

## THE DARK SIDE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER BEHAVIORS FOR LEADERS THEMSELVES: A CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES PERSPECTIVE

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The vast majority of theory and research to date on transformational leadership has focused on how transformational leader behaviors influence followers, portraying those behaviors as unequivocally beneficial. We pivot from this predominant focus to a focus on the detriments of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves. Drawing from conservation of resources theory, we propose that although transformational leader behaviors produce gains for both leaders and followers, those behaviors also trigger losses for leaders themselves. The results of two experience-sampling studies, whereby leaders and their followers completed weekly surveys for six weeks, revealed that transformational leader behaviors were associated with increases in leader emotional exhaustion and subsequent leader turnover intentions, and these detrimental consequences occurred over and above benefits to followers (Study 1) and benefits to leaders themselves (Study 2). Furthermore, the extent to which transformational leader behaviors were associated with increases in emotional exhaustion depended upon attributes of followers, such that leaders experienced greater increases in emotional exhaustion when their transformational leader behaviors were directed toward followers low in conscientiousness (Study 1) and competence (Study 2). Overall, our work provides answers to both why and under what conditions the dark side of transformational leader behaviors is likely to appear.

During the past several decades, few leadership styles have received as much research attention as transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Bono, Foldes, Vinson, & Muros, 2007; DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Transformational leader behaviors attempt to motivate followers to transcend their own self-interests and pursue collective goals (Bass, 1985). These behaviors include *idealized influence* (i.e., serving as a charismatic role model for followers), *inspirational motivation* (i.e., communicating a vision and ideals to followers), *intellectual stimulation* (i.e., stimulating followers' creativity by challenging existing assumptions), and *individualized consideration* (i.e., listening to

followers' needs and concerns). Research has shown that transformational leader behaviors are one of the most successful ways to promote leader effectiveness, display higher validity than other leadership styles (e.g., transactional and laissez-faire), and have a number of positive effects on followers, such as more positive affect, less emotional exhaustion, and greater engagement in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Bono et al., 2007; Montano, Reeske, Franke, & Huffmeier, 2017; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005).

As a result of these benefits, the current assumption is that "transformational leadership is a universally positive management practice" (Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, & Xie, 2013: 226). However, it is unclear whether this assumption holds when considering the impact of transformational leader behaviors on leaders themselves. A small number of studies have considered this impact, but they have focused only on potential

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benefits. Bono and Anderson (2005) found that leaders who exhibit transformational leader behaviors were located in more central positions in influence and advice networks, and Lanaj, Johnson, and Lee (2016) found that, on a daily basis, behaving transformationally improved leaders' moods by fulfilling their needs. Thus, the toll that transformational leadership may take on leaders has been overlooked, and the assumption that transformational leadership is universally positive may be premature.

Failing to consider the potential detriments of transformational leader behaviors is a significant oversight considering that an emerging body of research has suggested that engaging in what are widely considered to be "good" leader behaviors can be costly to leaders. As one example, Johnson, Lanaj, and Barnes (2014) showed that adhering to procedural justice rules left leaders depleted. As another example, the leader-member exchange literature has noted that leaders have a limited amount of resources (e.g., time, energy, and power), and leader behaviors can tax those scarce resources (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Transformational leader behaviors may be particularly taxing, for several reasons. For instance, expressing enthusiasm to motivate followers may require emotion regulation and be depleting (Venus, Stam, & van Knippenberg, 2013; see also Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), and devising compelling ways to persuade followers to transcend their self-interests and pursue collective goals is also likely to consume time and energy (van Knippenberg & Stam, 2014).

Thus, our research seeks to answer the following questions in order to advance theory and research on transformational leadership: (1) In addition to follower and leader benefits, do transformational leader behaviors have detriments in terms of taxing leader resources? and (2) If so, under what conditions are these detriments likely to emerge? To answer those questions, we draw on conservation of resources (COR) theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). COR theory is particularly relevant to our investigation because it provides an overarching framework through which to understand how transformational leader behaviors may generate resource gains and beneficial outcomes while simultaneously producing resource losses and detrimental outcomes for leaders themselves.

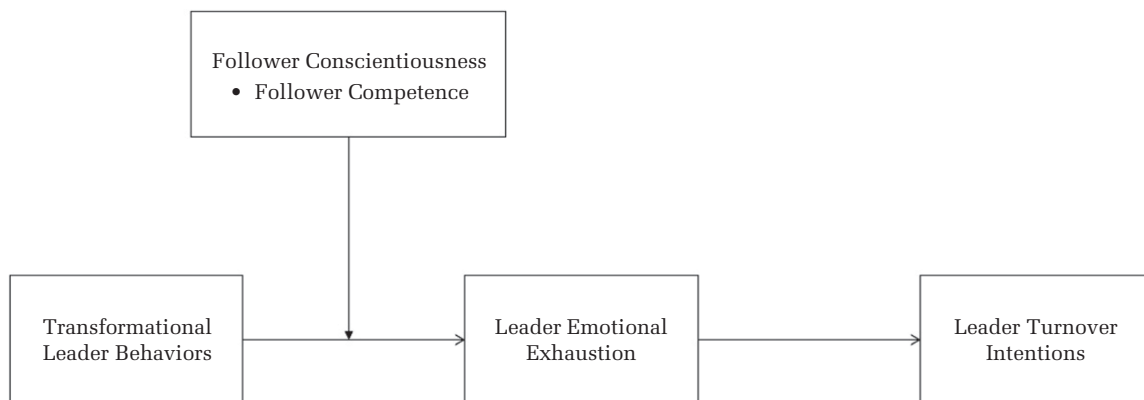
In terms of detrimental outcomes, we focus on leader feelings of emotional exhaustion as an immediate consequence of transformational leader behaviors, as those feelings have been implicated in frameworks on resource loss (Halbesleben & Buckley,

2004; Halbesleben et al., 2014). Indeed, as noted by Kammeyer-Mueller, Simon, and Judge (2016: 563), "One of the assumptions underlying COR is that emotional exhaustion reflects a state of depleted resources." In turn, we suggest that the experience of emotional exhaustion is likely to increase leader turnover intentions. We focus on leader turnover intentions as our downstream consequence because they are affected by resource loss and represent a primary outcome of COR theory (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). We examine these detrimental outcomes in conjunction with previously established benefits to followers (Study 1: positive affect, [low] emotional exhaustion, and OCB) (Bono et al., 2007; Montano et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2005) as well as alongside benefits to leaders themselves stemming from resource gain (Study 2: work engagement, need fulfillment, positive affect, and [low] negative affect) (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Lanaj et al., 2016).

We also go one step further and examine an important boundary condition on the extent to which transformational leader behaviors are resource depleting and detrimental to leaders. Given that followers are the recipients of transformational leader behaviors, we identify follower characteristics that should impact the extent to which their leader's transformational behaviors are capitalized upon versus squandered. Specifically, we examine follower conscientiousness and one of its facets (competence [Costa & McCrae, 1992]), theorizing that leaders directing transformational behaviors toward such followers will realize a greater return on their resource expenditure, thereby weakening the detriments of those behaviors (cf., Perry, Witt, Penney, & Atwater, 2010). In contrast, when transformational leader behaviors are directed toward less conscientious and competent followers, leaders will fail to see the fruits of their labor, thereby strengthening the detriments of those behaviors. A depiction of our hypothesized model is shown in Figure 1.

Our paper makes several contributions. First, we shift the literature's predominant focus on the effects of transformational leadership from followers to leaders. Although recent research has begun to understand transformational leader behaviors from an actor-centric perspective (Lanaj et al., 2016), the literature has overlooked the resource-related costs of engaging in those behaviors. Thus, we utilize COR theory to challenge the general assumption in the literature that engaging in more transformational leadership is a universally good thing (Li et al., 2013). In addition, we integrate follower personality into the study of the intrapersonal effects of transformational leadership.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Hypothesized Model**



Whereas previous research has examined the moderating effects of the leader's own personality on the effects of engaging in transformational leader behaviors (Lanaj et al., 2016), we examine the role of the follower in this process, which extends theory by demonstrating that the intrapersonal consequences of transformational leader behaviors do not occur in a vacuum, but rather are shaped by characteristics of followers. Finally, the within-person approach that we take departs from the majority of research examining transformational leadership between individuals (Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Our within-person approach not only allows us to illuminate the resource-depleting nature of transformational leader behaviors on an episodic basis, which is consistent with the episodic nature of resource loss within COR (Halbesleben et al., 2014), but also avoids potential confounds at the between-person level that could explain why those behaviors are taxing (e.g., characteristics of the job or organization). Overall, our model answers both why and under what conditions the dark side of transformational leader behaviors is likely to appear.

### CONSEQUENCES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

As noted at the outset, the vast majority of research on transformational leadership has examined the impact of this leadership type on followers. Meta-analyses examining differences between leaders have shown that transformational leadership is positively associated with a number of outcomes, including follower job satisfaction, satisfaction with the leader, motivation, mental health, and performance (DeRue

et al., 2011; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Montano et al., 2017). Benefits also have been observed at the within-person level of analysis; for example, followers engage in more OCB and experience higher positive affect at times when they receive transformational leader behaviors (Tepper et al., 2018). As a result of these findings, transformational leadership is considered to be a particularly effective way to lead others (though for a criticism, see van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013), which is consistent with the positive meta-analytic association between transformational leadership and leader effectiveness (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

To explain the benefits of transformational leader behaviors on followers, scholars have utilized a variety of theoretical frameworks and mechanisms. These include self-concept-based theory (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993); job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; see also Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006); and self-concordance theory (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; see also Bono & Judge, 2003), which is rooted in self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These theories stipulate (respectively) that transformational leader behaviors have beneficial effects on followers because those behaviors engage followers' self-concepts in the interest of the leader's mission, foster perceptions of core job characteristics (e.g., task significance) and intrinsic motivation, and cause followers to view their work-related activities as more meaningful and congruent with their authentic interests and values. In addition, research has shown that transformational leadership elicits positive affective states in followers, is perceived as more just, and facilitates the development of trust (for a review, see van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

In the nascent research examining the effects of transformational leader behaviors on leaders themselves, scholars have similarly relied on self-determination theory and need fulfillment to understand the within-person benefits of those behaviors on the leader's own mood (Lanaj et al., 2016). In addition, Bono and Anderson (2005) drew from theory on social networks to explain why transformational leaders tend to hold more central positions in advice and influence networks. We depart from these traditional perspectives and utilize COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989) to illuminate the dark side of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves. As we elaborate below, COR theory is well-suited to explain why, on a within-person basis, engaging in transformational leader behaviors can be detrimental to leaders themselves despite also bringing about benefits to both followers and leaders.

## THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

COR theory posits that people strive to obtain, protect, and retain their resources (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 2001). According to Hobfoll (1989: 516), "resources are defined as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies." Halbesleben et al. (2014: 1338) offered a revised definition of resources as "anything perceived by the individual to help attain his or her goals." Thus, the notion of goals, including progress toward them and their attainment, features prominently in contemporary treatments of COR. However, within both definitions, what constitutes a resource is broad, including factors such as time, energy, knowledge, and support.

Resources may be valuable in their own right, such as when individuals possess conditions such as tenure. However, resources may also hold value because they provide individuals with an opportunity to acquire more desirable resources (e.g., investments of time and energy in order to obtain tenure). The investment of resources in the short term in an effort to eventually obtain more desirable outcomes explains why individuals often take a long-term outlook with regards to their resource expenditures (Hobfoll, 1989). The distinction between resource expenditure in the short term and resource acquisition over the long term also creates conditions where the same resource can be construed in terms of both expense and gain (e.g., voice behavior [Ng & Feldman, 2012]).

A key tenet of COR theory is the *primacy of resource loss*, which stipulates that "it is psychologically more harmful for individuals to lose resources than it is helpful for them to gain the resources that they lost" (Halbesleben et al., 2014: 1335). This psychological harm is reflected by a state of emotional exhaustion, which prompts individuals to take steps to protect their remaining resources, such as removing themselves from their current situation (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Notably, feelings of exhaustion are especially likely when there is a lack of resource gain following significant resource expenditure. These tenets of COR theory set the stage for understanding why a leader expending resources by engaging in transformational behaviors is (1) likely to experience increases in emotional exhaustion, (2) likely to have thoughts of quitting as a defensive means to protect resources that remain, and (3) especially likely to experience these detrimental outcomes when transformational behaviors are directed toward subordinates who are less able to turn the leader's resource expenditures into gains.

## Detrimental Intrapersonal Outcomes of Transformational Leader Behaviors

We first discuss the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and emotional exhaustion, positing that each of the behaviors comprising transformational leadership (i.e., idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) is likely to tax leaders' resources. First, although transformational leaders need to frequently express positive emotions in order to serve as a charismatic role model to followers (i.e., idealized influence), such emotional expressions are unlikely to always align with leaders' actual, felt emotions (Venus et al., 2013). When misalignment occurs, leaders need to engage in emotion regulation or emotional labor in order to display the desired, positive emotion (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). On this point, leaders have been shown to engage in emotion regulation as much as employees in other occupations, including those in customer service (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Although modifying inner feelings in order to actually experience positive emotions (i.e., deep acting) has been shown to be better for well-being compared to faking positive displays while leaving underlying emotions unchanged (i.e., surface acting), both types of emotion regulation involve the expenditure of energy and effort, increasing exhaustion relative to displaying emotion naturally (for a meta-analysis, see Hülshager

& Schewe, 2011). Thus, through emotion regulation, transformational leader behaviors should consume leaders' resources, thereby increasing feelings of exhaustion (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000).

Second, communicating visions and ideals to followers (i.e., inspirational motivation) not only is likely to require emotion regulation as leaders work to stimulate enthusiasm, build confidence, and inspire followers (Bono & Judge, 2004), but should also require leaders to exert additional time and energy as they contemplate effective ways to persuade their followers. Bass (1985) posited that leaders may use nonverbal expressions, such as gestures and postures, to facilitate their communication. They may also adopt expressive language, such as metaphors or vivid images, to help followers picture their future, ideal states. Doing so requires leaders to consider the most persuasive and suitable verbal and nonverbal communications to use in their speech, which draws resources from the leader's already limited pool (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In addition, Bass and Riggio (2006) suggested that leaders may adapt their language depending on their followers' cultural differences. This also requires leaders to expend additional effort to understand followers' backgrounds and modify their communication when facing diverse audiences.

Third, challenging existing assumptions (i.e., intellectual stimulation) requires leaders to exert resources as they strive to break old routines. People tend to develop habits around their behaviors, including their behaviors at work (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). The development of habits and routines allows individuals to put minimal focus and attention on tasks as behaviors become automatic. In contrast, novel and infrequent behaviors require greater control, attention, and resources (Ouellette & Wood, 1998; Wood, Quinn, & Kashy, 2002). To challenge existing assumptions, transformational leaders need to break their previous habits by questioning prevailing work processes and reframing problems and work tasks (Bass, 1985), which should tax their finite pool of resources (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Finally, paying attention to each follower's needs and concerns (i.e., individualized consideration) should require leaders to expend additional resources because doing so does not align with leaders' natural tendencies. Fiske (1993) showed that people with higher power and authority tend to stereotype others and pay less attention to their needs and concerns. Stereotyping saves one's energy because it simplifies informational processing and response generation

(Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). In addition, leaders tend to form different levels of relationships with their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). To pay unique attention to each follower's needs and concerns, which may vary not only across followers, but also within followers over time (Tepper et al., 2018), transformational leaders must expend resources to overcome these natural tendencies.

Overall, each behavior comprising transformational leadership requires leaders to expend resources. Although such behaviors may at some point pay dividends via increases in follower well-being, performance, and support of the leader's vision, we propose that in the short term, transformational leader behaviors should be associated with lower leader well-being in the form of emotional exhaustion as a result of the primacy of resource loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014). On this point, research has shown that work demands use up resources more quickly compared to the rate at which resources are replenished (Freedy & Hobfoll, 1994), and resource losses have a stronger effect on distress compared to resource gains (Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). Consequently, although transformational leader behaviors are likely to produce both resource gains and losses, we expect an overall harmful effect of those behaviors (in terms of eliciting emotional exhaustion).

COR theory suggests that when people experience resource loss, they strive to protect their resources by engaging in avoidant and withdrawal behaviors to prevent them from further damage and loss (Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll, 2002; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). According to Leiter (1991, 1993), emotionally exhausted people tend to overvalue the importance of avoidance and withdrawal coping strategies. In order to conserve resources and protect themselves from further loss, they may entertain thoughts of leaving the current situation and quitting their jobs (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Indeed, research has shown that emotional exhaustion is positively related to turnover intentions (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2009; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Overall then, given that transformational leader behaviors are likely to leave leaders emotionally exhausted, and leader emotional exhaustion is likely to trigger thoughts of quitting, we hypothesize that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and leader turnover intentions.

*Hypothesis 1. Within leaders, there is a positive, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion.*

### The Moderating Role of Follower Personality

Although COR theory emphasizes the primacy of resource loss, the theory also suggests that subsequent resource gains can help offset the deleterious effects of loss. However, if gains are not realized, then resource loss is especially harmful, creating stronger feelings of emotional exhaustion. Notably, individuals look for signals that their resource expenditures will produce gains and result in the achievement of their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). To account for the fact that leadership is a two-way process involving both leaders and followers, we theorize that characteristics of followers signal to leaders (and actually influence) whether the resources expended by engaging in transformational leader behaviors, in the service of achieving the leader's vision and collective goals, are likely to be exploited or wasted.

We focus on follower conscientiousness, as conscientious individuals possess a number of qualities that should help them fulfill the mission of leaders behaving transformationally. One of the Big Five personality factors, conscientiousness, reflects an individual's typical level of motivation. Individuals high in conscientiousness are driven, responsible, hardworking, and dependable, and they work steadfastly toward achieving goals (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; Hogan, 1983; McCrae & Costa, 1999). They think strategically (Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002), can cope with multiple demands (Perry, Penney, & Witt, 2008), and are motivated to follow rules and expectations (Barrick & Mount, 2009). In contrast, individuals low in conscientiousness tend to be unreliable, lazy, careless, disorganized, and apathetic (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Johnson & Ostendorf, 1993). For these reasons, conscientiousness is the strongest predictor of job performance relative to the other dimensions of personality comprising the Big Five (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Importantly, conscientiousness is easily detected by others, and it is stable enough that observers can accurately assess it (Connelly & Ones, 2010). This includes leaders, who perceive and are affected by their followers' levels of conscientiousness (Mount, Barrick, & Strauss, 1994).

At its core, transformational leader behaviors attempt to motivate followers to achieve the vision and collective goals articulated by the leader. Follower conscientiousness should thus influence the degree to which those attempts are realized, allowing the leader to perceive that his or her transformational behaviors were worth the effort. While followers high in conscientiousness are likely to internalize the goals leaders

set for them, follow expectations, and work diligently on the leader's behalf, followers low in conscientiousness are less likely to commit to the leader's goals and invest their time in achieving them (Barrick & Mount, 2009). There is some indirect empirical evidence to support these assertions. For example, Colbert and Witt (2009) found that conscientious employees were more likely to take advantage of goal-focused leadership, viewing goals set by the leader as more congruent with their own goals and exhibiting higher performance as a result. In addition, Chi and Ho (2014) found that conscientious followers were more likely to internalize and perceive their leader's emotional signals, which yielded increased performance.

Overall, conscientious followers are more motivated and capable of behaving in ways that maximize outcomes (Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009; Penney, Hunter, & Perry, 2011; Perry et al., 2010). Consequently, the greater gain that results from directing transformational behaviors toward more conscientious followers should mitigate leader feelings of exhaustion stemming from the initial resource loss. Although such gains could theoretically take time to manifest, leaders behaving transformationally are also likely to perceive more immediate signals as to whether followers are motivated and buying into the leader's mission (i.e., an interested, enthusiastic response versus an apathetic, disinterested response). Thus, we hypothesize that follower conscientiousness serves as an important boundary condition on the intrapersonal consequences for leaders engaging in transformational leader behaviors.

We also go one step further and propose that a key facet of conscientiousness is largely responsible for the extent to which followers exploit versus squander their leader's transformational efforts. Specifically, we consider competence, which reflects differences in how "capable, sensible, and accomplished" individuals are (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991: 889). Although, at first blush, competence sounds like an ability rather than a personality trait, it is only weakly correlated with abilities such as intelligence (Luciano, Wainwright, Wright, & Martin, 2006). Within the context of personality, competence captures the aspirational aspect of conscientiousness; individuals with high perceptions of competence have a positive self-concept and believe that they have the efficacy to succeed. In line with this notion, competence has been shown to predict a variety of supervisor-rated performance outcomes, such as adaptive capacity and overall performance (Piedmont & Weinstein, 1994). Even when taking conscientiousness into account, competence is

predictive of the effort that individuals devote toward goal accomplishment (Trautwein, Ludtke, Roberts, Schnyder, & Niggli, 2009). Consequently, we suggest that individuals high in the specific facet of competence (even over and above the broader trait of conscientiousness) will be more likely to achieve the goals of a leader behaving transformationally, providing the leader with a favorable return on his or her resource expenditure and decreasing the intrapersonal detriments of those behaviors. This should not be the case when transformational leader behaviors are directed toward less competent followers, which ultimately should strengthen the intrapersonal detriments of those behaviors.

*Hypothesis 2. Follower (a) conscientiousness and (b) competence moderate the positive, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion, such that the indirect effect is weaker for followers high in conscientiousness (competence) and stronger for followers low in conscientiousness (competence).*

Given that we were interested in the within-person effects of transformational leader behaviors, we tested our model across two experience-sampling studies. Although a central focus of our work is to demonstrate the dark side of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves, we thought it important to examine whether the detrimental intrapersonal consequences of transformational leader behaviors occur alongside previously established benefits to both followers and leaders themselves. Thus, in Study 1, we examined the effect of transformational leader behaviors on leaders' emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (as well as the moderating role of follower conscientiousness) alongside followers' OCB, positive affect, and emotional exhaustion, which have all been shown to be associated with transformational leadership (e.g., Arnold, 2017; Bono & Ilies, 2006; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). In Study 2, we examined the effect of transformational leader behaviors on leaders' emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (as well as the moderating role of follower conscientiousness and follower competence) alongside leaders' work engagement, need fulfillment, positive affect, and negative affect, which have been shown to be associated with transformational leader behaviors (e.g., Jin, Seo, & Shapiro, 2016; Lanaj et al., 2016).

In order to avoid common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), we collected data from pairs of leaders and followers in Study 1 and from leaders and multiple followers in Study 2. We also controlled for prior assessments of our mediators and

outcomes in order to account for potential autoregressive relationships (Beal, 2015). Doing so enabled us to interpret the relationships as changes (e.g., Johnson et al., 2014; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Moreover, by measuring leader behaviors and follower personality from a group of followers in Study 2, we address the concern that leaders are likely to have followers with different levels of a given personality trait, and we also show that our results are robust regardless of whether we focus on one follower or a group of followers. In each study, we relied on follower reports of transformational leadership to avoid capturing the leader's intentions to behave transformationally, as well as over-reporting of such behaviors due to social desirability.

## STUDY 1: METHOD

### Sample and Procedures

We collected data from 130 pairs of leaders and followers who were employed in a variety of industries, including banking, communications, education, healthcare, and manufacturing. The leader demographics were as follows: 55% were male, the average age was 45.39 ( $SD = 12.40$ ), average tenure in their current organization was 14.10 ( $SD = 11.04$ ) years, and they held a wide range of job titles, including engineering manager, IT supervisor, and sales manager. The follower demographics were as follows: 41% were male, the average age was 38.33 ( $SD = 14.16$ ), average tenure in their current organization was 9.32 ( $SD = 9.96$ ) years, and they also held a wide range of job titles, including engineer, programmer, and sales associate.

Students in management courses, in exchange for extra credit, recruited a full-time employee who works during typical work hours to participate in our study. The full-time employee was then asked to recruit his or her direct supervisor to also participate. We collected all data via online surveys. First, we sent a baseline survey to leaders and followers one week before the experience-sampling phase. Both surveys included measures of demographics, and the follower survey also included the measure of follower conscientiousness. Next, in the experience-sampling phase of the study, both leaders and followers were sent a survey at the end of each week for six straight weeks. We chose a weekly interval (as opposed to a daily interval) in order to allow potential within-leader variance in transformational behaviors to manifest, as well as to ensure a greater likelihood that employees had interacted with their leaders. Indeed, previous research has shown that there is a considerable amount of within-person variance (36–46%) in

transformational leader behaviors (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, Demerouti, Olsen, & Espevik, 2014; Johnson, Venus, Lanaj, Mao, & Chang, 2012; Lanaj et al., 2016). The leader's weekly survey included assessments of their emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions, and the follower's weekly survey included assessments of their leader's transformational behaviors, follower's positive affect, follower's emotional exhaustion, and follower's OCB.

Out of 156 leader-follower dyads that initially agreed to participate, 130 completed 591 weekly matched surveys (each dyad completed an average of 4.56 weekly surveys, corresponding to a response rate of 76%). Given the concerns of snowball sampling for multisource research, we followed Marcus, Weigelt, Hergert, Gurt, and Gelleri's (2017) recommendation to identify suspicious data by examining user agent strings (i.e., browser version, language, and system software) and timestamps. This examination uncovered no suspicious data; thus, we retained all completed matched surveys.

## Measures

Participants responded to the items described below using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Due to concerns about overburdening participants during experience-sampling studies, we followed the recommendations of Beal (2015) and Uy, Foo, and Aguinis (2010) to assess the Level 1 constructs with as few items as possible without compromising the psychometric properties of the scales.

**Transformational leader behaviors.** We measured transformational leader behaviors (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .90) using five items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)<sup>1</sup> (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Each follower assessed his or her leader's behaviors over the past week.

**Emotional exhaustion.** We captured both leaders' (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .90) and followers' (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .91) emotional exhaustion with a 5-item scale from Pugh, Groth, and Hennig-Thurau (2011), which is similar to the emotional exhaustion scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986) (Maslach Burnout Inventory). Both leaders and followers reported their feelings of mental fatigue over the past week. Example items are, "I've felt tired," and "I've felt exhausted."

**Turnover intentions.** Leaders' turnover intentions (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .91) were measured with a 4-item measure developed by Kelloway, Gottlieb, and Barham (1999). Leaders reported their turnover intentions over the past week. Example items are, "I've thought about leaving this organization," and "I've considered asking people about new job opportunities."

**Organizational citizenship behaviors.** We measured followers' OCB (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .87) with 12 items adapted from Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, and Hulin (2009). Followers reported their engagement in OCB over the past week. Example items are, "I've tried to help my supervisor," and "I've volunteered for additional work tasks."

**Positive affect.** We measured followers' positive affect (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .86) with the 5-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) short form developed by Mackinnon, Jorm, Christensen, Korten, Jacomb, and Rodgers (1999). Followers reported their experience of positive affect over the past week. Example items are "excited" and "inspired."

**Conscientiousness.** Conscientiousness ( $\alpha$  = .87) was measured with Saucier's (1994) adjective checklist. Followers reported their agreement with each of the eight words comprising the scale, reporting the extent to which each word describes them in general. Example items are "organized" and "systematic."

## Analyses

We used multilevel path analysis to test our hypotheses using Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). The between-person variable, conscientiousness, was modeled as a level-2 variable, and the within-person variables, including transformational leader behaviors, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions, were modeled as Level 1 variables using random slopes for hypothesized paths (Beal, 2015). As discussed above, we controlled for previously established beneficial consequences of transformational leader behaviors for followers (i.e., positive affect, [low] emotional exhaustion, and OCB), in order to examine whether the hypothesized intrapersonal detriments of transformational leader behaviors occur alongside those benefits. These benefits were modeled as alternative mechanisms of transformational leadership and their subsequent effect on turnover. We also included prior levels of leader emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions as control variables. In order to minimize model complexity, we followed common practice to model these Level 1 controls using fixed slopes (Ilies, Liu, Liu, & Zheng, 2017; Koopman, Lanaj, & Scott, 2016;

<sup>1</sup> The MLQ, Form 5X-Short (Copyright 1995 by Bernard Bass and Bruce J. Avolio), was used with permission of Mind Garden. [www.mindgarden.com](http://www.mindgarden.com).



Wang et al., 2013). Following recommendations by Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, and Zapf (2010) and Hofmann and Gavin (1998), we grand-mean centered the Level 2 predictor and group-mean centered (i.e., centered around each person's mean) Level 1 predictors. Group-mean centering provides a pure estimate of the within-person relationship by removing between-person variance, and coefficients indicate what occurs when the level of a given predictor is greater or lesser than a person's own average (e.g., emotional exhaustion increases when a given leader behaves more transformationally than usual) (see Enders & Tofighi, 2007).

To test our hypotheses involving mediation and cross-level moderated mediation, we followed Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010), estimating a multi-level model and employing a parametric bootstrap to assess the significance of the indirect effects. Using the formula recommended by Bauer, Preacher, and Gil (2006), we calculated the magnitude of the indirect effect. To test the confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect, we used a Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replications (for similar applications for this method, see Koopman et al., 2016; Lanaj, Johnson, & Barnes, 2014; Wang et al., 2013).

## STUDY 1: RESULTS

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations among the focal variables. Null models partitioning the amount of variance in our Level 1

variables at the within- and between-person levels of analysis revealed that a considerable proportion of variance existed at the within-person level (i.e., 37% in transformational leader behaviors, 42% in leader emotional exhaustion, 28% in leader turnover intentions, 37% in follower OCB, 49% in follower positive affect, and 46% in follower emotional exhaustion), suggesting that multilevel modeling was appropriate. Prior to hypothesis testing, we conducted a within- and between-person confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the fit of the measurement model. Specifically, at the within-person and between-person level, we included the six variables in our model, including transformational leader behaviors, leader emotional exhaustion, leader turnover intentions, follower OCB, follower positive affect, and follower emotional exhaustion. At the between-person level, we also included follower conscientiousness. Given the large number of items, we modeled the constructs with two to four item parcels per construct (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008) using random assignment (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). The hypothesized seven-factor model showed acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(308) = 518.78$ , CFI = .96, RMSEA = .04, and SRMR (between) = .07; all loadings were significant ( $p < .05$ ). This model fit the data significantly better than all 10 constrained models in which any two of the six factors at the within-person level were combined ( $227.20 \leq \Delta \chi^2(\Delta df = 5) \leq 753.58$ ). These findings demonstrate the discriminant validity of the measures of our focal constructs.

TABLE 1  
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations in Study 1

| Variables                           | Mean | SD   | 1      | 2     | 3     | 4      | 5     | 6     | 7      | 8     | 9     |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| <b>Level 1 Variables</b>            |      |      |        |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |
| 1 Transformational Leader Behaviors | 3.71 | 0.36 | (.90)  |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |
| 2 Prior Leader Emotional Exhaustion | 2.50 | 0.48 | -.08   | (.89) |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |
| 3 Leader Emotional Exhaustion       | 2.51 | 0.52 | .11**  | -.08  | (.90) |        |       |       |        |       |       |
| 4 Prior Leader Turnover Intentions  | 1.91 | 0.42 | -.12** | .25** | .05   | (.90)  |       |       |        |       |       |
| 5 Leader Turnover Intentions        | 1.94 | 0.43 | -.02   | .03   | .26** | -.06   | (.91) |       |        |       |       |
| 6 Follower OCB                      | 3.63 | 0.28 | .37**  | -.03  | -.04  | -.24** | -.04  | (.87) |        |       |       |
| 7 Follower Positive Affect          | 3.58 | 0.40 | .13**  | .01   | .00   | .04    | .08   | .20** | (.86)  |       |       |
| 8 Follower Emotional Exhaustion     | 2.62 | 0.53 | .03    | .13** | .01   | -.04   | .01   | -.09* | -.32** | (.91) |       |
| <b>Level 2 Variables</b>            |      |      |        |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |
| 9 Conscientiousness                 | 4.19 | 0.47 | .12    | -.10  | -.13  | .03    | -.00  | .25** | .14    | -.21* | (.87) |

Notes: Level 1  $n = 591$ , Level 2  $n = 130$  (listwise). Correlations for the Level 1 variables represent group-mean centered relationships among the weekly variables at the within-person level of analysis. Level 1 variables were aggregated to provide estimates of between-person relationships with the Level 2 variable. Coefficient alphas are reported in parentheses along the diagonal.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

### Within-Person Hypotheses

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the results of our analyses. Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion. Our results showed that transformational leader behaviors were associated with an increase in leader emotional exhaustion from the previous week ( $\gamma = .19, p < .05$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was related to an increase in leader turnover intentions from the previous week ( $\gamma = .26, p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion was positive and significant (indirect effect = .05, 95% CI = [.004, .104]), supporting Hypothesis 1.

In addition, consistent with prior research, transformational leader behaviors were positively related to follower OCB ( $\gamma = .29, p < .01$ ) and positive affect ( $\gamma = .14, p < .05$ ). However, contrary to prior research, transformational leader behaviors were not related to follower emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .04, n.s.$ ). Finally, we examined the total indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on turnover intentions through emotional exhaustion and these alternative mechanisms. The total indirect effect was not significant (total indirect

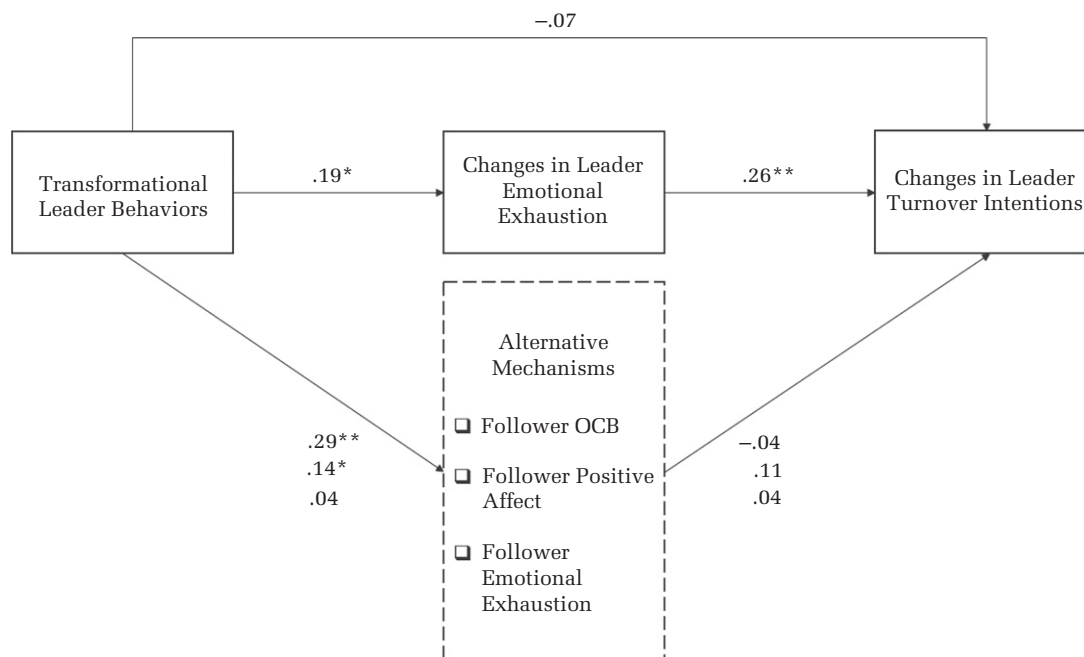
effect = .06, 95% CI = [−.021, .131]), which suggests that the resource loss reflected by emotional exhaustion was enough to offset, but not overshadow, the resource gains reflected by follower OCB and follower positive affect.

### Between-Person Hypotheses

In Study 1, we examined whether follower conscientiousness, as a broad personality trait, moderates the within-individual, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion. Table 3 shows the results of our analyses. Our results showed that follower conscientiousness did exhibit a cross-level moderating effect ( $\gamma = -.30, p < .05$ ), such that the relationship between transformational leadership and leader emotional exhaustion was stronger when followers were low in conscientiousness ( $b = .31, p < .01$ ) than when followers were high in conscientiousness ( $b = .03, n.s.$ ). Figure 3 shows a plot of this interaction. In addition, the within-individual, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was significant when followers were low in conscientiousness (estimate: .07; 95% CI = .017, .134), but not when followers were high in

FIGURE 2

Study 1 Multilevel Path Analysis Results for the Intrapersonal Detriments of Transformational Leader Behaviors





**TABLE 3**  
**Study 1 Cross-level Interaction Results of the Intrapersonal Detriments for Transformational Leader Behaviors**

| Predictor   | DV                          |           |             |                            |           |             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
|   | Leader Emotional Exhaustion |           |             | Leader Turnover Intentions |           |             |
|   | <i>B</i>                    | <i>SE</i> | <i>B/SE</i> | <i>B</i>                   | <i>SE</i> | <i>B/SE</i> |
| Intercept   | 2.49                        | .07       | 37.83**     | 1.40                       | .15       | 9.47**      |
| <i>Level 1 Predictor</i>                              |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Transformational Leader Behaviors                     | .17                         | .09       | 1.84        | -.07                       | .09       | -.74        |
| Prior Leader Emotional Exhaustion                     | -.07                        | .08       | -.87        |                            |           |             |
| Leader Emotional Exhaustion                           |                             |           |             | .22                        | .06       | 3.83**      |
| Follower OCB  |                             |           |             | -.05                       | .49       | -.10        |
| Follower Positive Affect                              |                             |           |             | .12                        | .31       | .38         |
| Follower Emotional Exhaustion                         |                             |           |             | .03                        | .05       | .62         |
| Prior Leader Turnover Intentions                      |                             |           |             | -.11                       | .14       | -.82        |
| <i>Level 2 Predictor</i>                              |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Conscientiousness                                     | -.22                        | .12       | -1.78       | .07                        | .13       | .54         |
| <i>Cross Level Predictor</i>                          |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Conscientiousness × Transformational Leader Behaviors | -.30                        | .13       | -2.29*      | -.31                       | .52       | -.60        |

Notes: Level 1  $n = 591$ , Level 2  $n = 130$  (listwise). Table 3 indicates the results after entering the cross-level moderator. The effects of transformational leader behaviors on follower OCB, positive affect, and emotional exhaustion were the same as the results before entering the cross-level moderator.

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

conscientiousness (estimate: .01; 95% CI =  $-.045, .057$ ). The difference in these indirect effects was significant (estimate =  $-.06$ ; 95% CI =  $-.139$  and  $-.007$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported.

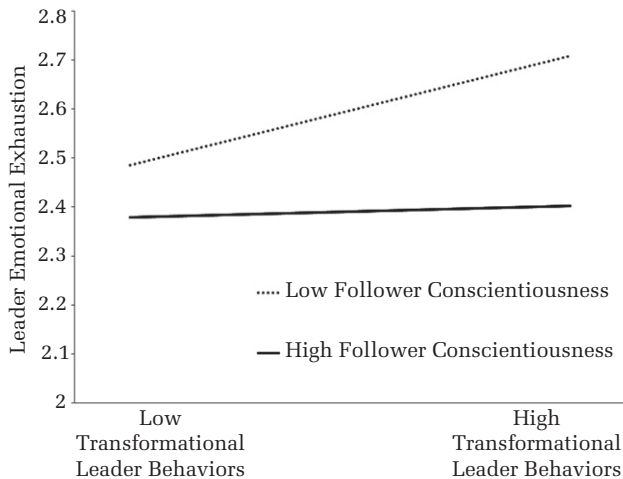
### Robustness Checks

We conducted several robustness checks to further examine our results. First, we removed the alternative mechanisms (follower benefits) and control variables (prior levels of the outcomes). When doing so, our hypothesized relationships remained significant. Specifically, transformational leader behaviors were positively related to leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .19, p < .05$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was positively related to leader turnover intentions ( $\gamma = .26, p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was positive and significant (indirect effect =  $.05$ , 95% CI =  $[.005, .104]$ ). In addition, conscientiousness still moderated the within-person

relationship between transformational leader behaviors and leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = -.29, p < .05$ ), such that the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and leader emotional exhaustion was stronger when followers were low in conscientiousness ( $b = .32, p < .01$ ) than when followers were high in conscientiousness ( $b = .03$ , n.s.).

Second, we re-estimated our model with the previously established benefits (i.e., follower OCB, follower positive affect, and follower emotional exhaustion) as predictors of leader emotional exhaustion and leader turnover intentions as opposed to alternative mechanisms. Transformational leader behaviors were still positively related to leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .23, p < .01$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was still positively related to leader turnover intentions ( $\gamma = .26, p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was positive and significant (indirect effect =  $.06$ , 95% CI =  $[.014, .114]$ ).

**FIGURE 3**  
**Study 1 Cross-Level Moderating Effect of Follower**  
**Conscientiousness on the Relationship between**  
**Transformational Leader Behaviors and Leader**  
**Emotional Exhaustion**



Third, we examined whether transformational leader behaviors in the previous week are negatively associated with transformational leader behaviors in the current week. The results showed that transformational leader behaviors in the previous week were indeed negatively related to transformational leader behaviors in the current week ( $\gamma = -.12$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These results further support the taxing effect of transformational leader behaviors by implying that, following engagement in those behaviors, leaders become depleted and therefore behave less transformationally, perhaps to avoid further losses or because they lack the energy to do so. Finally, although we followed best practice when testing mediation in multilevel models by including the direct path (Preacher et al., 2010), our results were consistent with or without the inclusion of the direct effect.

## STUDY 2: METHOD

Study 1 provided some preliminary support for the notion that transformational leader behaviors tax leaders and have detrimental, within-individual consequences (even when taking into account beneficial effects on followers), and that follower conscientiousness influences the strength of those detriments. In Study 2, we extend our investigation by examining the detrimental consequences of transformational leader behaviors in conjunction with benefits to leaders themselves. In addition,

we examine the more proximal facet of follower competence to complement our moderation findings for follower conscientiousness.

## Sample and Procedures

We used a similar procedure as in Study 1. Students first recruited a full-time employee who works during typical work hours to participate in our study. The full-time employee then recruited his or her direct supervisor and at least two coworkers to participate in order to address a limitation of Study 1 that only one follower was included. Using online surveys, we first sent a baseline survey assessing demographics and personality (follower reports of their conscientiousness and competence). Then, in the experience-sampling phase, we sent surveys to leaders and followers at the end of each week for six consecutive weeks. Followers reported on their leader's transformational behaviors and their leader's affect, and leaders reported on their emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions, work engagement, and need fulfillment.

Out of 97 groups who initially agreed to participate in the study, we obtained data from 79 leaders and 217 followers who completed 394 weekly matched surveys (i.e., each group completed an average of 4.99 weekly surveys, corresponding to a response rate of 83%). We employed the same method (Marcus et al., 2017) as in Study 1 to identify suspicious data. After removing questionable observations, our final sample consisted of 77 leaders and 211 followers who completed 378 weekly matched surveys (i.e., each group completed an average of 4.90 weekly surveys). The leader demographics were as follows: 50% were male, the average age was 47.44 ( $SD = 9.64$ ), average tenure in their current organization was 15.22 ( $SD = 10.93$ ) years, and they held a wide range of job titles, including associate analyst, office supervisor, and store manager. The follower demographics were as follows: 37% were male, the average age was 43.43 ( $SD = 12.50$ ), average tenure in their current organization was 9.76 ( $SD = 8.86$ ) years, and they held a wide range of job titles, including analyst, clerk, and office supervisor. Participants were employed in a variety of industries, including banking, education, healthcare, and retail.

## Measures

Participants responded to the items described below using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Transformational leader behaviors.** We measured transformational leader behaviors (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .97) using all 20 items from the MLQ<sup>2</sup> (Bass & Avolio, 1997), which includes four dimensions: idealized influenced, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Followers reported their leader's behaviors over the past week. Consistent with the theoretical notion (as well as prior research) that, together, these dimensions comprise transformational leadership in a gestalt-like manner (Bass, 1985), our results showed that they were highly correlated with each other (within correlations ranged from .67 to .79). In addition, a multilevel CFA whereby transformational leadership was loaded by the four dimensions and their indicators showed acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(4) = 10.89$ , CFI = .99, RMSEA = .07, and SRMR (between) = .01; all four dimensions had significant loadings ( $p < .01$ ). Given that a higher-order transformational leadership construct captured the variance of the four dimensions well, we averaged the 20 items to measure transformational leadership.

**Emotional exhaustion.** We measured leaders' emotional exhaustion (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .90) with a 5-item scale adapted from Maslach and Jackson (1986). Leaders reported their feelings of mental fatigue over the past week. Example items are, "I've felt emotionally drained from my work," and "I've felt burned out from my work."

**Turnover intentions.** We used the same items as in Study 1 to measure leaders' turnover intentions (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .97).

**Work engagement.** Leaders' work engagement (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .64) was measured with three items from the scale developed by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010). Leaders reported their experience of work engagement over the past week. Items are, "I've exerted a lot of energy on my job," "I've felt positive about my job," and "I've been absorbed by my job."

**Leader need fulfillment.** Leaders' weekly ratings of need fulfillment (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .76) were measured using nine items developed by La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, and Deci (2000). Example items are, "I felt free to be who I was," and "I felt like a competent person." Consistent with the previous literature on need fulfillment, we averaged need fulfillment into an overall construct (Lanaj et al., 2016; Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012).

**Leader state affect.** Follower ratings of their leaders' positive affect (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .92) and negative affect (averaged  $\alpha$  across weeks = .95) over the past week were each measured with the 5-item Mackinnon et al. (1999) PANAS short form. Example items for positive affect are "enthusiastic" and "excited." Example items for negative affect are "distressed" and "upset."

**Conscientiousness.** Followers' conscientiousness ( $\alpha = .81$ ) was measured with the same items as in Study 1.

**Competence.** Followers' competence ( $\alpha = .82$ ) was measured with 10 items from the International Personality Item Pool (Gough, 1996). Followers reported their agreement with each statement. Example items are "I know how to apply my knowledge" and "I come up with good solutions."

## Analyses

We again adopted multilevel path analysis to test our hypotheses using Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). Follower conscientiousness and competence were modeled as Level 2, between-person variables. Transformational leader behaviors, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions were modeled as Level 1, within-person variables using random slopes (Beal, 2015). Once again, we modeled our control variables (intrapersonal benefits of transformational leader behaviors and the prior levels of emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions) using fixed slopes (Ilies et al., 2017; Koopman et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2013). The intrapersonal benefits of transformational leader behaviors were modeled as alternative mechanisms of transformational leadership and their subsequent effect on turnover. Consistent with Study 1, we grand-mean centered the Level 2 predictors and group-mean centered the Level 1 predictors, and we tested our hypotheses involving mediation and cross-level moderated mediation by employing a parametric bootstrap to estimate the indirect effects (Bauer et al., 2006; Kenny, Korchmaros, & Bolger, 2003). We conducted a Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replications to build CIs around each indirect effect. In addition, following the recommendation of Paunonen and Ashton (2001), we examined the moderating effects of conscientiousness and competence simultaneously in order ascertain whether competence, as a facet of conscientiousness, demonstrates incremental validity.

Given that we collected ratings from multiple followers on leaders' transformational behaviors and

<sup>2</sup> The MLQ, Form 5X-Short (Copyright 1995 by Bernard Bass and Bruce J. Avolio), was used with permission of Mind Garden. [www.mindgarden.com](http://www.mindgarden.com).

affect each week, we examined Interclass Correlations (ICCs) in order to support the aggregation of those ratings. A significant proportion of the variance in these variables was at the group (i.e., leader) level. For weekly transformational leader behaviors, average ICC(1) values across weeks was .28, average ICC(2) values across weeks was .51, and  $F$ -test values ranged from  $F(69, 115) = 1.60, p < .05$  to  $F(53, 81) = 3.32, p < .01$ . For weekly leader positive and negative affect, average ICC(1) values across weeks were .14 and .17, respectively; average ICC(2) values across weeks were .31 and .35, respectively; and  $F$ -test values ranged from  $F(61, 97) = 1.22, n.s.$  to  $F(60, 92) = 1.73, p < .01$ , and from  $F(60, 92) = 1.40, p < .10$  to  $F(69, 115) = 1.84, p < .01$ , respectively. Although ICC(2) values are influenced by group size and thus were lower, the ICC(1) values were well above recommended values (Bliese, 2000; Glick, 1985) and support the aggregation of transformational leader behaviors and affect to the group (i.e., leader) level. In addition, because the level of individual perceptual agreement in personality is not central to our theorizing, we averaged follower conscientiousness and competence across followers given their additive nature (Bradley, Klotz, Postlethwaite, & Brown, 2013; Chan, 1998), which represents "the most common operationalization of team personality" (Colquitt, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, LePine, & Sheppard, 2002: 404).

## STUDY 2: RESULTS

Table 4 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations among the focal variables. Similar to the results in Study 1, a considerable proportion of the variance in each Level 1 variable existed at the within-person level (i.e., 38% in transformational leader behaviors, 39% in leader emotional exhaustion, 20% in leader turnover intentions, 45% in leader work engagement, 35% in leader need fulfillment, 45% in leader positive affect, and 40% in leader negative affect), suggesting that multilevel modeling was appropriate. Prior to hypothesis testing, we conducted a within- and between-person CFA to assess the fit of the measurement model. Specifically, at the within-person and between-person level, we included the seven variables in our model noted above. At the between-person level, we also included follower conscientiousness and competence. Consistent with Study 1, we modeled constructs with an average of two to four item parcels per construct. We created four item parcels for transformational leader behaviors by each dimension, three item parcels for leader need fulfillment by each dimension (autonomy,

competence, and relatedness), and other item parcels using random assignment (Little et al., 2002). The hypothesized nine-factor model showed acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(607) = 1069.35.42$ , CFI = .92, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR (between) = .08. This model fit the data significantly better than all 28 constrained models in which any two of the seven factors at the within-person level were combined ( $61.81 \leq \Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df = 6) \leq 796.94$ ), demonstrating the discriminant validity of the measures of our focal constructs.

## Within-Person Hypotheses

Figure 4 and Table 5 show the results of our analyses. Supporting Hypothesis 1 (and replicating the findings of Study 1), our results showed that transformational leader behaviors were associated with an increase in leader emotional exhaustion from the previous week ( $\gamma = .19, p < .05$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was related to an increase in leader turnover intentions from the previous week ( $\gamma = .28, p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion was positive and significant (indirect effect = .05, 95% CI = [.009, .116]).

Consistent with prior research, transformational leader behaviors were positively related to leader work engagement ( $\gamma = .27, p < .01$ ) and positive affect ( $\gamma = .56, p < .01$ ), and negatively related to leader negative affect ( $\gamma = -.35, p < .01$ ). Contrary to prior research, transformational leader behaviors were not related to leader need fulfillment ( $\gamma = .01, n.s.$ ). In addition, consistent with Study 1, the total indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was not significant (total indirect effect =  $-.09$ , 95% CI =  $[-.247, .060]$ ).

## Between-Person Hypotheses

Table 6 shows the results of our cross-level moderation. Hypothesis 2a predicted that follower conscientiousness moderates the indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions via leader emotional exhaustion. In contrast to Study 1, our results showed that conscientiousness did not moderate the within-person relationship between transformational leader behavior and leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .30, n.s.$ ), and the difference in the indirect effects on leader turnover intentions at high versus low levels of follower conscientiousness was not significant (estimate = .03; 95% CI =  $-.062, .261$ ). However, Hypothesis

TABLE 4  
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations in Study 2

| Variables                           | Mean | SD   | 1      | 2     | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7     | 8      | 9      | 10    | 11    |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| <b>Level 1 Variables</b>            |      |      |        |       |        |        |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 1 Transformational Leader Behaviors | 3.66 | 0.32 | (.97)  |       |        |        |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 2 Prior Leader Emotional Exhaustion | 2.37 | 0.50 | .09    | (.89) |        |        |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 3 Leader Emotional Exhaustion       | 2.33 | 0.49 | .13**  | .07   | (.90)  |        |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 4 Prior Leader Turnover Intentions  | 1.98 | 0.47 | .06    | .26** | -.02   | (.97)  |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 5 Leader Turnover Intentions        | 1.97 | 0.43 | .01    | -.04  | .16**  | -.15** | (.97)  |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 6 Leader Work Engagement            | 3.72 | 0.38 | .23**  | -.05  | .11*   | -.02   | -.03   | (.64)  |       |        |        |       |       |
| 7 Leader Need Fulfillment           | 3.73 | 0.25 | .01    | -.02  | -.13** | .00    | -.21** | .24**  | (.76) |        |        |       |       |
| 8 Leader Positive Affect            | 3.62 | 0.32 | .56**  | .07   | -.01   | -.02   | -.15** | .18**  | .02   | (.92)  |        |       |       |
| 9 Leader Negative Affect            | 2.13 | 0.37 | -.30** | -.04  | .03    | -.00   | .10    | -.17** | -.01  | -.34** | (.95)  |       |       |
| <b>Level 2 Variables</b>            |      |      |        |       |        |        |        |        |       |        |        |       |       |
| 10 Conscientiousness                | 4.20 | 0.28 | .16    | -.14  | -.14   | -.28*  | -.26*  | .14    | .09   | .30**  | -.36** | (.81) |       |
| 11 Competence                       | 4.13 | 0.38 | .12    | -.17  | -.09   | -.12   | -.08   | .04    | .05   | .31**  | -.31** | .54** | (.82) |

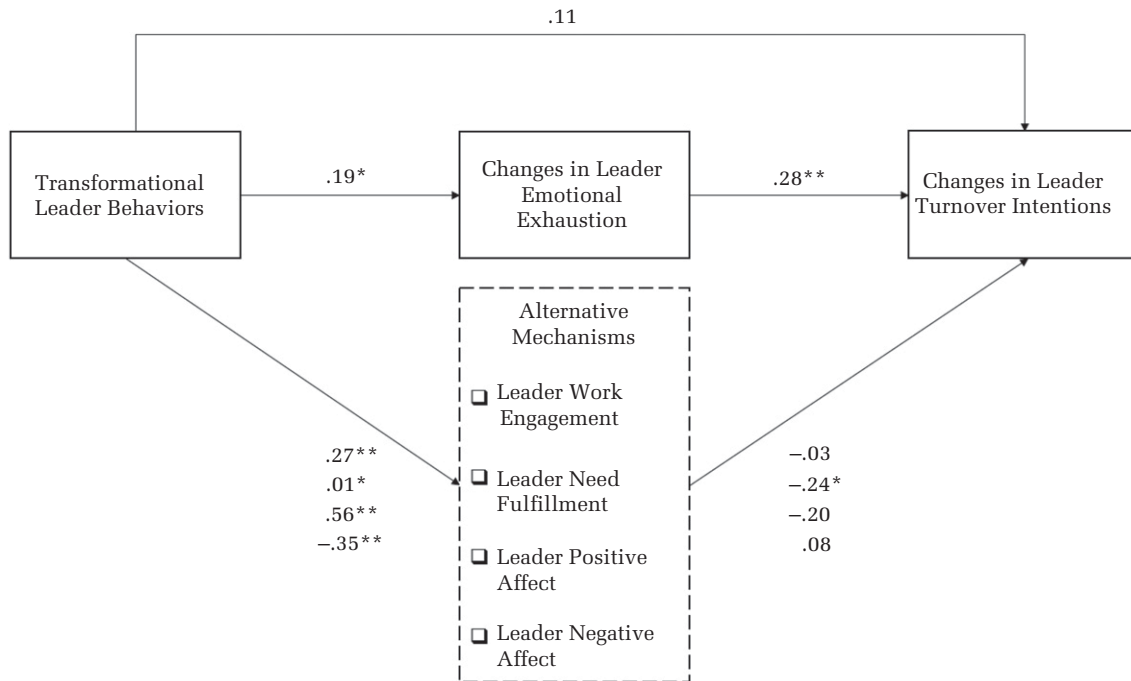
Notes: Level 1  $n = 378$ , Level 2  $n = 77$  (listwise). Correlations for the Level 1 variables represent group-mean centered relationships among the weekly variables at the within-person level of analysis. Level 1 variables were aggregated to provide estimates of between-person relationships with the Level 2 variable. Coefficient alphas are reported in parentheses along the diagonal.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$



**FIGURE 4**  
**Study 2 Multilevel Path Analysis Results for the Intrapersonal Detriments of Transformational Leader Behaviors**



2b, which predicted that follower competence moderates the indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through leader emotional exhaustion, was supported. Specifically, over and above the effects of follower conscientiousness, follower competence exhibited a cross-level moderating effect on the within-individual relationship between transformational leader behaviors and emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = -.69, p < .01$ ), such that the relationship was stronger for followers with low competence ( $b = .40, p < .01$ ) than for followers with high competence ( $b = -.11, n.s.$ ). Figure 5 shows a plot of this interaction. In addition, the within-person, indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions through emotional exhaustion was significant for followers low in competence (estimate: .07; 95% CI = .009, .164) but not for followers high in competence (estimate:  $-.02$ ; 95% CI =  $-.082, .029$ ). The difference in these indirect effects was significant (estimate =  $-.09$ ; 95% CI =  $-.294$  and  $-.011$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

### Robustness Checks

We again conducted several robustness checks. First, we removed all the control variables. When doing so,

our hypothesized relationships remained significant. Specifically, transformational leader behaviors were positively related to leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .20, p < .01$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was positively related to leader turnover intentions ( $\gamma = .31, p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was positive and significant (indirect effect = .06, 95% CI = [.013, .126]). In addition, conscientiousness still did not emerge as a cross-level moderator ( $\gamma = .28, n.s.$ ). However, competence still moderated the within-person relationship between transformational leader behaviors and leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = -.66, p < .01$ ), such that the relationship between transformational leadership and leader emotional exhaustion was stronger when followers were low in competence ( $b = .40, p < .01$ ) than when followers were high in competence ( $b = -.09, ns$ ).

Second, similar to Study 1, we re-estimated our model with the previously established benefits (i.e., leader work engagement, leader need fulfillment, leader positive affect, and leader negative affect) as predictors of leader emotional exhaustion and leader turnover intentions, as opposed to alternative mechanisms. Transformational leader behaviors were still positively related to leader emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .27$ ,

TABLE 5  
Study 2 Multilevel Path Analysis Results for the Intrapersonal Detriments for Transformational Leader Behaviors

| Predictor                         | DV                          |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         |                        |     |         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------|------------------------|-----|---------|-------------------------|-----|---------|------------------------|-----|---------|
|                                   | Leader Emotional Exhaustion |     |         | Leader Work Engagement |     |         | Leader Need Fulfillment |     |         | Leader Positive Affect |     |         |
|                                   | B                           | SE  | B/SE    | B                      | SE  | B/SE    | B                       | SE  | B/SE    | B                      | SE  | B/SE    |
| Intercept                         | 2.33                        | .08 | 28.44** | 3.71                   | .06 | 61.46** | 3.73                    | .05 | 79.61** | 3.62                   | .05 | 75.16** |
| Level 1 Predictor                 |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         |                        |     |         |
| Transformational Leader Behaviors | .19                         | .08 | 2.53*   | .27                    | .10 | 2.74**  | .01                     | .05 | .17     | .56                    | .07 | 8.53**  |
| Prior Leader Emotional Exhaustion | .06                         | .10 | .63     |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | -.35                   | .09 | -3.90** |
| Leader Emotional Exhaustion       |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | 2.15                   | .06 | 35.54** |
| Leader Work Engagement            |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | 1.27                   | .17 | 7.32**  |
| Leader Need Fulfillment           |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | .11                    | .12 | .93     |
| Leader Positive Affect            |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | .28                    | .07 | 4.10**  |
| Leader Negative Affect            |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | -.03                   | .07 | -.36    |
| Prior Leader Turnover Intentions  |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | -.24                   | .09 | -2.53** |
|                                   |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | -.20                   | .12 | -1.60   |
|                                   |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | .08                    | .06 | 1.38    |
|                                   |                             |     |         |                        |     |         |                         |     |         | -.23                   | .08 | -3.03** |

Notes: Level 1  $n = 378$ , Level 2  $n = 77$ . Table 5 indicates the results before entering the cross-level moderator.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

**TABLE 6**  
**Study 2 Cross-level Interaction Results of the Intrapersonal Detriments for Transformational Leader Behaviors**

| Predictor   | DV                          |           |             |                            |           |             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
|   | Leader Emotional Exhaustion |           |             | Leader Turnover Intentions |           |             |
|   | <i>B</i>                    | <i>SE</i> | <i>B/SE</i> | <i>B</i>                   | <i>SE</i> | <i>B/SE</i> |
| Intercept   | 2.34                        | .08       | 28.66**     | 1.55                       | .20       | 7.75**      |
| <i>Level 1 Predictor</i>                              |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Transformational Leader Behaviors                     | .15                         | .08       | 1.82        | .11                        | .11       | 1.02        |
| Prior Leader Emotional Exhaustion                     | .07                         | .10       | .74         |                            |           |             |
| Leader Emotional Exhaustion                           |                             |           |             | .18                        | .08       | 2.32*       |
| Leader Work Engagement                                |                             |           |             | -.01                       | .07       | -.10        |
| Leader Need Fulfillment                               |                             |           |             | -.28                       | .11       | -2.59**     |
| Leader Positive Affect                                |                             |           |             | -.22                       | .12       | -1.76       |
| Leader Negative Affect                                |                             |           |             | .08                        | .06       | 1.33        |
| Prior Leader Turnover Intentions                      |                             |           |             | -.21                       | .07       | -3.16**     |
| <i>Level 2 Predictor</i>                              |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Conscientiousness                                     | -.21                        | .30       | -.72        | -.85                       | .48       | -1.75       |
| Competence  | -.11                        | .26       | -.44        | .22                        | .30       | .73         |
| <i>Cross Level Predictor</i>                          |                             |           |             |                            |           |             |
| Conscientiousness × Transformational Leader Behaviors | .30                         | .37       | .81         | .44                        | .59       | .74         |
| Competence × Transformational Leader Behaviors        | -.69                        | .25       | -2.81**     | -.08                       | .27       | -.28        |

Notes: Level 1  $n = 378$ , Level 2  $n = 77$ . Table 6 indicates the results after entering the cross-level moderators. The effects of transformational leader behaviors on leader work engagement, need fulfillment, positive affect, and negative affect were the same as the results before entering the cross-level moderators.

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

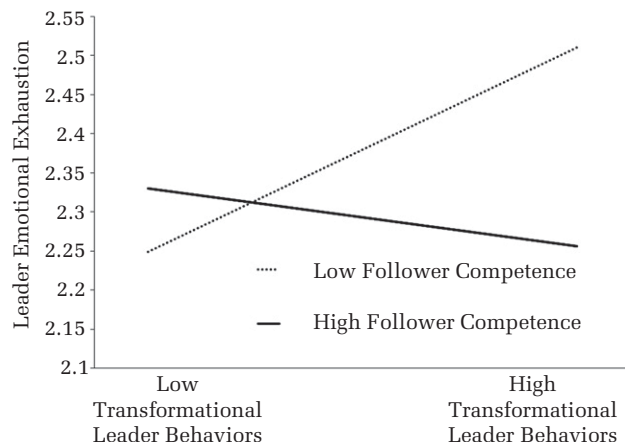
$p < .01$ ), and leader emotional exhaustion was still positively related to leader turnover intentions ( $\gamma = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The indirect effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader turnover intentions was positive and significant (indirect effect = .08, 95% CI = [.022, .149]).

Third, as with Study 1, we examined whether transformational leader behaviors in the previous week were negatively associated with transformational leader behaviors in the current week. Once again, our results showed that transformational leader behaviors in the previous week were negatively related to transformational leader behaviors in the current week ( $\gamma = -.14$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Finally, although we followed best practice when testing mediation in multilevel models by including the direct path (Preacher et al., 2010), our results were consistent with or without the addition of this path.

## DISCUSSION

Despite leadership being a two-way street, involving social exchanges between leaders and followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006), theory and research to date on transformational leadership has been rather lopsided, focusing on the benefits of transformational leader behaviors to followers (e.g., Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Although there has been limited work examining the consequences of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves (Bono & Anderson, 2005; Lanaj et al., 2016), that work mirrors the voluminous literature on followers by assuming that transformational leader behaviors are good for leaders too. We endeavored to reduce this lopsidedness by examining the dark side of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves. Across two studies, we found that transformational leader behaviors were associated with an increase in emotional exhaustion,

**FIGURE 5**  
**Study 2 Cross-Level Moderating Effect of Follower Competence on the Relationship between Transformational Leader Behaviors and Leader Emotional Exhaustion**



which in turn was associated with an increase in turnover intentions. We also gleaned some information about the conditions under which this dark side of transformational leader behaviors is most likely to appear by showing that the effect of transformational leader behaviors on leader emotional exhaustion, as well as its indirect effect on leader turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion, were stronger for leaders with followers low in conscientiousness (Study 1) and competence (Study 2).

### Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our study extends theory and research on transformational leadership in several ways. First, we contribute to the transformational leadership literature by taking an actor-centric perspective and focusing on the intrapersonal consequences of transformational leader behaviors. By viewing transformational leader behaviors through the lens of COR theory, our study challenges the general consensus in the literature that such behaviors are universally positive (Li et al., 2013) and answers calls from scholars to examine its potential dark side (e.g., Lanaj et al., 2016). Although transformational leader behaviors certainly have benefits, they also appear to consume leaders' resources, especially when those behaviors are directed toward certain followers (i.e., those low in conscientiousness or competence).

Second, we contribute to understanding of transformational leadership by utilizing a within-person perspective. Previous research has predominantly

adopted a between-person perspective, assuming that some leaders engage in transformational leader behaviors while others do not (Bono & Judge, 2004; DeRue et al., 2011). However, such assumptions preclude the possibility that a given leader could behave more transformationally at some times but less at others. In line with recent research (e.g., Breevaart et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2012), we found a large proportion of within-person variance (37–38%) in transformational leader behaviors, indicating that such leader behaviors are indeed dynamic. Perhaps more importantly, by linking within-person fluctuations in transformational leader behaviors to important outcomes (i.e., emotional exhaustion and subsequent turnover intentions), we demonstrate that those fluctuations are systematic as opposed to transient error, which between-person approaches would assume. Within-person fluctuations in transformational leader behaviors also suggest that organizations would benefit from focusing on interventions aimed at replenishing leaders' resources when they are depleted, such as respite activities, as opposed to viewing the dark side of transformational leadership as a selection problem.

Although we were successful in illuminating the dark side of transformational leader behaviors (even over and above benefits to followers and leaders), we were admittedly less successful in revealing follower personality as a boundary condition influencing the extent to which that dark side appears. We identified follower conscientiousness as a factor influencing whether transformational leader behaviors are exploited versus wasted, and we reasoned that competence, as a specific facet of conscientiousness, was the essential piece to this puzzle. Although Study 1 supported conscientiousness as a moderator, Study 2 did not. Instead, follower competence emerged as the significant moderator. Given that we did not measure competence in Study 1, we cannot know for certain whether a broader, trait approach (conscientiousness) or a narrower, facet approach (competence) is best. However, our results do at least lend credence to the notion that the intrapersonal consequences of transformational leader behaviors do not occur in a vacuum, but rather are shaped, in part, by characteristics of followers toward whom those behaviors are directed.

From a practical standpoint, our finding that transformational leader behaviors can lead to thoughts of quitting is noteworthy, because turnover is associated with large financial costs (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010), workplace disruptions (Ton & Huckman, 2008), and a greater likelihood of accidents (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005). We thus would suggest caution in recommending that managers "consistently exhibit

transformational leadership” (Li et al., 2013: 226). Instead, steps should be taken to mitigate the detrimental outcomes for leaders. For example, leaders could periodically take breaks in order to psychologically detach from job-related activities (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), or they could engage in social activities to replenish their resources and recover (Sonnentag, 2001). The within-person nature of our study also implies that organizations (and leaders) would benefit from deploying transformational leader behaviors in a more strategic manner (e.g., when the leader is not already low on resources or feeling depleted; when the leader is already experiencing positive emotions and thus does not have to manufacture them through emotion regulation; toward followers high in conscientiousness or competence to ensure that the leader’s efforts are not wasted).

### Limitations and Future Research

Although our research possesses several strengths, such as the use of experience sampling methods with reports from both leaders and followers, it still has several limitations that should be recognized. First, given the nature of our study, we measured our focal variables at the same time. Although we included lagged relationships in order to examine changes in our endogenous variables (Beal, 2015), our studies cannot establish causality. In addition, although we obtained data from different sources (i.e., leaders and followers), which is atypical in experience-sampling studies, not every relationship (i.e., the relationship between leader emotional exhaustion and leader turnover intentions) was based on independent sources of data. That being said, common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012) is unlikely to account for our findings, especially considering that the use of group-mean centering in experience sampling designs mitigates several sources of common method variance (e.g., social desirability, acquiescence, and common rater effects) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Second, we relied on one follower report for transformational leader behaviors and conscientiousness in Study 1, which raises concerns about selection bias and the representativeness of leaders and followers in our sample. It may be that followers only approached supervisors with whom they have a good relationship to participate in the study. Although we tried to address this limitation by including multiple followers in Study 2, it was not practically feasible to conduct an experience-sampling study of leaders and all of their followers. If information about followers was known ahead of

time, then future researchers could attempt to randomly select a group of followers to ensure greater representativeness. That being said, the means of follower ratings of transformational leader behaviors in both studies were below 4.0, which suggests that the leaders included in this study were not merely those who were viewed in an overwhelmingly positive manner by their followers. In addition, the fact that we still found a significant moderating effect for the conscientiousness of a single follower in Study 1 suggests that even one follower may be enough of a “bad apple” to “spoil the barrel,” so to speak, which is consistent with research on the conscientiousness of team members (see Felps, Mitchell, & Byington, 2006).

Third, we only focused on the short-term, proximal outcomes of transformational leader behaviors for leaders themselves. Our short-term focus matches well with the tenets of COR theory that resource losses are episodic (Halbesleben et al., 2014), and it allowed us to extend previous research on within-person variance in transformational leader behaviors (Johnson et al., 2012; Lanaj et al., 2016) by demonstrating that such behaviors are associated with resource loss. That being said, future research could also adopt a long-term perspective to understand the dark side of transformational leader behaviors. For example, it may be that transformational leaders are less likely to experience burnout in the long run because they eventually see the fruits of their labor (i.e., the gains from their transformational behaviors). However, it may also be that the beneficial consequences of their transformational behaviors (e.g., higher performance), coupled with repeated bouts of exhaustion and intentions to quit, act as shocks that prompt voluntary turnover at some point because: (1) their effectiveness as a leader makes them more marketable, and (2) they experience dissatisfaction with their current job (see Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008). One interesting question for future research is whether leaders who leave their current organization for a better opportunity (i.e., a higher-level position) find themselves in the ironic position of having to engage in as much (or more) transformational behaviors than in their previous job. On the one hand, this would be illogical if transformational behaviors prompted the leader to quit in the first place. On the other hand, it would be logical if the leader views those behaviors as the price to be paid for personal advancement. Moreover, it may be the case that advancement to a higher-performing organization provides the leader with the opportunity to direct transformational leader behaviors toward more competent followers, and thus quitting is a means to change the recipients of the leader’s behaviors.

Fourth, we focused our investigation on transformational leader behaviors and did not consider other leadership behaviors that may also bring detriments to leaders themselves. Ultimately, it is an empirical question as to whether our model would hold for other “positive” leader behaviors (such as transactional leadership, ethical leadership, and servant leadership), as well as “negative” leader behaviors (such as abusive supervision). Due to the high demands associated with transformational leader behaviors that we discussed, it may be that their dark sides are “darker” relative to other leader behaviors because the resource losses are greater. Regarding abusive leader behaviors in particular, previous research has shown that leaders engage in abusive behaviors when they are low on resources (Barnes, Lucianetti, Bhawe, & Christian, 2015; Lin, Ma, & Johnson, 2016), which suggests that resource loss and emotional exhaustion are antecedents, rather than consequences, of abusive behavior.

Fifth, although we focused on follower characteristics as moderators of the effects of transformational leader behaviors, it is possible that leader characteristics may also serve as moderators (cf., Lanaj et al., 2016). For example, since leaders with a promotion focus value transformational leader behaviors because those behaviors involve striving for ideals and motivating change (Johnson et al., 2017; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007), they may be less adversely affected by engaging in those behaviors. In addition, it may be that leaders with a more abstract construal level (compared to those with a more concrete construal level [Trope & Liberman, 2010]) are better able to ignore the short-term detriments of transformational leader behaviors by focusing on the long-term, potential benefits instead (i.e., achievement of the leader’s vision).

Finally, although we utilized COR theory to argue that followers who lack conscientiousness and competence signal to leaders (and actually influence) whether their leader’s transformational behaviors are likely to be exploited or wasted, we did not directly assess whether such followers do, in fact, waste their leader’s transformational behaviors, or whether the leader perceives that their efforts will be wasted. Future research could thus directly examine these proposed mechanisms, which could also reveal whether actual waste versus the perception of waste is more important.

## CONCLUSION

Although transformational leader behaviors bring benefits to followers and leaders, our study demonstrates

that these behaviors may simultaneously bring costs to leaders themselves. Drawing on COR theory, the results of two experience-sampling studies showed that transformational leader behaviors have a dark side, and the extent to which this dark side appears depends on characteristics of followers. We hope that our work not only challenges the way we think about transformational leader behaviors, but also stimulates future scholars to take a more balanced look at the pros and cons of this important leader behavior.

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