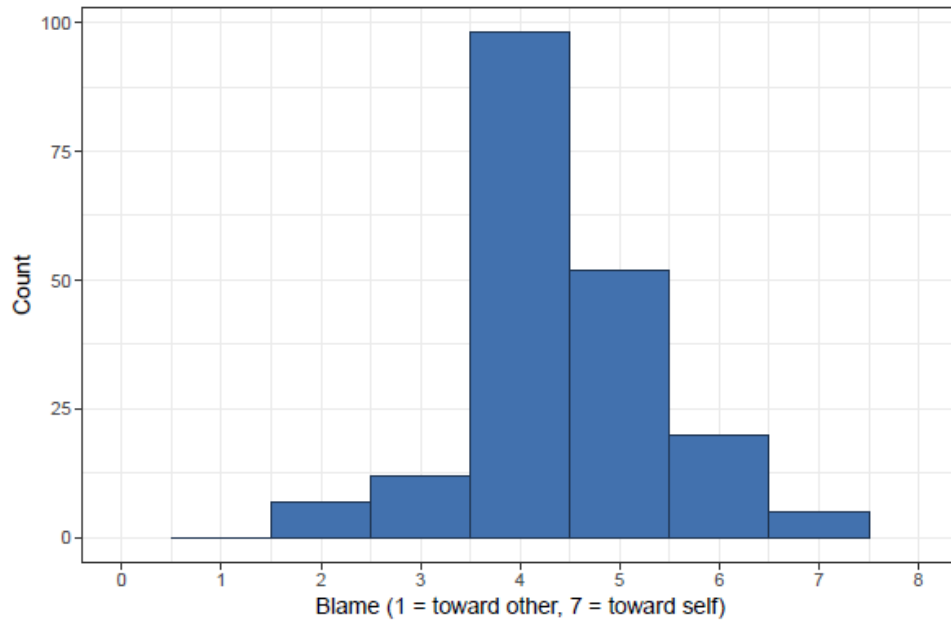


Figure C7. Distribution of General Blame Behavior (Audience: Subordinates).

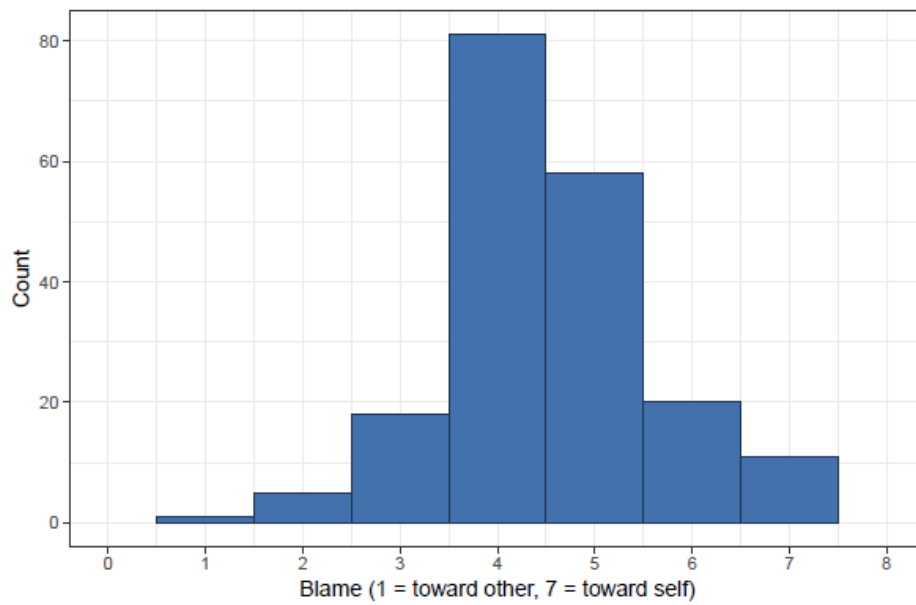


Figure C8. Distribution of General Blame Behavior (Audience: Superiors).

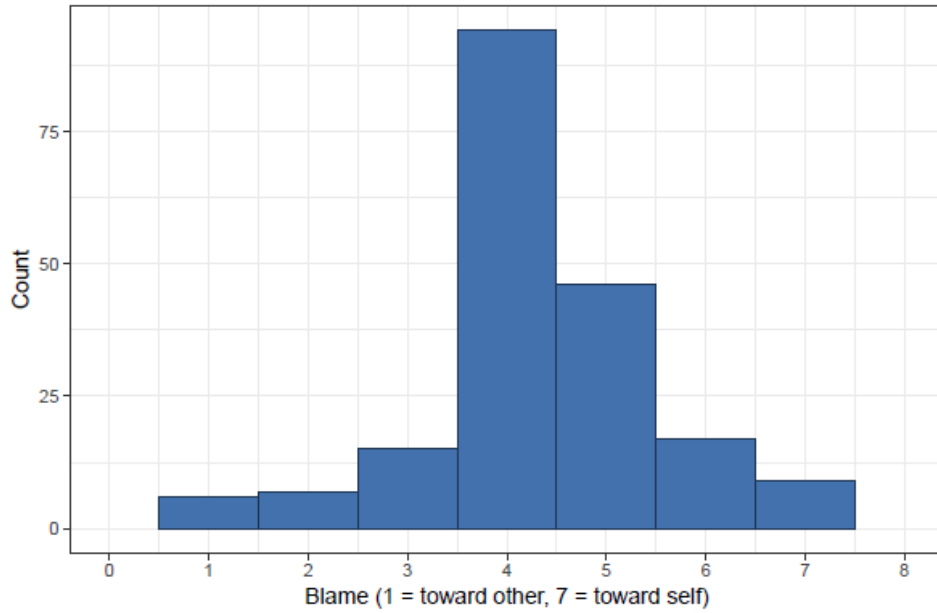


Figure C9. Distribution of Situation-specific Blame Behavior (Audience: Subordinates).

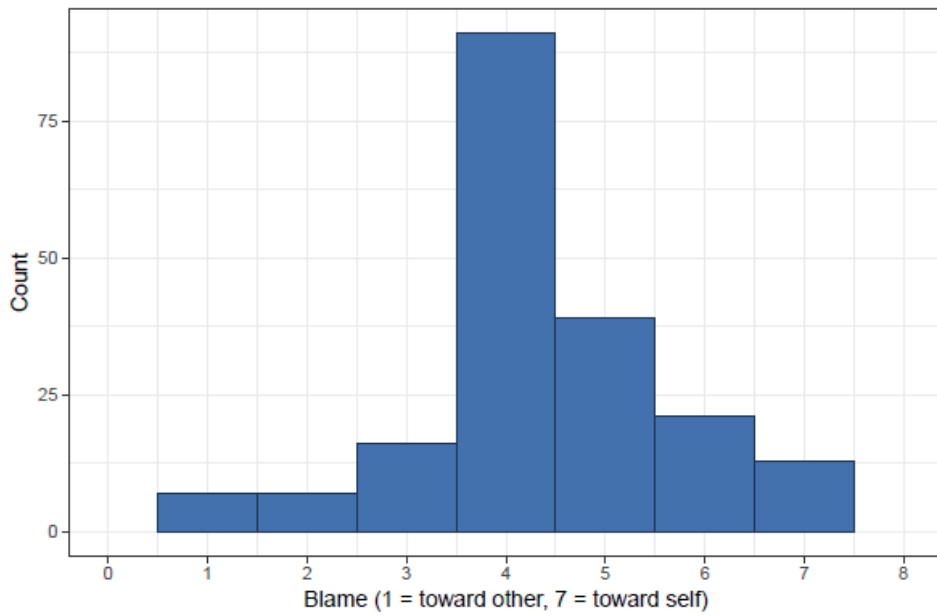


Figure C10. Distribution of Situation-specific Blame Behavior (Audience: Superiors).

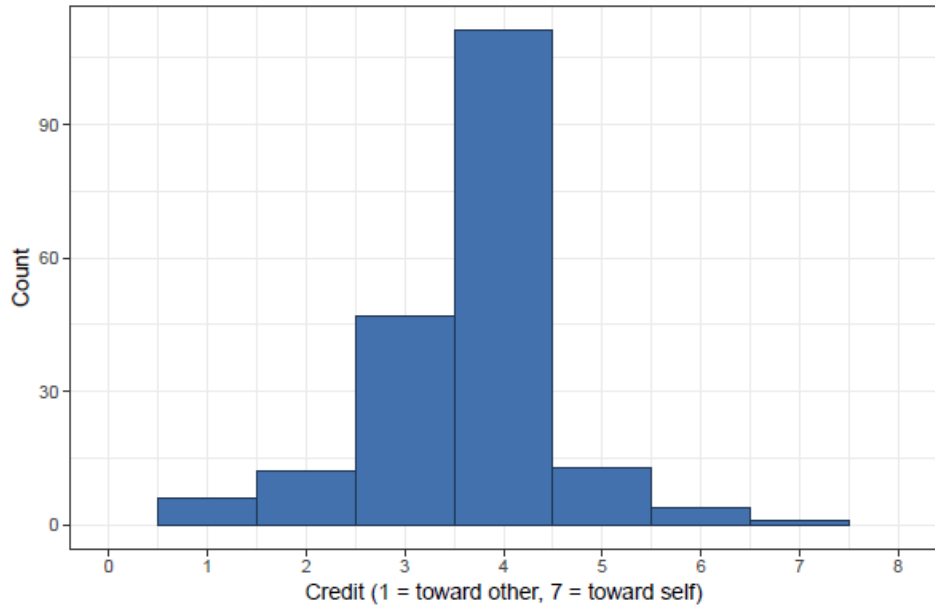


Figure C11. Distribution of General Credit Behavior (Audience: Subordinates).

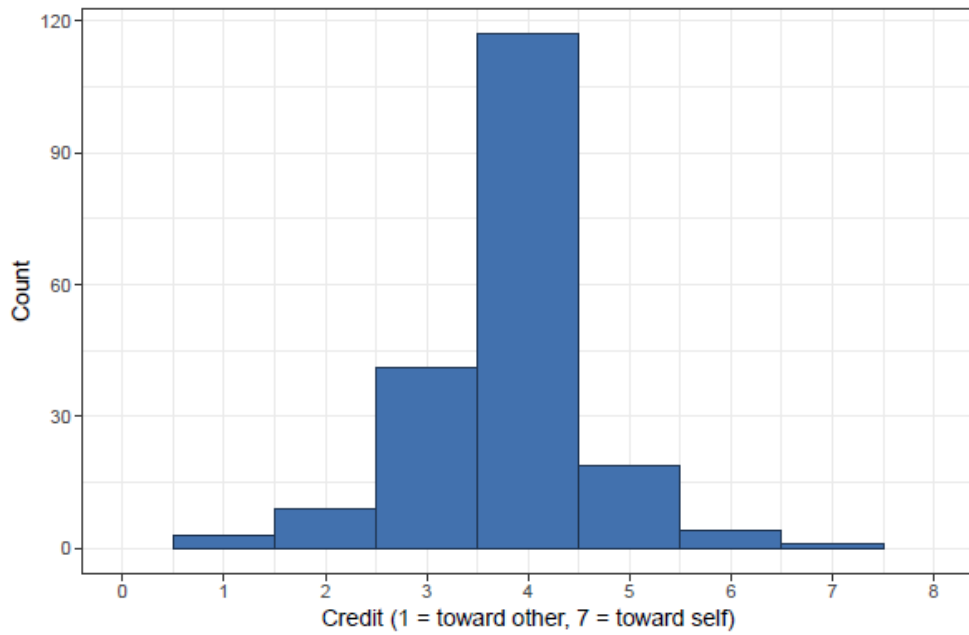


Figure C12. Distribution of General Credit Behavior (Audience: Superiors).

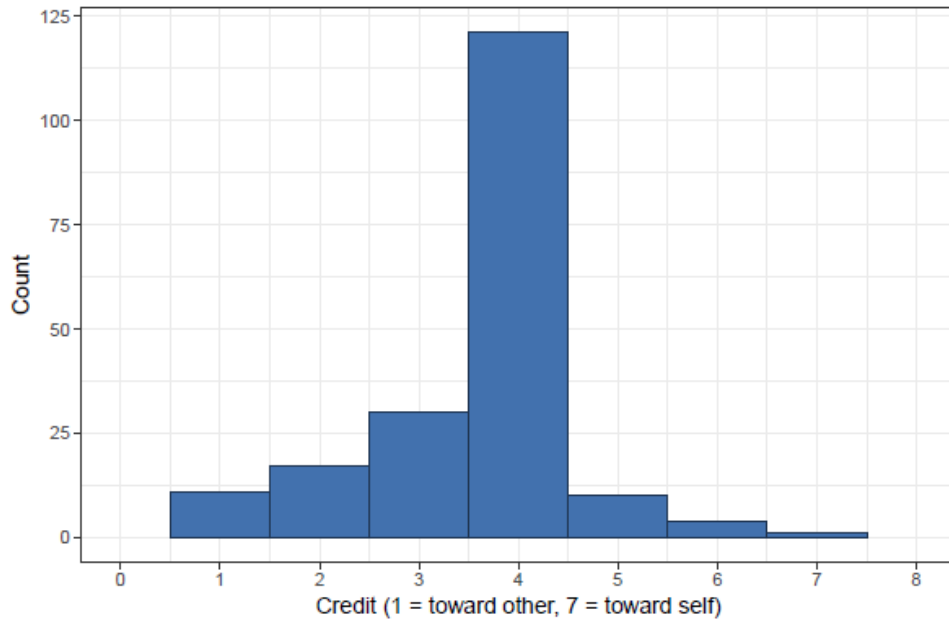


Figure C13. Distribution of Situation-specific Credit Behavior (Audience: Subordinates).

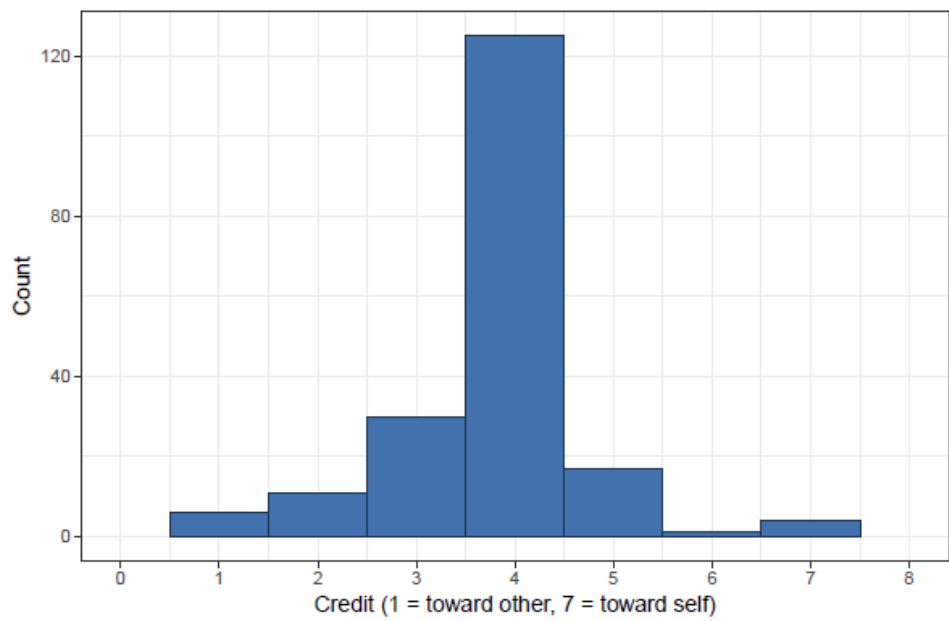


Figure C14. Distribution of Situation-specific Credit Behavior (Audience: Superiors).

Appendix D

Tasks and Blame or Credit Responses Used in Studies 3 and 4

Moon Survival Task

In the following situation, your “life” and “death” depends upon how well you can prioritize items for survival in a relatively unfamiliar environment. This problem is fictional, although the ranking to which you will compare your results was done by a number of space experts.

The Situation

You are a member of a lunar exploration crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 320 kilometers (200 miles) from the rendezvous point. During the re-entry and landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged, and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 320 km trip.

The Task

Below are listed the 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank these items according to their importance in aiding you to reach the mother ship, starting with “1” the more important, to “15” the least important. You should assume that you and your team members are the only survivors, you have agreed to stick together, and all 15 items are in good condition.

Items

- Box of matches
- Food concentrate
- 50 feet of nylon rope
- Parachute silk
- Portable heating unit
- Two .45 caliber pistols
- One case of dehydrated milk
- Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen
- Stellar map
- Self-inflating life raft
- Magnetic compass
- 20 liters of water
- Signal flares
- First aid kit, including injection needle
- Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

Screenshot of Computer Program – Moon Survival Task (with partner)

The screenshot displays the interface for the Moon Survival Task. At the top center, a red timer shows "05:05". Below the timer is the "Instructions" section, which contains three paragraphs of text. The first paragraph asks the user to consider the value and usability of each item. The second paragraph states that success is tied to the leader's ability to think highly of himself or herself. The third paragraph instructs the leader to act consistently with a partner who also thinks highly of themselves. Below the instructions are two main sections: "Survival Items" and "Chat with your Partner". The "Survival Items" section includes a list of 15 items in a table, a "Submit" button, and instructions to drag and drop items to reorder them. The "Chat with your Partner" section features a chat window with "Partner: hi" and "You: hi", a text input field labeled "Enter your message here", and a "Send Message" button.

05:05

Instructions

Consider the value and usability of each item as you think through the possible rankings, given the situation you are in.

As a reminder, success on the task is strongly tied to the leader's ability to **think highly of himself or herself**.

Therefore, you, as the leader, must do your best to act in a way that is consistent with a leader whose role requires him or her to **think highly of himself or herself** as you complete the tasks in this study.

Survival Items

Drag and drop the items to re-order in order of priority.
Click on Submit when you are satisfied with the items' order.

Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen
20 liters of water
Food concentrate
50 feet of nylon rope
Parachute silk
Portable heating unit
Two .45 caliber pistols
One case of dehydrated milk
Stellar map
Self-inflating life raft
Signal flares
First aid kit, including injection needle
Magnetic compass
Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter
Box of matches

Chat with your Partner

Partner: hi
You: hi

Enter your message here

Figure D1. Studies 3 and 4 – Interface of computer program (Moon Survival Task).

Leaders' Options in Communicating Blame

To Partner (Subordinate)

Your team performed “well below average”.

As team leader, you must communicate with your partner about the outcome achieved.

Choose one of the below messages to send to your partner.

Study 3:

You are to blame for this outcome

You are somewhat to blame for this outcome

We are equally to blame for this outcome

I am somewhat to blame for this outcome

I am to blame for this outcome

Study 4:

You are to blame for this outcome

You are somewhat to blame for this outcome

You are slightly to blame for this outcome

We are equally to blame for this outcome

I am slightly to blame for this outcome

I am somewhat to blame for this outcome

I am to blame for this outcome

To Lab Administrator (Superior)

Your answers to the below three questions will impact your **Contribution Score**.

As a reminder, your Contribution Score is based the lab administrator's evaluation of the leader's contribution (your contribution) to your team's performance on the Moon Survival Task.

The administrator of the lab study will see your responses to these questions.

1. To what extent are you, as the leader, or your partner to blame for your team's performance?
 - a) My partner is entirely to blame
 - b) My partner is somewhat to blame
 - c) My partner is slightly to blame*
 - d) My partner and I are both to blame
 - e) I am slightly to blame*
 - f) I am somewhat to blame
 - g) I am entirely to blame

2. To what extent do you, as the leader, take responsibility for your team's performance?

Study 3:

- a) I take none of the responsibility
- b) I take very little of the responsibility
- c) I take some of the responsibility
- d) I take a considerable amount of the responsibility
- e) I take all of the responsibility

Study 4:

- a) I take none of the responsibility
 - b) I take a very small amount of the responsibility
 - c) I take a small amount of the responsibility
 - d) I take a moderate amount of the responsibility
 - e) I take a large amount of the responsibility
 - f) I take a very large amount of the responsibility
 - g) I take all of the responsibility
3. As the leader, to what extent do you agree that your team's performance was your fault?
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree*
 - c) Somewhat disagree
 - d) Neither agree nor disagree
 - e) Somewhat agree
 - f) Agree*
 - g) Strongly agree

Note: Items labeled with * or "Study 4" were included in Study 4 but not included in Study 3.