

**Attachment Styles and Workplace Stressors: An Individual and Contextual  
Approach to Employee Well-Being and Behavior and  
the Mediating Role of Surface Acting**

by

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## Abstract

Workplace stress is a thriving area of research and is a topic of concern to employees and employers, alike. Using a conservation of resources framework, I sought to take an integrative approach to better understand how workplace stress influences employee well-being and work behaviors. In so doing, I investigated the influence of attachment styles and workplace stressors on employees' emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (OCB-I). Data were collected through online subordinate and supervisor surveys which resulted in 206 matched supervisor and subordinate pairs. The results offered some support to the hypothesized model. As hypothesized, attachment avoidance and challenge stressors demonstrated positive associations with emotional exhaustion, and attachment avoidance negatively related to feedback inquiry. Further, attachment avoidance positively related to surface acting, and surface acting positively related to emotional exhaustion. Surface acting mediated the association between attachment avoidance and feedback inquiry. However, the relation between surface acting and feedback inquiry was positive instead of the expected negative relation. Findings are discussed as well as limitations and directions for future research.

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## List of Abbreviations

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
COR	Conservation of Resources
CMV	Common Method Variance
ECR	Experiences in Close Relationships Scale
ECR-S	Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Short Form
FSB	Feedback Seeking Behavior
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
OCB	Organizational Citizenship Behavior
OCB-I	Organizational Citizenship Behavior - interpersonal
OCB-O	Organizational Citizenship Behavior - organization
OMB	Office of Management and Budget

RMSEA      Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

SEM        Structural Equation Model

SRMR      Standardized Root Mean Residual

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Workplace stress is a vital topic of concern for organizations particularly due to its associations with employee attitudes, behaviors, and well-being. To illustrate, work stress has been linked to important individual and organizational outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and actual turnover (e.g., Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007); performance (e.g., LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005); organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Eatough, Chang, Miloslavic, & Johnson, 2011); emotional exhaustion (e.g., LePine, LePine, & Jackson, 2004); cardiovascular disease (e.g., Kivimaki et al., 2011); depression (e.g., Blackmore, Stansfeld, Weller, Munce, Zagorski, & Stewart, 2007); and physical symptoms such as gastrointestinal problems and sleep disturbances (e.g., Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011). Given the potentially devastating effects workplace stress can have on individuals (e.g., depression) and organizations (e.g., turnover), stress is a vital area of study. Indeed, stress in the workplace is a thriving research area as evidenced by recent stress-related quantitative and qualitative reviews (e.g., Eatough et al., 2011; Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; LePine et al., 2005; Nixon et al., 2011; Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 1989, 2001) has become a popular theory employed in the stress literature (e.g., Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009; Kramer & Chung, 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2012) in part, because it allows for consideration of both internal and contextual processes (Hobfoll, 2001). COR theory suggests individuals are motivated to keep, protect, and build valued resources. Resources refer to objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that

individuals consider valuable or that facilitate the attainment of valued objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies (Hobfoll, 1989).

The overarching purpose of this dissertation is to develop an integrative understanding of the influence of stress on individuals' well-being and workplace behaviors through an examination of key internal (captured as attachment styles) and contextual (captured as workplace stressors) processes in organizations that should be salient to a COR theory perspective. Specifically, I examine whether attachment styles and workplace stressors relate to individuals' experienced emotional exhaustion, their tendency to ask their supervisors for feedback (i.e., feedback inquiry), and their tendency to engage in positive interpersonal discretionary behaviors (i.e., interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior; OCB-I) and whether individuals' deliberate efforts to modify their emotional expressions (i.e., surface acting) is a mechanism through which these relations occur.

I chose to measure attachment styles and workplace stressors as independent variables because I expected these variables to be particularly relevant to a COR theory perspective. Rooted in attachment theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1982; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), attachment styles are comprised of two dimensions: *attachment anxiety* which reflects a general preoccupation with relationships and *attachment avoidance* which reflects a general discomfort with closeness in relationships (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). These dimensions represent differences in how individuals approach their relationships with important others (e.g., parents, friends, supervisors), and they become particularly salient in times of stress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). To date, the majority of studies related to attachment theory have

focused on attachment styles as the key independent variables (e.g., L. M. Little, Nelson, Wallace, & Johnson, 2011; Richards & Schat, 2011). Studying attachment styles and workplace stressors together allows for a richer understanding of the influence of stress on well-being and work behaviors as well as for a comparison of dispositional and contextual factors.

Attachment styles were chosen because individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance should have fewer resources available due to resource loss and to difficulties replenishing or acquiring new resources. Accordingly, I expect such individuals will experience negative effects in terms of their well-being (measured as emotional exhaustion) and will be less likely to engage in feedback inquiry, a proactive behavior, or in interpersonal citizenship behavior, a discretionary behavior. In this dissertation, attachment styles are conceptualized as an individual difference likely to evoke the stress process.

Workplace stressors refer to contextual variables that evoke the stress process (LePine et al., 2005). I chose to include two different types of stressors (i.e., hindrance stressors and challenge stressors) because both types of stressors should consume individuals' resources and negatively impact well-being. However, these two types of stressors tend to have different effects on other organizational outcomes, and I expect that hindrance and challenge stressors will relate differently to feedback inquiry and OCB-I.

Also in line with a COR theory perspective, the mediating role of surface acting is investigated. A form of emotional labor, surface acting denotes ways individuals may actively seek to modify their expression of emotions (Grandey, 2000) such as smiling when they do not feel happy. Surface acting requires effort and depletes mental

resources, which can be stressful to individuals (Hülshager, Lang, & Maier, 2010; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Lastly, I chose three dependent variables (i.e., emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I) that I expect to be particularly relevant to a COR theory perspective. Emotional exhaustion was selected as it is a commonly studied outcome of workplace stressors and is considered an important indicator of psychological strain (Halbesleben, Wheeler, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013). Next, feedback inquiry was chosen because it is considered a proactive behavior that may benefit employees. Feedback inquiry would require an investment of individuals' resources, and individuals with limited resources may be less likely to engage thereby foregoing the potential benefits. Lastly, interpersonal citizenship behavior (OCB-I), a discretionary behavior, was selected because it is considered an important component of performance. I similarly argue that individuals with limited resources are less likely to engage in such behaviors.

### **Contributions**

This dissertation contributes to the literature in several ways. First, drawing on the conservation of resources (COR) theory, this dissertation offers further insight into how attachment styles, as individual difference variables particularly salient in times of stress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995), and workplace stressors, as contextual variables that evoke the stress process (LePine et al., 2005), relate to employees' emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I. Studying attachment styles and workplace stressors together allows for a simultaneous investigation of an individual difference and contextual approach to studying stress. As attachment styles have thus far been relatively understudied in the organizational literature, a related contribution lies in the inclusion of

attachment styles in this dissertation and the examination of attachment styles in conjunction with workplace stressors.

Another contribution is the examination of both challenge and hindrance stressors. Detecting relations between stressors and work outcomes could prove challenging if all stressors are combined (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine, 2004) as demonstrated by recent studies that have shown different effects on outcomes for the different stressor dimensions (e.g., LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2007). Podsakoff et al. urged researchers to consider this complexity in future research. Webster, Beehr, and Christiansen (2010) also recommended further investigation into the dual dimensionality of work stressors as not all stressors may have detrimental effects on workplace outcomes. This dissertation also responds to recommendations made by previous researchers (e.g., Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Frazier, & Finch, 2009) to examine health outcomes of challenge and hindrance stressors and Podsakoff et al.'s suggestion to study whether these stressors have different relations to OCB.

A final contribution involves investigating the mediating role of surface acting in intra-organizational relationships. To date, studies of surface acting have largely occurred in service contexts where the interactions of interest are those between employees and customers (e.g., Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004). Seery and Corrigan (2009) recommended that future researchers consider how emotional labor occurs among coworkers, arguing that rules regarding such relationships may differ from those traditionally studied. In line with this recommendation and with Ozelik (2013) who studied surface acting in intra-organizational relationships, this dissertation examines surface acting occurring within organizational relationships.



Specifically, I investigate how surface acting mediates the relations of attachment styles and stressors with well-being (i.e., emotional exhaustion) and positive workplace behaviors (i.e., feedback inquiry and OCB-I). This dissertation addresses Kammeyer-Mueller et al.'s (2013) recommendation to account for individual differences and contextual components when studying the emotional labor process. The overarching contribution of this dissertation, then, is the merging of the attachment, stress, and emotional labor literature to offer an individual and contextual approach to understanding employee well-being and behavior. Developing a better understanding of these relations may allow insight into how to better prevent non-productive resource loss and how to better promote productive resource gain.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an introduction to my dissertation including why the particular variables were chosen and why they are important to study. This chapter also highlighted the expected contributions of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, I build a case for my dissertation model by offering a review of the literature attuned to the dissertation variables, theory development, prior research findings, and dissertation hypotheses. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methods used in collecting responses and the resulting data analyses. Chapter 4 provides the results of the hypothesis testing, and Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the dissertation findings and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

### Conservation of Resources Theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 2001) is an integrative theory of stress that takes into account both environmental and individuals' internal processes as contributors to stress. COR theory is built upon the central tenet that individuals endeavor to keep, protect, and build valued resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). According to COR theory, resources are “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” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). In a workplace setting, *object resources* refer to objects (e.g., office) that have value to individuals. *Personal characteristics* (e.g., job mastery) serve as resources when they help individuals resist stress. *Conditions* (e.g., valued work role) serve as resources to the extent that individuals value them. Lastly, *energies* represent resources (e.g., time) that are of value because of their instrumentality in gaining other resources (Hobfoll, 1989).

According to COR theory, psychological stress occurs when there is (a) a threat of resource loss, (b) an actual resource loss, or (c) no resource gain after the investment of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Although individuals may evaluate resource loss through their own appraisals of the situation, most resources are objective or observable and would accordingly be interpreted in the same manner by others in similar situations (Hobfoll, 2001). COR theory predicts that when individuals face stress, they will actively try to minimize their loss of resources. When they do not face current stress, they will seek to develop excess resources for future needs (Hobfoll, 1989).

Several principles can be derived from COR theory's central tenet. The first principle, *the primacy of resource loss*, recognizes that resource loss is more salient to an individual than resource gain. The second principle, *resource investment*, recognizes that individuals must use or invest resources in attempts to counter resource loss, recover from losses, and acquire resources. This use of resources adds additional stress. COR theory suggests individuals who possess greater resources are better able to acquire additional resources and better protected from resource loss. Additionally, initial resource gain promotes further gain (Hobfoll, 2001). On the other hand, individuals with fewer resources have more difficulty gaining resources and are more susceptible to resource loss. Moreover, initial resource loss promotes further loss, making such individuals increasingly vulnerable to *loss spirals*. Individuals with limited resources are less willing to invest resources due to a lack of resources to invest or a desire to conserve their remaining resources. Such individuals have fewer options than those having more available resources and, in their efforts to conserve resources, are likely to implement a defensive coping strategy (e.g., denial), which may be costly and unlikely to succeed in the long run (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001).

Drawing from COR theory, I propose that attachment styles and workplace stressors influence individuals' available resources, as indicated by their level of emotional exhaustion, and their tendency to engage in feedback inquiry and interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (OCB-I). I also propose that surface acting mediates these associations. Figure 1 provides a representation of the hypothesized direct effects model, and Figure 2 depicts the hypothesized mediation model. In the following paragraphs, I provide an overview of attachment styles and workplace stressors as well as

a description of proposed mediator and dependent variables. The chapter concludes with theory development and proposed hypotheses.

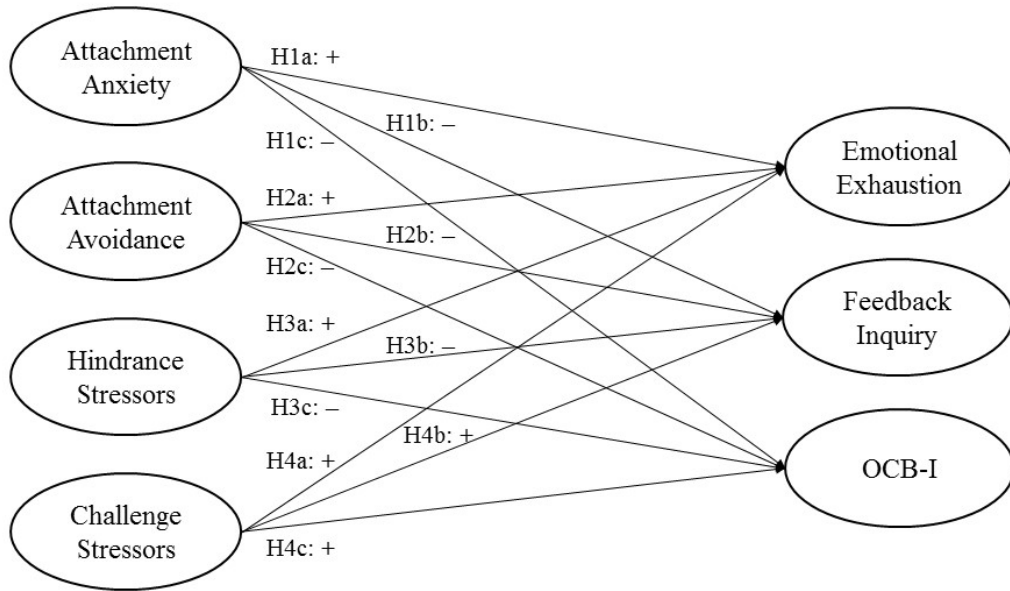


Figure 1. Hypothesized direct effects model.

Note. OCB-I = interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior.

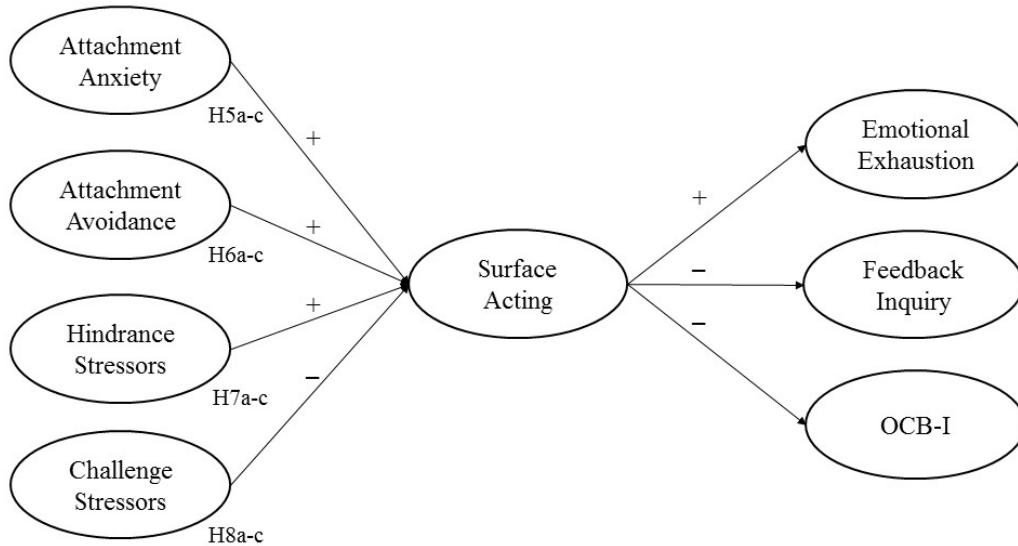


Figure 2. Hypothesized mediation model.

Note. OCB-I = interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior. Direct effect relationships are not shown for parsimony.

## Overview of Study Variables

### Independent Variables

**Attachment styles.** An extension of infant attachment theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1982), adult attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) describes the natural tendency of individuals to form strong affectional bonds to certain others (Bowlby, 1977). Henceforth simply referred to as attachment theory, adult attachment theory is well established as one of the most influential theories in developmental and social psychology (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Further, since Hazan and Shaver's (1990) pivotal article that applied attachment theory to an organizational context, it is increasingly recognized as an important theoretical perspective in organizational research (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011).

Within attachment theory, *attachment styles* represent differences in how individuals view and build relationships. Several attachment style conceptualizations exist including Hazan and Shaver's (1987) three categories (i.e., secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant), Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four prototypes (i.e., secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful), and Joplin, Nelson, and Quick's (1999) three patterns (i.e., interdependent, overdependent, and counterdependent). However, Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's (1998) approach has arguably become the preferred conceptualization and is employed in this dissertation. In this approach, two dimensions represent attachment styles: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. *Attachment anxiety* reflects jealousy, preoccupation with relationships, fear of abandonment, and a fear of rejection. *Attachment avoidance* reflects self-reliance, avoidance of intimacy, and a general discomfort with closeness (Brennan et al.). By

convention, high levels on one or both of these dimensions signify *insecure* attachment whereas low levels of both dimensions denote *secure* attachment.

As work is inherently a relational act in which decisions and communications are influenced by relationships (Bluestein, 2011), attachment theory lends itself well to workplace studies. Attachment styles have been associated with a variety of outcomes important for organizational functioning including work engagement (Littman-Ovadia, Oren, & Lavy, 2013), leader-member exchange (LMX; Richards & Hackett, 2012), turnover intentions (Richards & Schat, 2011), and well-being factors (e.g., Neria, Guttman-Steinmetz, Koenen, Levinovsky, Zakin, & Dekel, 2001; Simmons, Nelson, & Quick, 2003). Further, attachment avoidance demonstrated a positive indirect relation to production deviance (i.e., behavior that goes against norms regarding work quality and quantity) through vigor (L. M. Little, Nelson, Wallace, & Johnson, 2011), and a negative association with trust in supervisor (Frazier, Gooty, Little, & Nelson, 2015).

Attachment styles may be thought of in terms of a hierarchical network. At the top of the hierarchy are *general attachment styles*, which develop from a pattern of relationship experiences and serve as the default approach especially in times of stress or new situations (N. L. Collins & Read, 1994). Considered to operate as an individual difference variable, these attachment styles remain fairly stable across relationships (Pierce & Lydon, 2001). At the bottom of the hierarchy are *relationship-specific attachment styles*, which develop from interactions with specific individuals, called *attachment figures* (e.g., relationship partners, close friends, supervisors). In a work context, attachment styles are commonly studied in terms of individuals' approach to relationships in general, (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011) or as specific relationships such

as those with their supervisors (e.g., Game, 2008). In this dissertation, I employ *general* attachment styles to capture individuals' general attachment approach to relationships and to better represent attachment styles as an individual difference variable.

**Workplace stressors.** In an organizational context, *stressors* refer to stimuli in the work environment that place demands on individuals (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Stressors can be categorized as hindrances or challenges (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). *Hindrance stressors* are “work-related demands or circumstances that that tend to constrain or interfere with an individual’s work achievement and that do not tend to be associated with potential gains for the individual” (Cavanaugh et al., 2000, p. 68). Examples of hindrance stressors are organizational politics, red tape, role ambiguity, and role conflict (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005). On the other hand, *challenge stressors* refer to demands or situations in the workplace that are linked to potential gains for individuals despite being potentially stressful (Cavanaugh et al.). If challenge stressors can be overcome, they may help individuals reach their goals (Webster, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2010). Time pressures and high levels of responsibility are examples of challenge stressors (Cavanaugh et al.).

Workplace stressors have become a thriving area of study as evident through recent meta-analyses. These studies have provided strong evidence that workplace stressors relate to individual well-being including psychological strain (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007), physical symptoms (Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011), and a variety of important organizational outcomes including performance (Chang et al., 2009; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; LePine et al., 2005), organizational

citizenship behavior (OCB; Chang et al., 2009; Eatough, Chang, Miloslavich, & Johnson, 2011), turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2007), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Chang et al., 2009; Podsakoff et al., 2007).

### **Surface Acting as a Mediator Variable**

Emotional labor refers to the process of modifying feelings and expressions as an effort to meet organizational goals (Grandey, 2000). Self-regulatory processes play a crucial role in emotional labor (Converse & DeShon, 2009). Self-regulation refers to “processes that enable an individual to guide his or her goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances, including the modulation of thought, affect, and behavior” (Porath & Bateman, 2006, p. 185). A prominent view in the self-regulation literature is that the amount of inner self-regulatory resources available to an individual at any time influences the effectiveness of self-regulation (Converse & DeShon). These limited resources are drained as they are used, suggesting that the effectiveness of self-regulation decreases with use over time (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). When an individual is depleted of resources, self-regulation becomes less successful (Bhave & Glomb, 2016).

Emotional labor is often conceptualized in terms of two strategies: surface acting and deep acting. Individuals employing *surface acting* seek to manage their observable emotional expressions. Such individuals may display more emotion than they feel, suppress the emotions they feel, or fake the emotions altogether to present an appropriate expression. Through *deep acting*, individuals seek to manage their feelings and may attempt to modify the situation or their perception of the situation to actually experience the emotion they display (Grandey, 2000).



Emotional labor maps well onto emotion regulation theory (Grandey, 2000), which refers to “the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998, p. 275). Although both surface and deep acting require effort, which drain mental resources, surface acting is considered more taxing on individuals’ limited resources (Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016). Accordingly, I investigate emotional labor in terms of surface acting and expect surface acting will mediate relations between attachment styles and stressors with emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior. Surface acting is a response-focused form of emotion regulation used when the emotion has already developed (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). Because surface acting involves attempts to conform to expectations, it has been called “faking in bad faith” (Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Studies of surface acting have typically involved service jobs (e.g., Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005) including such occupations as bank tellers (e.g., Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009), customer service (e.g., Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004), and nurses’ aides and childcare workers (e.g., Seery & Corrigan, 2009). The interactions of interest have typically been those between employees and clients or customers. However, researchers now acknowledge that the use of surface acting is not limited to service jobs but rather extends into most occupations (Mahoney, Buboltz, Buckner, & Doverspike, 2011). Surface acting is also not limited to interactions with clients or customers, but applies to intra-organizational relationships such as those between coworkers or between leaders and followers (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Ozcelik, 2013).

Intra-organizational relationships are inherently different from those between employees and customers and the driving forces behind surface acting should be different for intra-organizational relationships (Ozcelik, 2013). For example, relative to service-based relationships (e.g., employees and customers), intra-organizational relationships tend to be more political and include differing interests and assessments of matters occurring within the organization. Further, employees are expected to have a stronger motivation to gain social acceptance from coworkers and to maintain healthy working relationships with them than they would have in service-based encounters (Ozcelik). I focus on surface acting in intra-organizational relationships to gain a better understanding of the influence intra-organizational surface acting has on employees.

### **Dependent Variables**

To examine the impact of attachment styles and workplace stressors on individuals' well-being and workplace behaviors, I test the relations of these variables with emotional exhaustion and two workplace behaviors (i.e., feedback inquiry and interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior; OCB-I). Emotional exhaustion is an important indicator of strain in employees (Halbesleben, Wheeler, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013). Feedback inquiry, a proactive behavior (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, & Sackett, 2015), was chosen because research has demonstrated task-related feedback is a valuable resource that helps individuals attain performance goals and enhance workplace relationships (Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012). Finally, I selected OCB-I, a discretionary behavior (B. J. Collins & Mossholder, in press), because citizenship behavior is considered a vital component to organizations' performance and long-term success (Takeuchi, Bolino, & Lin, 2015).

**Emotional exhaustion.** Emotional exhaustion gauges employee well-being. It is a core dimension of burnout and closely linked to stress (Courtright, Colbert, & Choi, 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Emotional exhaustion reflects a chronic state of resource depletion experienced as a consequence of excessive job demands and continuous hassles at work (Courtright et al., 2014; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

**Feedback inquiry.** Feedback seeking behavior (FSB) includes both *feedback inquiry*, which involves explicit verbal requests for feedback and *feedback monitoring*, which follows a more passive observation of the work environment for information. Individuals engaging in feedback inquiry open themselves up to others' judgments, therefore, attaching more personal risk to this form of FSB. However, inquiry stands to offer valuable performance evaluations that may support goal attainment (Ashford, Blatt, & Walle, 2003). Indeed, in their recent meta-analysis, Anseel et al. (2015) observed recent FSB research tends to focus on the inquiry dimension over the monitoring dimension. They advised researchers not to view the two FSB dimensions as indicators of the same construct. In line with recent FSB studies (e.g., Dahling et al., 2012) and recent meta-analytic results that found only inquiry led to significant increases in job performance (Anseel et al.), I focus on feedback inquiry in this dissertation. Further, although feedback may be sought from peers (e.g., Callister, Kramer, & Turban, 1999), my interest in this dissertation is on feedback sought from supervisors.

**Interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (OCB-I).** Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to “contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” (Organ, 1997, p. 91). Empirically distinct from task performance (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr,

2007), OCB is commonly viewed in terms of two broad categories including OCB intended to benefit the organization (OCB-O) and OCB intended to benefit individuals in the organization, or interpersonal OCB (OCB-I; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Particularly because attachment styles influence interpersonal relationships, I focus only on OCB-I in this dissertation.

## **Theory Development and Hypotheses**

### **Direct Effects Hypotheses**

In the following sections, I rely on COR theory to develop hypotheses regarding direct relations of attachment styles and hindrance and challenge stressors with the study outcome variables.

**Attachment style direct effects.** Attachment styles reflect positive or negative views of self and others. Attachment anxiety is characterized by a negative view of self and positive view of others, whereas attachment avoidance is represented by a positive self-view and negative view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Through a series of studies, Mikulincer (1998a) demonstrated individuals scoring high in attachment anxiety demonstrated a negative self-view, and that this view was more negative in the presence of attachment threat words (i.e., words accentuating rejection and separation) versus neutral words (e.g., kitchen, pencil). Those scoring high in attachment avoidance demonstrated a positive self-view. This view was more positive in the presence of self-reliance threat words (i.e., words emphasizing personal weakness and dependence on others) versus neutral words. The author suggested that the intent associated with each attachment dimension (i.e., pursuing others' acceptance or pursuing self-reliance) may underlie their respective self-views. Interestingly, Mikulincer suggested the positive self-

view associated with avoidance might actually be a defensive strategy used to shield perceived rejection or personal deficiencies. The positive self-view might reflect repression by which undesired information is dissociated from desired information concerning the self.

Attachment styles are particularly salient in times of stress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). Bowlby (1988) suggested that attachment styles serve as cognitive schemas offering guidelines for coping with stress. Mikulincer, Orbach, and Iavnieli (1998) described different strategies associated with secure versus insecure attachment for coping with perceived threats and stress. Secure attachment (i.e., low levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance) is an adaptive style of coping. Individuals engage in effective support seeking and can acknowledge distress without becoming overwhelmed by it.

Each attachment dimension is associated with maladaptive strategies for dealing with stress and perceived threats. Preoccupation with relationships, a fear of rejection and abandonment, and jealousy characterize attachment anxiety (Brennan et al., 1998). It is associated with hyperactivating strategies whereby individuals seek to minimize physical or psychological distance from the source of stress and win others' approval and acceptance through "clinging, hypervigilant, and controlling responses" (Mikulincer et al., 1998, p. 437). These strategies are associated with an increased tendency to detect threats in everyday situations, exaggerate the possible consequences, and ruminate on the potential consequences of the threats. This leads to a continuing cycle of distress (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Several studies help illustrate hyperactivating strategies related to attachment anxiety. Individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety relied on emotion-focused strategies (e.g., hypervigilant

attention) in dealing with stressful events (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995; Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993) and reported higher levels of anger, less control over their anger, and a greater tendency to ruminate on feelings without overtly expressing them (Mikulincer, 1998b). Such individuals easily accessed negative memories and were unable to limit the spreading of negative emotion (Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995).

Gentzler, Kerns, and Keener (2010) investigated how attachment styles related to emotional reactions and responses to negative and positive events. In an experiment, participants either received positive or negative feedback, and changes in their affect were assessed. Individuals scoring higher in attachment anxiety demonstrated greater increases in negative affect regardless of the experimental condition, indicating these individuals were more feedback reactive. The authors suggested attachment anxious individuals may be predisposed to interpreting events negatively.

In contrast to attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance is characterized by discomfort with closeness, avoidance of intimacy, and self-reliance (Brennan et al., 1998). It is manifested through deactivating strategies in which individuals distance themselves from others and stress-related cues to suppress unpleasant thoughts and feelings and attain self-reliance and autonomy (Mikulincer et al., 1998). Studies suggest attachment avoidance relates to a reliance on distancing strategies to deal with stressful events (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995; Mikulincer et al., 1993). Related, individuals scoring high in attachment avoidance reported high levels of defensiveness and low emotional intensity accompanying negative memories (Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995).

Research suggests, however, that despite efforts to avoid or repress distressing thoughts and feelings, individuals with high attachment avoidance still experience

physiological reactions to stress. Although individuals high in avoidance reported low levels of anger in response to anger scenarios, these individuals also reacted to the scenarios with increased physiological symptoms (i.e., heart rate changes; Mikulincer, 1998b). Finally, these individuals also reported greater escapist responses (i.e., responses meant to diffuse anger by dismissing the situation) and were more prone to interpreting others' actions as hostile. Mikulincer labeled the discrepancy between the self-reported and physiological recordings of anger as dissociated anger and suggested it may follow from avoidant individuals' tendency to distance themselves from stressful situations.

In formulating hypotheses regarding attachment styles and the proposed outcomes (i.e., emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I), I draw on COR theory and suggest that the nature of attachment anxiety and avoidance makes such individuals more prone both to expending valuable resources and to difficulties replenishing them. Several studies offer additional support to this notion. Attachment anxiety and avoidance have been negatively linked to hope (Simmons et al., 2003), vigor (L. M. Little et al., 2011), overall hardiness, and general mental health (Neria et al., 2001) and positively linked to distress (Neria et al., 2001), anxiety and insomnia (Joplin et al., 1999), and physiological, psychological, and somatic symptoms (Joplin et al., 1999; Neria et al., 2001; Quick, Joplin, Nelson, & Quick, 1992). Attachment avoidance is also negatively related to well-being (Neria et al.). Further, in response to a positive event, individuals scoring high in attachment anxiety or avoidance demonstrated tendencies to minimize the positive event as well as their associated emotions (Gentzler et al., 2010). Accordingly, insecure attachment should negatively impact individuals' well-being and proactive and discretionary workplace behavior, and in the following paragraphs, I suggest that

attachment anxiety and avoidance will demonstrate positive relations to emotional exhaustion and negative relations to feedback inquiry and OCB-I.

*Attachment and emotional exhaustion.* Many of the characteristics connected to attachment anxiety and avoidance are likely to tax individuals' available resources, making them more susceptible to emotional exhaustion. The preoccupation with relationships (Brennan et al., 1998), hypervigilance to winning others' approval (Mikulincer et al., 1998), perceiving threats in commonly occurring situations, and ruminating on threat consequences (Gentzler et al., 2010; Mikulincer, 1998b; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002) associated with attachment anxiety are likely to be a constant source of resource depletion. Further, attachment anxiety has been shown to relate to experiencing anxiety regarding work performance and work relationships (Hardy & Barkham, 1994), greater work stress intensity (Schirmer & Lopez, 2001), and negative spillover from personal life to work life (Sumer & Knight, 2001). Similarly, many characteristics related to attachment avoidance may also deplete resources. The effort individuals expend in thwarting emotional reactions to stressful events (Mikulincer et al., 1998) as well as the physiological reactions experienced (e.g., Diamond, Hicks, & Otter-Henderson, 2006; Mikulincer, 1998b) should amount to a loss of valuable resources.

Tendencies related to higher levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance may also limit individuals' ability to replenish lost resources or acquire new resources, making these individuals more likely to experience emotional exhaustion. For example, insecurely attached individuals were shown to minimize their responses relating to positive experiences (Gentzler et al., 2010). Their lack of reflection on the positive event, their dismissiveness toward the event, and their feelings surrounding the event suggest



that insecurely attached individuals are unable to reap the benefits linked with positive experiences.

Attachment anxiety and avoidance both positively relate to social dysfunction (Joplin et al., 1999). Insecurely attached individuals may also have difficulty acquiring resources that would otherwise be gained through social interaction and support. For example, attachment avoidance negatively correlated with perceived social support from individuals' supervisor, co-workers, and family and friends (Joplin et al.) and support-seeking from others (Gentzler et al., 2010), and positively correlated with trouble with relationships at home and their social life (Hardy & Barkham, 1994). Accordingly, the avoidance of closeness with others and self-reliance associated with attachment avoidance (Brennan et al., 1998) are likely to limit not only individuals' willingness to seek support but also the support they feel they receive.

Several studies lend support to the idea that insecurely attached individuals are prone to emotional exhaustion. Recent studies have demonstrated that attachment anxiety and avoidance positively relate to emotional exhaustion (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2012) and overall job burnout (Littman-Ovadia et al., 2013; Pines, 2004; Ronen & Mikulincer, 2009, 2012). Additionally, secure attachment has been found to be negatively associated with burnout (Pines, 2004; Simmons, Gooty, Nelson, & Little, 2009).

***Attachment and feedback inquiry.*** Insecurely attached individuals are likely to be deficient in inner resources they have available. Accordingly, these individuals should be less willing to invest their resources on feedback inquiry despite the potential benefits (e.g., through gaining valuable information that could assist in goal attainment; Ashford et al., 2003). Attachment anxiety is characterized by a negative view of self and positive

view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety have been shown to experience anxiety about their work performance (Hardy & Barkham, 1994), and they may be less inclined to ask for feedback from their supervisor as a result. They fear appearing weak or incompetent and may worry their supervisor will form a negative impression of them. Attachment avoidance, on the other hand, is characterized by a positive view of self and negative view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz). Particularly due to their self-reliance and belief that others cannot be relied upon (Brennan et al., 1998), individuals with high levels of attachment avoidance may not consider seeking supervisor feedback as useful and may be unwilling to invest their resources in feedback inquiry as a consequence.

Feedback is inherently emotionally charged (Ashford et al., 2003), and both dimensions of insecure attachment may mitigate active feedback seeking as a method of self-protection. Individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety may protect their already fragile self-view by not inviting their supervisors to scrutinize their performance. Those with high levels of attachment avoidance may not be motivated to engage in feedback inquiry to avert information that could diminish their positive self-view. Allen, Shockley, and Poteat's (2010) study of attachment anxiety and feedback in mentoring relationships supports that attachment anxiety and avoidance will negatively relate to feedback inquiry. These researchers showed attachment anxiety negatively related to seeking feedback from mentors.

***Attachment and OCB-I.*** Engaging in OCB requires time as well as physical and mental effort (Ozer, Chang, & Schaubroeck, 2014). Following from COR theory, I expect that individuals with insecure attachment will have limited resources available and

accordingly will be less likely to engage in OCB-I. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) are often used to explain why individuals may engage in OCB (Bowler & Brass, 2006). This theory suggests employees feel obligated to reciprocate positive relationships and work experiences provided by their employers, and that one of the ways individuals may reciprocate is through engaging in OCB. Relationships based on social exchange are characterized as trusting and loyal (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Mikulincer's (1998b) study of attachment style differences in the attribution of hostile intent during anger-eliciting events offers additional insight. Although no attachment style differences were evident in the hostile scenario, both attachment anxiety and avoidance related to higher attributions of hostile intent in the ambiguous scenario. Attachment avoidance also related to more hostile intent attributions in the non-hostile scenario. These results indicate that when events are ambiguous, insecurely attached individuals are inclined to make attributions of others' hostile intent. Such findings suggest that in addition to having limited resources, insecurely attached individuals likely do not truly experience positive social exchange relationships and may feel no obligation to expend the resources required to engage in OCB-I.

Several studies support negative relations between attachment dimensions and OCB-I. Attachment anxiety and avoidance have yielded negative relations with overall OCB (Desivilya, Sabag, & Ashton, 2006). Other research has shown negative relations between attachment anxiety and other discretionary behaviors including OCB-O (Richards & Schat, 2011) and instrumental co-worker helping behavior (Geller & Bamberger, 2009).

In summary, I offer the following hypotheses:

*Hypotheses 1a-c:* Attachment anxiety will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.

*Hypotheses 2a-c:* Attachment avoidance will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.

**Workplace stressor direct effects.** As previously discussed, hindrance stressors refer to workplace demands that interfere with individuals' ability to carry out their work. Challenge stressors refer to demands or situations that, although stressful, allow for potential gains for individuals that may help them reach their goals (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Because hindrance stressors have the potential to harm or block individuals' personal growth or gains, they trigger negative emotions and elicit a passive or emotional style of coping such as withdrawing from the situation or decreasing engagement. Challenge stressors, due to their potential to promote personal growth or gains, trigger positive emotions and elicit an active, problem-solving coping style (Crawford et al., 2010).

It is important to acknowledge that individual differences may influence the manner in which individuals evaluate and cope with stressors. However, it has been argued that individuals tend to appraise stressors similarly because they have a shared understanding of the work context and the stressors experienced in the workplace (Brief & George, 1995; Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Frazier, & Finch, 2009). From a COR theory perspective, when individuals are faced with hindrance stressors, they should be less willing to invest their resources because they see little opportunity to reach their goals. However, when faced with challenge stressors, individuals should be more willing

to invest resources because they believe the energy investment will allow goal attainment (Crawford et al., 2010).

Both hindrance and challenge stressors cause *strains* (Jex, 1998), or poor psychological (e.g., frustration, emotional exhaustion; Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine, 2004; Webster et al., 2010) and physical well-being, (e.g., eye strain, gastrointestinal problems, headache; Nixon, et al., 2011). However, hindrance stressors are associated with undesired outcomes while challenge stressors are related to desired outcomes. Hindrance stressors have been shown to negatively relate to performance (LePine et al., 2005), job satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2007; Webster et al., 2010), organizational commitment (Podsakoff et al., 2007), and work self-efficacy (Webster et al., 2010), and to positively relate to job search (Boswell et al., 2004; Cavanaugh et al., 2000), turnover intentions, and turnover (Podsakoff et al.). The same research shows challenge stressors have demonstrated opposite relations with the same outcomes.

In the following paragraphs, I draw on COR theory to suggest that hindrance and challenge stressors both positively relate to emotional exhaustion. Further, I suggest that hindrance stressors negatively relate to feedback inquiry and OCB-I while challenge stressors positively relate to these outcomes.

***Stressors and emotional exhaustion.*** All stressors, whether challenge or hindrance, are expected to have a positive relationship with strains (e.g., anxiety and emotional exhaustion; Boswell et al., 2004). Drawing on COR theory, stressors are expected to deplete individuals' resources through the emotional and cognitive effort used in assessing and coping with the stressors (Courtright et al., 2014; LePine et al., 2005). Accordingly, I expect that challenge and hindrance stressors will positively relate

to emotional exhaustion (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Boswell et al. showed that both hindrance and challenge stressors positively related to emotional exhaustion, and Courtright et al. (2014) showed that developmental challenge positively related to emotional exhaustion. Two meta-analyses (LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2007) demonstrated positive relations between hindrance and challenge stressors with an overall measure of strain, and Crawford et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis showed positive relations between hindrance and challenge stressors with burnout.

*Stressors and feedback inquiry.* As previously noted, hindrance stressors trigger a passive or emotional style of coping (Crawford et al., 2010). Accordingly, individuals encountering hindrance stressors should be less likely to invest their resources to engage in feedback inquiry because they may not see potential rewards for doing so. Although Anseel et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis revealed no association between role ambiguity (a hindrance stressor) and overall FSB, these findings must be interpreted with caution as overall FSB included both the feedback inquiry and monitoring dimensions.

Challenge stressors trigger an active or problem-solving style of coping such as increasing effort (Crawford et al., 2010). As noted, individuals should be more willing to invest their resources when confronted with challenge stressors because they believe the investment is worthwhile in that it will lead to achieving their goal. One way individuals may respond to challenge stressors is through investing resources in feedback inquiry. Engaging in inquiry allows individuals to gain potentially valuable information that may be helpful to them (Ashford et al., 2003). Accordingly, I suggest hindrance stressors negatively relate to feedback inquiry while challenge stressors positively relate to inquiry.

***Stressors and OCB-I.*** Due to a tendency to constrain or interfere with work achievement, a lack of associated potential gains (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), and an associated passive coping style (Crawford et al., 2010), hindrance stressors render individuals less willing to invest their resources engaging in OCB-I because they would not see gains accompanying resource use. Instead, these individuals would more likely attempt to conserve resources through the passive coping response of not engaging in OCB-I.

On the other hand, because challenge stressors have potential for growth (Cavanaugh et al., 2000) and tend to elicit active coping (e.g., increasing effort; Crawford et al., 2010), individuals should be more willing to use their resources and engage in OCB-I because this resource investment may help them reach their goals. Drawing again from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), the potential gains associated with challenge stressors may instill a desire to reciprocate these gains. One way this may occur is through engaging in OCB-I. Also from a reciprocity perspective, engaging in helping behaviors toward some individuals may in turn make other individuals in the workplace more willing to help which could aid in goal attainment.

Hindrance stressors negatively related and challenge stressors positively related to role-based performance measured as a composite of OCB, task performance, and service performance (Wallace et al., 2009). Further, meta-analytic evidence has revealed that the hindrance stressors of role ambiguity and role conflict negatively relate to OCB (Eatough et al., 2011). Perceived organizational politics (a hindrance stressor) also correlates

negatively with both OCB-I and OCB-O (Chang et al., 2009). Therefore, I offer the following hypotheses:

*Hypotheses 3a-c:* Hindrance stressors will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.

*Hypotheses 4a-c:* Challenge stressors will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

### **The Mediating Role of Surface Acting**

Standards for appropriate emotion displays in the workplace are referred to as *display rules*, and emotional labor involves adhering to these rules regardless of the emotions one actually feels (Diefendorff et al., 2005). Display rules generally follow implicit norms in organizations that encourage displaying positive emotions but discourage displaying negative emotions (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003). To adhere to display rules, individuals may adopt surface acting as a means of regulating their emotions.

Surface acting is a response-focused form of emotion regulation. It involves attempts to manage observable emotional expressions through amplifying, suppressing, or faking emotions thought to be appropriate for the given situation (Grandey, 2000). Employees are more likely to surface act in times of high stress (Grandey et al., 2004), making surface acting particularly salient for the attachment and workplace stressor literature. Below, I suggest surface acting is a mechanism through which attachment styles and stressors affect emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I.

**Attachment and surface acting.** Individual differences may play an important role in influencing whether employees engage in surface acting (Kiffin-Petersen, Jordan,



& Soutar, 2011). In their study, Diefendorff et al. (2005) determined that dispositional variables accounted for more unique variance in surface acting than did job-based variables such as frequency or duration of interpersonal interactions. They offered this as evidence that surface acting is influenced more by individual differences than job features. Buckner and Mahoney (2012) arrived at a similar conclusion, and Ozelik (2013) suggested that some employees may be predisposed to engaging in surface acting in their intra-organizational relationships.

COR theory acknowledges people differ in the amount of available resources they possess, and that those with more resources are not as vulnerable to resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989; Nguyen et al., 2016). Building on my previous suggestion that individuals with insecure attachment will have limited available resources and be more vulnerable to resource loss, I propose that such individuals are more likely to engage in surface acting in an effort to limit resources expenditures. Although surface acting depletes resources (Hülshager, Lang, & Maier, 2010), insecurely attached individuals may favor this strategy because they may perceive less resource investment involved in faking, suppressing, or enhancing emotion than in expending the effort to actually try to feel what display rules prescribe.

Individuals embodying insecure attachment tend to rely on maladaptive strategies for dealing with stress and perceived threats (Mikulincer et al., 1998). Attachment anxiety is associated with hyperactivating strategies where individuals seek to win others' approval (Mikulincer et al., 1998). With an inclination to interpret events negatively (Gentzler et al., 2010) and experience anxiety regarding work performance and relationships (Hardy & Barkham, 1994), such individuals tend to detect threats in work

situations and ruminate on the threat consequences (Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Accordingly, these individuals may mask their inner anxiety concerning performance and acceptance needs through surface acting. It is likely that attachment avoidance also positively relates to surface acting. Avoidant individuals tend to follow deactivating strategies in which they strive to suppress unpleasant thoughts and feelings (Mikulincer et al., 1998). Such individuals may be more likely to suppress their negative emotions and to fake positive emotions in order to maintain a positive work image. Attachment anxiety and avoidance have been associated positively with emotion suppression, a form of surface acting (Richards & Schat, 2011).

**Stressors and surface acting.** I propose that workplace stressors are important contextual factors in influencing individuals' likelihood of engaging in surface acting. I suggest that hindrance and challenge stressors relate differently to surface acting. Individuals tend to view hindrance stressors as potentially standing in the way of their personal growth, and such stressors may generate negative emotions (LePine et al., 2005). Hindrance stressors should deplete individuals' resources and trigger a passive or emotional style of coping (Crawford et al., 2010). In efforts to maintain a positive image in the workplace and comply with workplace norms while still seeking to conserve their limited resources, individuals experiencing hindrance stressors may choose to surface act by suppressing negative emotions or faking positive emotions.

In contrast, challenge stressors have the potential to promote personal growth and trigger positive emotions (LePine et al., 2005) and an active coping style (Crawford et al., 2010). Although challenge stressors consume individuals' resources (e.g., Courtright et al., 2014), they are perceived as manageable by employees (Wallace et al., 2009).

Individuals facing challenge stressors are likely to be motivated to overcome these stressors and experience confidence that resource investment will allow goal achievement. Accordingly, individuals facing challenge stressors should be more willing to invest their resources because they see an opportunity for achievement (Crawford et al.). As surface acting is an ineffective emotion regulation strategy because of its associations with impaired psychological health and performance (Hülshager & Shewe, 2011), individuals should be less inclined to employ surface acting in their attempts to overcome challenge stressors.

**Surface acting and outcomes.** Surface acting is a deliberate act requiring individuals to invest their resources to meet the emotional demands at work with the hope of potential gain (Nguyen et al., 2016). It does not involve an actual adjustment of emotions. Therefore, individuals still experience the original emotion that they attempt to deal with through surface acting (Hülshager & Shewe, 2011). This means that when individuals surface act by suppressing negative emotions, they continue to experience them which drains their available resources (Hülshager et al., 2010). *Emotional dissonance*, or the discrepancy between felt and expressed emotion (Morris & Feldman, 1996) has also been offered as an underlying mechanism for understanding how surface acting affects outcomes. An underlying assumption of emotional dissonance is that individuals are aware of this discrepancy. They experience distress as a result of the discrepancy (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011), and expend more effort to regulate emotions (Mahoney et al., 2011; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Surface acting has a negative impact on individuals and organizations. Findings from their recent meta-analysis led Hülshager and Shewe (2011) to consider surface

acting a fairly ineffective emotion regulation strategy for employees and organizations due to its negative associations with psychological health and performance. Further, Bhave and Glomb (2016) noted that as resources become depleted, self-regulation becomes less successful. Therefore, surface acting can have increasingly devastating effects. In addition, Kiffin-Petersen et al. (2011) warn that as resources become depleted, individuals may fall into a self-defeating cycle where they continue to rely on surface acting in attempts to preserve their resources. In addition to surface acting's negative influence on psychological well-being, recent meta-analyses reveal surface acting's negative impact on desired work outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller, Rubenstein, Long, Odio, Buckman, Zhang, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2013).

Based on the above discussion, I propose that individuals engaging in surface acting are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and be less willing to engage in feedback inquiry or interpersonal citizenship behavior. Meta-analytic evidence supports a positive association between surface acting and emotional exhaustion (Bono & Vey, 2005), psychological strain and psychosomatic complaints (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), and a combination of emotional exhaustion and other psychological strains (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Particularly relevant to my dissertation, Ozelik (2013) showed employees who engaged in more surface acting in their intra-organizational relationships experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Importantly, Hülshager et al.'s (2010) study provided evidence that surface acting precedes strain, and had a positive lagged effect on emotional strain.

The extent to which surface acting consumes individuals' resources limits the resources available for other job-related behaviors. Thus, it is likely that individuals will prioritize whether to invest or conserve their resources, making it less likely they would invest resources in feedback inquiry or OCB-I. Offering additional support, Salami (2007) demonstrated a negative association between surface acting and OCB. In another study, surface acting negatively related to OCB-O but not OCB-I (Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011). However, this study was concerned with surface acting in service settings where employee-customer interactions were investigated.

To conclude, I propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypotheses 5a-c:* Surface acting will mediate the associations between attachment anxiety and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

*Hypotheses 6a-c:* Surface acting will mediate the associations between attachment avoidance and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

*Hypotheses 7a-c:* Surface acting will mediate the associations between hindrance stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

*Hypotheses 8a-c:* Surface acting will mediate the associations between challenge stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overarching theoretical framework for my dissertation. I employed COR theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989), a theory of stress that integrates environmental and internal processes as contributors to stress, to explain why attachment styles and workplace stressors should relate to emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and interpersonal citizenship behavior (OCB-I). I also argued for the mediating role of

surface acting in these associations. Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed hypotheses. The next chapter, Chapter 3, offers a description of the research methods employed to collect and analyze my dissertation data.

Table 1

*Summary of Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1a-c	Attachment anxiety will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 2a-c	Attachment avoidance will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 3a-c	Hindrance stressors will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and will negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 4a-c	Challenge stressors will positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 5a-c	Surface acting will mediate the associations between attachment anxiety and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 6a-c	Surface acting will mediate the associations between attachment avoidance and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 7a-c	Surface acting will mediate the associations between hindrance stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.
Hypothesis 8a-c	Surface acting will mediate the associations between challenge stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

## Chapter 3: Method

### Power and Estimation of Sample Size

To estimate an approximate necessary sample size, I carried out a series of computations using Preacher and Coffman's (2006) Web utility for computing minimum sample size for the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). In the RMSEA approach, a null hypothesis of *close model fit* is defined as  $H_0: \varepsilon \leq .05$ , where  $\varepsilon$  represents the RMSEA index. In this instance, a rejection of the null hypothesis leads to the conclusion that the observed data are inconsistent with the hypothesis of close fit, and therefore, the model is not supported. Due to the difficulty of arguing for model support with the close fit approach, researchers may wish to test a null hypothesis of a lack of close fit in the population where the null hypothesis is accordingly defined as  $H_0: \varepsilon \geq .05$ . Here, rejection of the null hypothesis would provide evidence that the observed data are inconsistent with the hypothesis of a lack of fit and would suggest that the fit of the model in the population is close (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996).

The computation for determining a minimum sample size for RMSEA requires inputting the desired alpha, degrees of freedom, desired power, null RMSEA, and alternative RMSEA. I estimated a minimum sample size needed to obtain a power of .80 and .90 under the following conditions: partial mediation (including all possible direct effects) or full mediation and a test of close fit or a test of lack of close fit. These computations were determined assuming three item parcels per study latent variable. To carry out these computations, I used  $\alpha = .05$  and MacCallum et al.'s (1996) suggested values for the null RMSEA (i.e., .05 for test of close fit and lack of close fit) and alternative RMSEA (i.e., .08 for test of close fit and .01 for test of lack of close fit).

Results are presented in Table 2. Accordingly, a conservative minimum sample size of 133 is desired. This estimate corresponds to  $\alpha = .05$ , a test of lack of close fit (null value of the RMSEA = .05, and the alternative value = .01), a partial mediation model (all possible direct effects) with no control variables ( $df = 227$ ), and power = .90.

Table 2

*Minimum Sample Size (N) Determination Based on RMSEA*

	<i>df</i>	Minimum <i>N</i> for test of close fit (Power = .80)	Minimum <i>N</i> for test of close fit (Power = .90)	Minimum <i>N</i> for test of lack of close fit (Power = .80)	Minimum <i>N</i> for test of lack of close fit (Power = .90)
Partial mediation model (all possible direct effects)	227	77.7	95.7	111.3	132.8
Full mediation model	239	75.4	92.6	108.2	128.9

*Note.* Sample size determination obtained using Preacher and Coffman (2006) using  $\alpha = .05$ . Calculations determined assuming three parcels per latent variable. For the test of close fit, the null value of the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .05, and the alternative value = .08. For the test of lack of close fit, the null value of the RMSEA = .05, and the alternative value = .01.

To provide an additional estimation of a necessary sample size, I used Soper's (2015) *a-priori* sample size calculator for structural equation models. This calculator provides a minimum sample size required given the structural complexity of the model based on the number of observed and latent variables, the anticipated effect size, and desired alpha and power levels. Medium effect sizes involving behaviors (e.g., attitudes – behaviors) fall approximately between  $|r| = .10$  and  $.25$  (Bosco, Aguinis, Singh, Field, & Pierce, 2015). Using an alpha of .05, eight latent variables, and 24 observed variables (the number of indicator variables assuming 3 parcels per latent variable), I estimated a minimum sample size using a desired power of .8 and .9 and an anticipated effect size of .10 and .25. In all cases, the results indicated a minimum sample size of 200 is needed



given the structural complexity of the model. Based on the above analyses, a sample size of 200 was desired.

### **Surveys and Data Collection**

I collected my dissertation data via online surveys using Qualtrics software and the Qualtrics Panels response service. Survey items are provided in Appendix A. Subordinate respondents were recruited by Qualtrics and responded to items regarding attachment styles, stressors, surface acting, emotional exhaustion, the marker variable attitudes towards the color blue (blue attitudes), and demographic items (e.g. age, gender, and organizational tenure).

Two randomly distributed versions of the subordinate survey were used to check for possible order effects resulting from the order the independent variables were presented. Both survey versions were identical except for the order in which the attachment style and stressor variables were presented in the survey. Version A presented the attachment variables (beginning with attachment anxiety) before the stressor variables (beginning with hindrance stressors) while Version B presented the stressor variables (beginning with hindrance stressors) before the attachment variables (beginning with attachment anxiety).

At the end of the subordinate survey, subordinate respondents had the option to provide additional information so that the supervisor survey could be sent to their supervisor. A survey trigger was set up for the supervisor invitation email to automatically be sent upon survey completion only when all necessary information was provided (i.e., supervisor's first name and email address and subordinate first name and last initial) and only when the subordinate selected that they had their supervisor's

permission to provide this information. Supervisor surveys contained the OCB-I and feedback inquiry variables and demographic questions. Two reminder emails were sent to any supervisor who had not yet responded after a period of time (typically three days). Appendix B contains the subordinate survey information letter, the supervisor recruitment email, and the supervisor survey information letter.

### **Survey Screens and Checks**

The subordinate survey contained screening questions designed to ensure that respondents met survey qualifications. To qualify, subordinate respondents had to be currently employed full-time and age 19 or older. Otherwise, they were not allowed to continue in the survey. Further, content validation was set on the organization tenure and supervisor tenure demographic items such that the maximum number that could be entered for these fields was 1,000 months.

The subordinate survey also contained several checks designed to detect and remove insufficient effort responding which Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, and DeShon (2012) defined as “a response set in which the respondent answers a survey measure with low or little motivation to comply with survey instructions, correctly interpret item content, and provide accurate responses” (p.100). First, two attention questions were included in the survey to gauge whether respondents were paying attention while responding. The first such item, “Please select strongly agree for this question” was presented between the attachment style variables, and the second instructed item, “Please select disagree for this statement” occurred after the independent variables and before the marker variable. This approach assumes that respondents who

are paying attention will respond in accordance with instructions whereas those who are not may not respond appropriately.

Second, logic screening was used to terminate any respondent who indicated that they had worked more months (indicated by the organization and supervisor tenure responses) than they indicated they had lived (indicated by their response to the age demographic item). Finally, based on soft launch data, a speeding check was included and was measured as one third of the median soft launch survey completion time. Any subordinate respondent who responded faster than this time was automatically terminated from the survey. The above three checks correspond to the instructed items, bogus items, and response time screening techniques, respectively, described in DeSimone, Harms, and DeSimone (2015).

### **Survey Compensation and Incentives**

Each subordinate who successfully completed the survey received \$2.50 in compensation. Providing supervisor contact information was not required to receive this compensation. To incentivize subordinates to provide the necessary information to send their supervisor a survey, subordinates received the equivalent of \$10 through Qualtrics if their supervisor completed the survey. Supervisors who completed the survey received a \$15 Amazon e-gift card incentive.

### **Measures**

Researchers have suggested that items written in opposite directions (e.g., reverse-scored items) may produce artifactual factors (Spector, Van Katwyk, Brannic, & Chen, 1997). Accordingly, any scale items of a measure that were designed to be reverse-

scored were modified to be in the same direction as other items of that measure such that higher scores represent greater levels of the measured constructs.

**Attachment.** I assessed general attachment anxiety and avoidance using a modified version of Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel's (2007) 12-item Experiences in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form (ECR-S). The ECR-S is a shortened version of Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's (1998) 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) Scale. The ECR, developed from a large-sample factor analytic study conducted on a pool of 323 items from existing self-report attachment measures, assesses the two attachment dimensions: anxiety (18 items) and avoidance (18 items). The ECR-S contains six attachment anxiety and six attachment avoidance items and was validated across six studies with findings suggesting the ECR-S (whether administered alone or embedded within the ECR) retains similar psychometric properties to the original ECR.

As other researchers have done with the full ECR measure (e.g., Game, 2008; Richards & Schat, 2011), I replaced references to romantic partners with "others" or "other people." Sample items are "I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them" and "I find that others don't want to get as close as I would like" (anxiety) and "I try to avoid getting too close to others" and "I don't usually discuss my problems and concerns with other people" (avoidance). Attachment items were rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Wei et al. (2007) reported coefficient alphas for the ECR-S ranging from .77 to .86 for attachment anxiety and from .78 to .88 for attachment avoidance. Cronbach's alphas for attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance in this dissertation were .89 and .87, respectively.

**Stressors.** Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau's (2000) 11-item scale (five hindrance items, six challenge items) measured hindrance and challenge stressors. Participants indicated the degree of stress each work-related item causes them on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*produces no stress*) to 5 (*produces a great deal of stress*). Sample items are "The degree to which politics rather than performance affects organizational decisions" and "The inability to clearly understand what is expected of me on the job" (hindrance) and "Time pressures I experience" and "The amount of responsibility I have" (challenge). Cavanaugh et al. reported Cronbach's alphas of .75 and .87 for hindrance and challenge stressors, respectively. The alphas in this dissertation were .85 for hindrance stressors and .93 for challenge stressors.

**Surface acting.** Surface acting was assessed with an adaptation of Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand's (2005) seven-item scale. This scale refers to employees' interactions with customers; however, my focus was on surface acting in which employees may engage with other organizational members. Drawing from two measures of surface acting originally designed to measure employee-customer interactions, Ozelik (2013) measured surface acting in intra-organizational relationships with five items modified to reflect interactions with "my colleagues." Scale items were similarly modified in this study to refer to "the people with whom I work" to capture a general sense of surface acting in intra-organizational relations. Sample modified scale items are "I fake a good mood when interacting with the people with whom I work" and "I put on a 'mask' in order to display the emotions I need for the job." Participants rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Diefendorff et al. reported coefficient alphas for their surface acting measure of .91 and .92 in the primary

sample and cross-validation sample, respectively. The coefficient alpha for surface acting in this study was .92.

**Emotional exhaustion.** Wharton's (1993) six-item measure of emotional exhaustion was employed to tap the extent participants feel "used up" at the end of the workday. Sample items are "I feel emotionally drained from my work" and "I feel used up at the end of the work day." Wharton followed a seven-point scale ranging from 0 (*never felt this way while at work*) to 6 (*feel this way every day*). In line with Ozcelik (2013), scale anchors in my study ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Wharton reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87, and Ozcelik reported a Cronbach's alpha of .91 for this measure. Cronbach's alpha for emotional exhaustion in this dissertation was .92.

**Feedback inquiry.** Subordinates' feedback inquiry was measured with Lam, Huang, and Snape's (2007) adaptation of VandeWalle, Ganensan, Challagall, and Brown's (2000) five-item scale. VandeWalle et al.'s measure asked participants to assess how often they asked for feedback; however, following the wording modifications by Lam et al. (2007), supervisors rated how often their employees seek feedback from them regarding various aspects of their employees' job. Sample items include "overall work performance" and "social behaviors." Supervisors rated each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). VandeWalle et al. reported a Cronbach's alpha of .88, and Lam et al. (2007) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .92 for their measures of feedback inquiry. Feedback inquiry had a coefficient alpha of .94 in this study.

**OCB-I.** Lee and Allen's (2002) eight-item OCB-I measure was used to gauge subordinates' OCB directed at specific individuals. Sample items include, "Helps others

who have been absent” and “Assist others with their duties.” Supervisors rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*) how often their employee engages in these behaviors. Lee and Allen reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .83, and the alpha reliability in this dissertation was .91.

**Demographic variables.** I collected subordinate respondents’ demographic information regarding gender, age, race, industry, organization tenure, supervisor tenure (how long the subordinate’s current supervisor has been their supervisor), and hours worked per week. The categories used to assess race (e.g., Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) adhere to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards which guide the U. S. Census Bureau, and the categories used to measure industry (e.g., Finance and Insurance) were in line with the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Questions regarding gender, age, and race included a “prefer not to answer” option. Supervisor surveys only included the gender, age, and race items.

**Control variable.** I used gender as a control variable. Previous researchers have used gender as a control variable in studies relating to this dissertation’s mediator and outcome variables. For example, based on early theorizing by Hochschild (1983) about gender differences in emotional labor, Schaubroeck and Jones (2000) suggested and found gender differences in perceived emotional labor particularly in terms of perceived demands to express positive emotion. Accordingly, there may be gender differences in the use of surface acting. Diestel and Schmidt (2011) used gender as a control variable in their study of emotional exhaustion. Discussing gender differences in feedback seeking, Roberson, Deitch, Brief, and Block (2003) controlled for gender in their study of

feedback seeking in the workplace. Studies have also theorized and found gender influences on OCBs (e.g. Kidder, 2002; Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001).

**Marker variable.** Miller and Chiodo's (2008) attitudes toward the color blue (blue attitudes) served as a marker variable to estimate the influence of common method variance (CMV) on study findings. I measured the three items from Miller and Chiodo's attitudes toward the color blue scale that were employed by Simmering, Fuller, Richardson, Ocal, and Atinc (2015). Sample items include, "I like the color blue" and "I prefer blue to other colors." Simmering et al. reported a Cronbach's alpha of .81 and .72 for sample 1 and 2, respectively. The alpha reliability in this dissertation was .82. Participants rated the extent to which they agree with the statements on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### **Precautionary Measures**

To alleviate some of the concerns regarding common method bias and other method effects, I followed several of the procedural remedies recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003). Specifically, supervisors rated study participants' feedback inquiry and OCB-I, thereby allowing two of the three dependent variables to be measured from a different source. Methodological separation was promoted by separating the measurement of the independent and dependent variables on the survey and through using different scale formats. For example, the dissertation measures contained a variety of scale anchors (e.g., "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," "never to always," and "produces no stress" to "produces a great deal of stress") using both five-point and seven-point scales. Further, the measurement of attachment anxiety and avoidance as well as hindrance and challenge stressors were separated on the



survey to help reduce method effects, which may be produced by a common rater. Respondents were assured that their privacy would be protected. Subordinate respondents were informed that providing their supervisor's contact information was not required, that supervisors would not have access to their responses, and they would not have access to their supervisor's responses. Supervisors were similarly assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

### **Analyses**

I used IBM SPSS Version 23 software to perform the initial descriptive analyses and independent sample *t*-tests for equality of means on the subordinate-rated variables. Survey version (i.e., Version A or Version B) served as the grouping variable to test for any order effects that may have been caused by the order in which the independent variables appeared. IBM SPSS Amos Version 23 software was used to perform the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses. The data were analyzed using CFA and SEM following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach. As described in T. D. Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002), I used the "item-to-construct" partial disaggregation approach to create three parcels of items for each of the study variables. These authors discuss several psychometric and estimation advantages for using parcels compared to item-level data including fewer estimated parameters, fewer opportunities for correlated residuals and dual loadings, and fewer sources of sampling error. Further, item-level data tends to become more normally distributed with the use of item parcels.

To test indirect effects, I employed a bootstrapping procedure to construct bias-corrected confidence intervals for significance testing using 1,000 bootstrapped samples

(Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Resampling methods such as bootstrapping are generally preferred over traditional methods (e.g., Sobel test) because the distribution of the indirect effect is not assumed to be normally distributed (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). In a simulation study comparing common resampling methods and traditional single sample methods, MacKinnon et al. found that the bias-corrected bootstrap method was the best method overall with reasonable Type I error rates, more power than the other methods, and the most accurate confidence intervals. This method has been used in recent organizational studies in top management journals (e.g., Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014; Ferris, Lian, Brown, & Morrison, 2015).

To gauge an estimation of the effect of common method variance on study results, I followed the CFA marker variable technique analysis plan described in Williams, Hartman, and Cavazotte (2010) using Miller and Chiodo's (2008) attitudes toward the color blue as the marker variable. I chose this marker variable, which Richard, Simmering, and Sturman (2009) label an "ideal" marker variable, because it is similar in semantic content to other study variables but is theoretically unrelated.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter offered a description of the methods used for collecting my dissertation data including a minimum sample size determination and information about the measures used. I also provided an overview of the analyses that would be conducted and the precautionary measures to reduce the threat of common method variance. Chapter 4 provides a description of how the data were analyzed and the results of this dissertation. Chapter 5 then offers a final discussion of findings, limitations, and future research suggestions.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Sample

Before the full study launch, a soft launch was conducted to ensure all survey mechanisms functioned properly. The soft launch allowed 20 subordinate responses, which resulted in five supervisor responses. The median subordinate survey completion time in the soft launch was 13 minutes. This time was used in the speeding check screen described in Chapter 3.

The full administration of surveys resulted in 886 subordinate and 245 supervisor responses. Responses where either an employee or their supervisor completed their survey more than once, as indicated by duplicate unique survey identifiers, were removed (22 supervisor responses and two subordinate responses). Seventeen employee surveys were also removed due to questionable responses (e.g., patterned responses). This left a final sample size of 206 matched responses. Demographics of the final subordinate sample were age ( $M = 39.56$ ;  $SD = 12.32$ ; based on  $N = 205$  because one subordinate selected the “Prefer not to answer” option), gender (50.5% Male), race (91.7% White; 3.9% Asian; 3.9% Black or African American; and 0.5% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander), organizational tenure ( $M = 95.49$  months;  $SD = 113.92$ ), and supervisor tenure ( $M = 43.85$  months;  $SD = 45.62$ ). The main industries represented were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (15.0%); Manufacturing (14.6%); Health Care and Social Assistance (10.7%); Finance and Insurance (9.2%); Construction (7.3%); Information (6.3%); Educational Services (5.8%); and Retail Trade (5.3%). Demographics of the final supervisor sample were age ( $M = 44.89$  years;  $SD = 10.48$ ; based on  $N = 200$  because six supervisors chose “Prefer not to answer”), gender (63.1%

Male; 1.0% Prefer not to answer), and race (90.8% White; 4.9% Asian; 2.4% Black or African American; 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native; 0.5% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; 1.0% Prefer not to answer).

## **Preliminary Analyses**

### **Order Effects**

In the final sample, 94 subordinates (45.6%) completed survey Version A, and 112 subordinates (54.4%) completed Version B. As previously noted, both survey versions were identical except for the order in which the independent variables appeared in the survey. To conduct the independent sample *t*-tests to test for order effects, I created a dummy variable for the survey version (Version A = 0; Version B = 1), which served as the grouping variable. Results of the *t*-tests for the independent variables were as follows: attachment anxiety,  $t(204) = -1.27, ns$ ; attachment avoidance,  $t(204) = -1.40, ns$ ; hindrance stressors,  $t(204) = -1.00, ns$ ; challenge stressors,  $t(204) = 0.34, ns$ ; surface acting,  $t(204) = -1.57, ns$ ; emotional exhaustion,  $t(204) = -0.77, ns$ ; and blue attitudes,  $t(204) = 0.66, ns$ . Accordingly, no statistically significant differences for the subordinate variables according to the survey version were detected indicating that the order in which the independent variables appeared did not influence subsequent responses.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Table 3 displays the study variable means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities. Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were positively correlated ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ) as were hindrance stressors and challenge stressors ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ). Regarding the dependent variables, only feedback inquiry and OCB-I were correlated ( $r = .15, p < .05$ ). All independent variables demonstrated positive correlations with

Table 3

*Correlations and Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Attachment anxiety	3.46	1.44	(.89)								
2. Attachment avoidance	3.38	1.37	.48***	(.87)							
3. Hindrance stressors	2.65	1.02	.50***	.42***	(.85)						
4. Challenge stressors	2.72	1.06	.45***	.39***	.63***	(.93)					
5. Emotional exhaustion	3.56	1.66	.48***	.57***	.54***	.71***	(.92)				
6. Feedback inquiry	4.35	1.58	.31***	-.08	.12	.05	-.03	(.94)			
7. OCB-I	5.46	0.97	-.13	-.16*	-.13	-.08	-.12	.15*	(.91)		
8. Surface acting	2.97	1.22	.47***	.62***	.42***	.43***	.57***	.12	-.14*	(.92)	
9. Blue attitudes	5.02	1.29	.16*	.08	.10	.04	.09	.11	.10	.09	(.82)
10. Gender			-.02	-.11	-.06	-.03	-.08	.07	-.10	-.13	.09

*Note.*  $N = 206$ . Reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) are given in parentheses on the diagonal. Gender is coded 0 = female and 1 = male.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

emotional exhaustion offering preliminary support to Hypotheses 1a, 2a, 3a, and 4a. The strongest correlation was a positive correlation between challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion ( $r = .71, p < .001$ ). Attachment anxiety was the only independent variable to correlate with feedback inquiry ( $r = .31, p < .001$ ), but the correlation was not in the expected direction according to Hypothesis 1b. Of the independent variables, only attachment avoidance correlated with OCB-I ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ) offering preliminary support to Hypothesis 2c. All independent variables exhibited positive correlations with surface acting, although challenge stressors were predicted to negatively associate with surface acting. Although correlations were expected between surface acting and all dependent variables, surface acting only correlated with emotional exhaustion ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ) and OCB-I ( $r = -.14, p < .05$ ) albeit in the expected manner. Blue attitudes, the marker variable, did not correlate with any of the study variables with the exception of attachment anxiety ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ). Cronbach's alphas were all greater than .70 suggesting good internal consistency reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

In order to create parcels according to the item-to-construct approach (T. D. Little et al., 2002), I conducted an item-level CFA on the eight study variables to obtain the standardized factor loadings needed to create the parcels. As previously noted, three parcels were constructed for each study variable. I then conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to evaluate the model fit of several plausible models including the expected 8-factor model (i.e., comprised of attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, hindrance stressors, challenge stressors, surface acting, emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I), which treated all factors as distinct, a 7-factor model in

which attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were combined into one variable, a 7-factor model in which hindrance stressors and challenge stressors were combined into one variable, a 7-factor model in which the feedback inquiry and OCB-I items were combined into one variable, a 6-factor model in which attachment avoidance and anxiety were combined into one variable and hindrance and challenge stressors were combined into one variable, a 5-factor model in which all independent variables were combined into one variable, and a 1-factor model in which all items loaded onto a single factor.

I used several indices to assess the fit of each model including chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ), the comparative fit index (CFI), standardized root mean residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and a series of chi-square difference tests (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), cutoff values close to .95 or higher for CFI, close to .08 or lower for SRMR, and close to .06 or lower for RMSEA suggest relatively good fit. As seen in Table 4, the fit indices of the expected 8-factor measurement model suggest good fit ( $\chi^2 = 397.28$ ,  $df = 224$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .96, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .06, RMSEA 90% CI [.05, .07]). The nested model comparisons using chi-square difference tests also indicated the expected model provided a statistically better fit than the comparison models.

In support of convergent validity of the 8-factor model, all indicators had statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) factor loadings on their intended constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), and all standardized factor loadings were above .7 (Hair et al., 2010). All average variance extracted (AVE) values were greater than .5 also suggesting convergence (Hair et al.). AVE is calculated as the total of the squared standardized factor loadings for a given variable divided by the total number of items in that variable.

Table 4

*CFA Model Comparisons*

Model	<i>df</i>	$\Delta df$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2_{\text{difference}}$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI
8-factor expected model	224		397.28***		.96	.05	.06	[.05, .07]
7-factor (combine attachment)	231	7	641.57***	244.29***	.90	.08	.09	[.09, .10]
7-factor (combine stressors)	231	7	533.11***	135.83***	.93	.07	.08	[.07, .09]
7-factor (combine FI and OCB-I)	231	7	792.64***	395.36***	.87	.10	.11	[.10, .12]
6-factor (combine attachment, combine stressors)	237	13	776.88***	379.60***	.87	.09	.11	[.10, .11]
5-factor (combine attachment and stressors)	242	18	1118.12***	720.84***	.79	.10	.13	[.13, .14]
1-factor (all items load on a single factor)	252	28	2611.97***	2214.69***	.44	.16	.21	[.21, .22]

*Note.*  $N = 206$ . *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



AVE values were as follows: attachment anxiety (.70), attachment avoidance (.72), hindrance stressors (.66), challenge stressors (.83), surface acting (.81), emotional exhaustion (.83), feedback inquiry (.87), and OCB-I (.76).

As initial evidence of discriminant validity, all factor correlations were less than .8 with the highest correlation (.75) occurring between challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion (Kline, 2011). As a more rigorous test of discriminant validity, the AVE for each construct was compared with the square of the factor correlation estimate between the relevant constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

To indicate discriminant validity, AVE values should be greater than the squared factor correlations for the applicable variables (Hair et al., 2010). Providing strong evidence of discriminant validity, the largest squared correlation estimate was .56, the factor correlation between challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion. This value is well below the AVE values associated with challenge stressors (i.e., .83) and emotional exhaustion (i.e., .83) and also below the smallest AVE value (i.e., .66) which corresponded with hindrance stressors. Accordingly, the expected 8-factor model was retained.

### **CFA Marker Variable Analysis**

As previously noted, Miller and Chiodo's (2008) attitudes towards the color blue was used as an "ideal" marker variable (Richards et al., 2009) to gauge whether common method variance had an influence on study results. To carry out this analysis, I used the CFA marker variable technique and followed the steps described in Williams et al. (2010) to test for the presence of method effects associated with the marker variable. This analysis required testing five different models and comparing their fit through a series of

chi-square difference tests. The first model to be examined was labeled the *CFA Model* and allowed factor correlations among all latent variables (i.e., eight study variables and marker variable). The purpose of the CFA model was to obtain the unstandardized factor loadings and measurement error variances of the blue attitudes items which were used in the remaining models. The unstandardized factor loadings were 1.00, .98, and .89 for blue attitudes items 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The error variance estimates were 1.89, .28, and .42 for blue attitudes 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Assessments of model fit for each of the five models and chi-square difference tests are provided in Table 5.

The second model, the *Baseline Model*, set the correlations between the marker variable and study variables to zero and fixed the factor loadings and error variances on the marker variable to the values obtained from the CFA model. This model was the baseline for the subsequent assessments of method effects.

The third model, the *Method-C Model*, was similar to the Baseline Model but added factor loadings from the marker variable to each study indicator. These new factor loadings were constrained to have equal values in order to represent the CMV Model assumption that method effects are equal across study variables. Comparing this model with the Baseline Model tested for the presence of equal method effects associated with the marker variable according to the null hypothesis that the method factor loadings associated with the marker variable were not related to the study indicators. The chi-square difference test was not statistically significant. The null hypothesis was not rejected indicating there was no evidence of method effects associated with the marker variable.

Table 5

*Marker Variable Fit and Model Comparisons*

Model	<i>df</i>	$\Delta df$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2_{\text{difference}}$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI
CFA Model	288		486.51***		.96	.05	.06	[.05, .07]
Baseline Model	301		493.39***		.96	.06	.06	[.05, .07]
Method-C (compared to Baseline)	300	1	490.10***	3.29	.96	.06	.06	[.05, .06]
Method-U (compared to Method C)	277	23	472.84***	17.26	.96	.05	.06	[.05, .07]
Method-R (compared to Method-C)	328	28	490.17***	0.07	.96	.06	.05	[.04, .06]

*Note.*  $N = 206$ . *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

For completeness, I proceeded to the fourth model, the *Method-U Model*, which was identical to the Method-C Model except the factor loadings from the marker variable to the substantive indicators were not set to be equal. This model assumed that the marker variable may have different associations with the study variables. The Method-U and Method-C Models were compared to determine whether the effect of the marker variable on the substantive items was the same and tested the null hypothesis that method factor loadings were equal. Again, the results of the chi-square difference test were not significant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Accordingly, the Method-C Model was the comparison model for the final model comparison. It is worth noting that a deeper analysis of Method-U model results revealed no significant method factor loadings (i.e., loadings from the marker variable on substantive indicators), and all study indicators loaded significantly on their intended construct, as expected.

The final model, the *Method-R Model*, tested for biasing effects from the marker variable. The Method-R Model was identical to the Method-C Model except the factor correlations on the study variables were set to the values from the Baseline Model. The comparison of the Method-R and Method-C Models examined whether the factor correlations were biased by method effects attributable to the marker variable. The chi-square difference test was not statistically significant indicating that any method effects related to the marker variable did not have a biasing effect on the factor correlations. This result is expected given that the conclusion from the Method-C model was there was no evidence of significant method effects related to the marker variable.

To ensure the conclusions of the CMV marker variable test held if only the subordinate-rated variables were considered, I repeated the steps above without including

the feedback inquiry and OCB-I latent variables. The results yielded the same conclusions (i.e., no evidence of method effects or biasing effects associated with the marker variable).

## Hypothesis Testing

### Hypothesis Testing for Hypotheses 1-4

Hypotheses 1-4 proposed direct associations between the independent variables (i.e., attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, hindrance stressors, and challenge stressors) and emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I. These hypotheses were tested through SEM where direct paths were specified between each of the independent variables including the gender control variable and each of the dependent variables. The model fit was adequate ( $\chi^2 = 357.36$ ,  $df = 185$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .95, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .07, RMSEA 90% CI [.06, .08]). Results are displayed in Figure 3.

Hypotheses 1a-c stated that attachment anxiety would positively relate to (a) emotional exhaustion and negatively relate to (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I. No support was found for Hypothesis 1a-c. Hypothesis 1b produced statistically significant results but were opposite to the hypothesized direction ( $B = .58$ ,  $S.E. = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Hypothesis 1a ( $B = .05$ ,  $S.E. = .08$ ,  $ns$ ) and 1c ( $B = -.01$ ,  $S.E. = .07$ ,  $ns$ ) did not yield statistically significant results.

Hypotheses 2a-c proposed positive relations between attachment avoidance and (a) emotional exhaustion and negative relations between avoidance and (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I. Hypothesis 2a ( $B = .44$ ,  $S.E. = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and 2b ( $B = -.42$ ,  $S.E. = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ) received support, but Hypothesis 2c ( $B = -.12$ ,  $S.E. = .07$ ,  $ns$ ) did not.

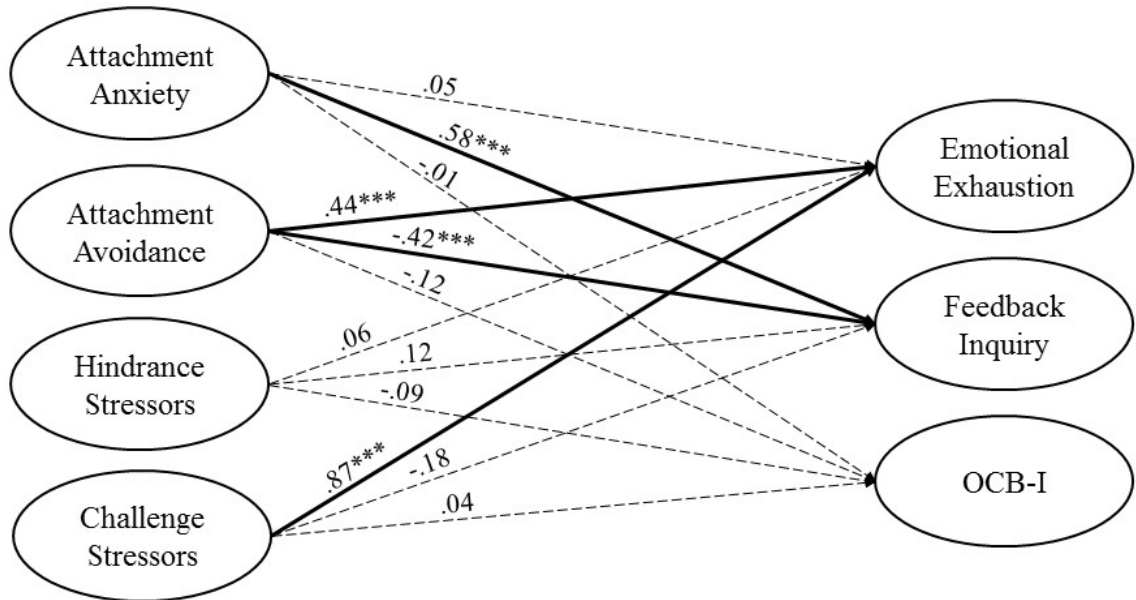


Figure 3. Direct effect results.

Note.  $N = 206$ . Unstandardized results are reported. The gender control variable is not shown. Solid paths indicate statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) relationships. Dotted paths indicate non-significant relationships.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

According to Hypotheses 3a-c, hindrance stressors would positively associate with (a) emotional exhaustion and negatively associate with (b) feedback inquiry and (c) OCB-I. Hypothesis 3a-c did not receive support as Hypothesis 3a ( $B = .06, S.E. = .13, ns$ ), 3b ( $B = .12, S.E. = .17, ns$ ), and 3c ( $B = -.09, S.E. = .12, ns$ ) did not achieve significant results.

Hypotheses 4a-c stated challenge stressors would positively correspond to (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I. Hypothesis 4a was supported ( $B = .87, S.E. = .13, p < .001$ ) while hypothesis 4b ( $B = -.18, S.E. = .16, ns$ ) and hypothesis 4c ( $B = .04, S.E. = .11, ns$ ) were not supported.

### Hypothesis Testing for Hypotheses 5-8

The remaining hypotheses involved the proposed mediating role of surface acting in the associations tested in Hypotheses 1-4. To test these hypotheses, first, a series of

nested structural models were examined to compare model fit, and the results are displayed in Table 6. In line with study hypotheses, a partially mediated model was tested with paths specified from all study independent variables to all dependent variables and the mediator variable as well as paths specified from the mediator variable to the dependent variables. The model fit of the hypothesized structural model was good ( $\chi^2 = 434.71$ ,  $df = 243$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .96, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .06, RMSEA 90% CI [.05, .07]).

A second model was tested in which the direct association between avoidance and emotional exhaustion was removed to test for a fully mediated relationship between avoidance and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, a third model was tested in which the direct path between avoidance and feedback inquiry was removed to test for full mediation between these variables. Finally, a fully mediated model was tested as the fourth model for comparison. As seen in Table 6, the results of the nested model comparisons suggest that each model compared to the hypothesized model resulted in a significantly worse fit. Accordingly, the hypothesized model was retained.

Next, as noted in Chapter 3, I used a bootstrapping procedure in order to construct bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for significance testing of estimated indirect effects using 1,000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Results of the final model are displayed in Figure 4.

Table 6

*SEM Model Comparisons*

Model	<i>df</i>	$\Delta df$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2_{\text{difference}}$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI
Partial mediation (hypothesized model)	243		434.71***		.96	.06	.06	[.05, .07]
Remove avoidance → emotional exhaustion path	244	1	449.39***	14.68***	.95	.06	.06	[.06, .07]
Remove avoidance → feedback inquiry path	244	1	454.70***	19.99***	.95	.07	.07	[.06, .07]
Full mediation	255	12	582.47***	147.76***	.92	.11	.08	[.07, .09]

*Note.*  $N = 206$ . *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



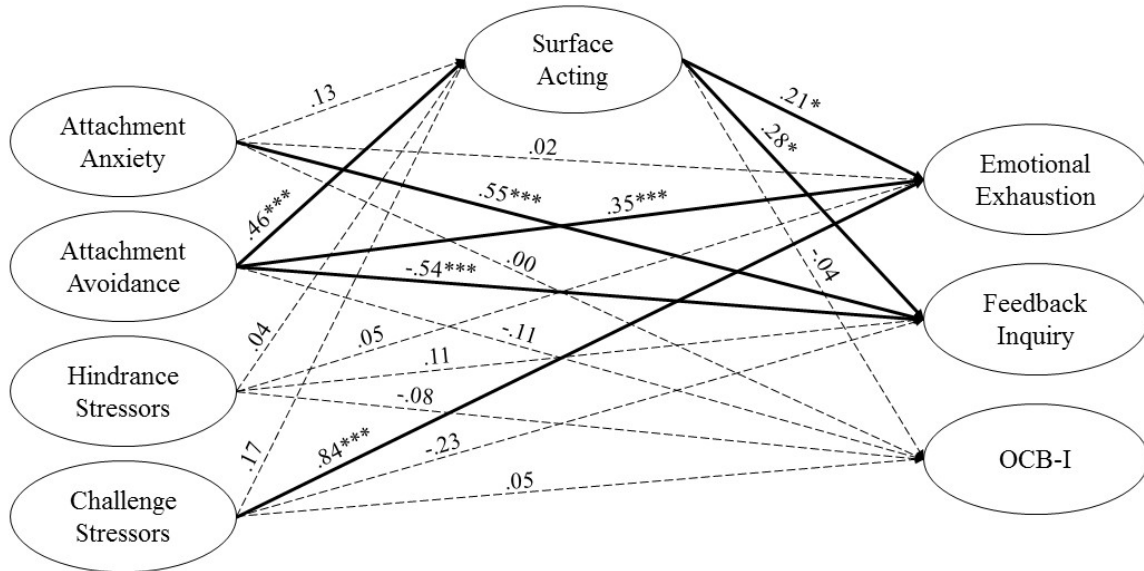


Figure 4. Final model.

Note.  $N = 206$ . Unstandardized results are reported. The gender control variable is not shown. Solid paths indicate statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationships. Dotted paths indicate non-significant relationships.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 5 stated that surface acting would mediate associations between attachment anxiety and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I. Failing to support Hypothesis 5a, attachment anxiety did not relate to surface acting ( $B = .13, S.E. = .07, ns$ ) or to emotional exhaustion ( $B = .02, S.E. = .08, ns$ ), and no indirect effect was found between attachment anxiety and emotional exhaustion (indirect effect = .03,  $S.E. = .03$ , 95% CI [-.01, .11]). Surface acting positively related to emotional exhaustion ( $B = .21, S.E. = .10, p < .05$ ), as expected. Attachment anxiety positively related to feedback inquiry ( $B = .55, S.E. = .11, p < .001$ ), opposite to the hypothesized direction stated in Hypothesis 1b, and surface acting positively related feedback inquiry ( $B = .28, S.E. = .13, p < .05$ ), opposite to the expected direction. There was no indirect effect between attachment anxiety and feedback inquiry (indirect effect = .04,  $S.E. = .03$ , 95% CI [-.01, .12]). Considering Hypothesis 5c, attachment anxiety did not associate

with OCB-I ( $B = .00$ ,  $S.E. = .07$ ,  $ns$ ), and surface acting did not relate to OCB-I ( $B = -.04$ ,  $S.E. = .09$ ,  $ns$ ). No indirect effect existed between attachment anxiety and OCB-I (indirect effect =  $-.01$ ,  $S.E. = .02$ , 95% CI  $[-.06, .02]$ ). Hypothesis 5 did not receive any support.

Hypothesis 6 posited that surface acting would mediate associations between attachment avoidance and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I. Regarding Hypothesis 6a, avoidance demonstrated positive associations with surface acting ( $B = .46$ ,  $S.E. = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and, in line with Hypothesis 2a, with emotional exhaustion ( $B = .35$ ,  $S.E. = .09$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As previously noted, surface acting positively related to emotional exhaustion. However, avoidance did not exhibit a significant indirect effect on emotional exhaustion (indirect effect =  $.09$ ,  $S.E. = .06$ , 95% CI  $[-.00, .24]$ ). However, when considering a 90% confidence interval, the indirect effect was significant (indirect effect =  $.09$ ,  $S.E. = .06$ , 90% CI  $[.01, .21]$ ). Hypothesis 6a received marginal support. Avoidance negatively related to feedback inquiry ( $B = -.54$ ,  $S.E. = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in line with Hypothesis 2b. As noted above, avoidance positively associated with surface acting, as expected; however, surface acting positively associated with feedback inquiry which was not in the expected direction. Avoidance demonstrated a significant indirect effect on feedback inquiry (indirect effect =  $.13$ ,  $S.E. = .08$ , 95% CI  $[.00, .35]$ ) through surface acting. Hypothesis 6b was partially supported. Failing to support Hypothesis 6c, no significant relation existed between avoidance and OCB-I ( $B = -.11$ ,  $S.E. = .08$ ,  $ns$ ) or, as noted, between surface acting and OCB-I. No indirect effect existed between avoidance and OCB-I (indirect effect =  $-.02$ ,  $S.E. = .05$ , 95% CI  $[-.13, .07]$ ).

Hypothesis 7 stated that surface acting would mediate the associations between hindrance stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I.

Failing to support Hypothesis 7a, hindrance stressors did not relate to surface acting ( $B = .04$ ,  $S.E. = .11$ ,  $ns$ ) or emotional exhaustion ( $B = .05$ ,  $S.E. = .13$ ,  $ns$ ), and there was no indirect effect evident between hindrance stressors and emotional exhaustion (indirect effect =  $.01$ ,  $S.E. = .04$ , 95% CI  $[-.05, .10]$ ). Hindrance stressors did not associate with feedback inquiry directly ( $B = .11$ ,  $S.E. = .17$ ,  $ns$ ) or indirectly (indirect effect =  $.01$ ,  $S.E. = .05$ , 95% CI  $[-.06, .14]$ ) thus offering no support to Hypothesis 7b. Regarding Hypothesis 7c, there was neither a direct association between hindrance stressors and OCB-I ( $B = -.08$ ,  $S.E. = .12$ ,  $ns$ ) nor an indirect association (indirect effect =  $-.00$ ,  $S.E. = .02$ , 95% CI  $[-.06, .02]$ ). Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 8 predicted that surface acting would mediate the associations between challenge stressors and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) feedback inquiry, and (c) OCB-I. Hypothesis 8a received no support. Challenge stressors did not relate to surface acting ( $B = .17$ ,  $S.E. = .10$ ,  $ns$ ) although they did relate to emotional exhaustion ( $B = .84$ ,  $S.E. = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in line with Hypothesis 4a, and there was no significant indirect effect between challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion (indirect effect =  $.03$ ,  $S.E. = .04$ , 95% CI  $[-.01, .14]$ ). Challenge stressors did not relate to feedback inquiry directly ( $B = -.23$ ,  $S.E. = .16$ ,  $ns$ ) or indirectly (indirect effect =  $.05$ ,  $S.E. = .05$ , 95% CI  $[-.01, .19]$ ) and did not relate to OCB-I directly ( $B = .05$ ,  $S.E. = .11$ ,  $ns$ ) or indirectly (indirect effect =  $-.01$ ,  $S.E. = .02$ , 95% CI  $[-.09, .02]$ ) failing to support Hypothesis 8b and 8c, respectively.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I reported the results of this dissertation including an examination of (a) the subordinate and supervisor samples, (b) possible order effects due to the order

in which independent variables appeared on the subordinate survey, (c) descriptive statistics, (d) a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to examine measurement model fit, (e) hypothesis testing through a structural equation model (SEM) approach, and (f) an examination of possible method effects through use of the CFA marker variable technique. Table 7 offers a summary of the dissertation hypotheses and conclusions. The final chapter offers a discussion of the results, dissertation limitations, and possible avenues for future research.

Table 7

*Summary of Hypotheses and Conclusions*

Hypothesis	Conclusion
H1: Attachment anxiety will:	
H1a: positively relate to emotional exhaustion.	Not supported
H1b: negatively relate to feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H1c: negatively relate to OCB-I.	Not supported
H2: Attachment avoidance will:	
H2a: positively relate to emotional exhaustion.	Supported
H2b: negatively relate to feedback inquiry.	Supported
H2c: negatively relate to OCB-I.	Not supported
H3: Hindrance stressors will:	
H3a: positively relate to emotional exhaustion.	Not supported
H3b: negatively relate to feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H3c: negatively relate to OCB-I.	Not supported
H4: Challenge stressors will:	
H4a: positively relate to emotional exhaustion.	Supported
H4b: positively relate to feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H4c: positively relate to OCB-I.	Not supported
H5-H8: Surface acting will mediate the associations between:	
H5a: attachment anxiety and emotional exhaustion.	Not supported
H5b: attachment anxiety and feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H5c: attachment anxiety and OCB-I.	Not supported
H6a: attachment avoidance and emotional exhaustion.	Marginally supported
H6b: attachment avoidance and feedback inquiry.	Partially supported
H6c: attachment avoidance and OCB-I.	Not supported
H7a: hindrance stressors and emotional exhaustion.	Not supported
H7b: hindrance stressors and feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H7c: hindrance stressors and OCB-I.	Not supported
H8a: challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion.	Not supported
H8b: challenge stressors and feedback inquiry.	Not supported
H8c: challenge stressors and OCB-I.	Not supported

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The topic of work stress is important to employees and employers, alike, with studies demonstrating its association with employees' attitudes such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2007), behaviors including performance and OCBs (e.g., Eatough et al., 2001; LePine et al., 2005), and well-being such as depression and physical symptoms (e.g., Blackmore et al., 2007; Nixon et al., 2011). COR theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 1989, 2001) has often been used in the stress literature to explain such relations. The premise of COR theory is that individuals strive to keep, protect, and build valued resources and that when individuals experience a threat of resource loss, an actual resource loss, or when they fail to gain resources after investing resources, they experience psychological stress. COR theory predicts that individuals experiencing stress will actively seek to minimize resource loss, and while not experiencing stress, they will try to acquire extra resources for later needs (Hobfoll, 1989).

Using COR theory as a theoretical framework, this dissertation sought to develop an integrative understanding of how stress influences employees' well-being and workplace behaviors by investigating the role of key internal (i.e., attachment anxiety and avoidance) and contextual (i.e., hindrance and challenge stressors) processes inside organizations. I hypothesized that attachment styles and workplace stressors would influence employees' emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I and that surface acting would serve as a mechanism through which these associations would occur. Accordingly, a primary contribution of this dissertation was its merging of the attachment, stress, and emotional labor literature to provide an individual difference and

contextual approach to understanding employee well-being and behavior. Another contribution was the manner in which surface acting was operationalized. Surface acting has traditionally been studied in a service context where the interactions studied are those between employees and customers (e.g., Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004). Building on Ozcelik (2013) who studied surface acting in organizational relationships, this dissertation measured surface acting in intra-organizational relationships. In the remaining paragraphs, results are discussed as well as study limitations and possible future research directions.

I proposed that attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, hindrance stressors, and challenge stressors would directly associate with emotional exhaustion, feedback inquiry, and OCB-I and that surface acting would be a mechanism through which these associations would occur. Findings suggested, that, in line with dissertation hypotheses, individuals who were high in attachment avoidance were more likely to feel emotionally exhausted (Hypothesis 2a) and less likely to seek feedback from their supervisor (Hypothesis 2b) and that individuals experiencing challenge stressors would experience greater emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 4a).

Against expectations, however, individuals who were high in attachment anxiety were more (not less) likely to seek feedback from their supervisor. As previously discussed, attachment anxiety is associated with hyperactivating strategies in which individuals seek to win approval and acceptance from others through “clinging, hypervigilant, and controlling responses” (Mikulincer et al., 1998, p. 437). It may be that feedback inquiry is one of the methods such individuals use in efforts to try to win or maintain their supervisor’s approval. Offering support for this idea, Ashford, De

Stobbeleir, and Nujella (2016) suggest that feedback seeking may be driven by impression management motives such that individuals engage in feedback seeking in the hope of creating a good impression. From a COR theory perspective, such efforts by attachment anxious employees may be a means for gaining resources or replenishing lost resources from the hope or expectation of receiving favorable feedback and from believing they have created a good impression. Further research is needed to investigate this point.

Findings suggested that the higher individuals were in attachment avoidance, the more they engaged in surface acting, and the more they engaged in surface acting, the more they experienced emotional exhaustion. However, despite these positive associations, no significant indirect effect between attachment avoidance and emotional exhaustion through surface acting was evident at a 95% CI although a significant indirect effect was evident through a 90% CI (Hypothesis 5a). It could be that there is a moderator involved in this association that was not taken into account. In partial support of Hypothesis 5b, surface acting mediated the relation between attachment avoidance and feedback inquiry, but the surface acting-feedback inquiry association was not in line with expectations. Instead of engaging in less feedback inquiry, as expected, individuals indicating higher uses of surface acting were rated by their supervisors as engaging in more feedback inquiry. When individuals employ surface acting, they are attempting to manage their emotional expressions in order to conform to organizational display rules through displaying the appropriate emotion (Grandey, 2000). It may be that such individuals use feedback inquiry as a way to exhibit their appropriate emotional expression to their supervisor thereby hoping to create a favorable impression and

allowing a demonstration of their compliance with display rules. More research is needed to better understand this mechanism.

Not all hypothesized relations were supported, and not all preliminary support found through correlations held up when considering the overall model. For example, all independent variables significantly correlated with surface acting, but in the overall model, only attachment avoidance significantly related to surface acting. All independent variables also positively correlated with emotional exhaustion, but once included in the overall structural model, only attachment avoidance and challenge stressors demonstrated significant associations. Attachment avoidance exhibited the hypothesized negative correlation with OCB-I but was not statistically associated once considered in the overall model. Hindrance stressors revealed no significant hypothesized associations in the overall model although previous studies have found relations between hindrance stressors and the dissertation outcome variables such as emotional exhaustion (e.g., Boswell et al., 2004). Similarly, none of the independent variables or the mediator related to OCB-I in the overall model, against expectations and previous attachment and stressor research (e.g., Chang et al., 2009; Geller & Bamberger, 2009). As OCB-I refers to interpersonal discretionary behaviors, it may be that supervisors were not aware of all such behaviors in which their employees engaged. Many of the items used to assess OCB-I in this study may not necessarily apply to an employee's relationship with their supervisor (e.g., "Helps others who have been absent"). It could be that self-ratings or co-worker- ratings would give a more accurate depiction of employees' OCB-I. Further research is needed to investigate these ideas.



Limited support was found for the hypothesized associations regarding surface acting in intra-organizational relationships. The sample of employees used in this dissertation had an average organizational tenure and supervisor tenure of approximately 7.96 years and 3.65 years, respectively. It could be that employees with longer tenure had learned more effective ways of regulating their emotions or simply no longer felt the need to surface act. It could also be that those who did not or were not able to adopt more effective means of emotion regulation were no longer with their organization. Future research should study longitudinally whether time in an organization influences the use of surface acting. Further, the nature of the surface acting measure used was general and did not distinguish among different types of surface acting (i.e., faking, suppressing, or enhancing an emotion). Future researchers should examine the tendency to choose certain surface acting strategies and the resulting impact of those strategies.

A similar argument regarding organizational or supervisor tenure could be made for feedback inquiry. Because feedback seeking is considered especially pertinent to an organizational newcomer context (Ashford et al., 2016), it may be that a lack of support for hypothesized associations regarding feedback inquiry were at least partially due to subordinates having worked with their supervisors and in their organizational long enough to no longer need to actively seek feedback. Similarly, longitudinal investigations are needed.

### **Implications**

The results of this dissertation have several implications. First, the findings suggest that individuals who are high in attachment avoidance use surface acting as a means of emotion regulation which contributes to emotional exhaustion and feedback

inquiry. If supervisors are aware of such tendencies, they can help employees learn a better and less taxing way to regulate their emotions in the workplace. This would be a step in helping to reduce such individuals' tendency to experience emotional exhaustion. Although feedback inquiry is usually considered a good thing, if employees are engaging in inquiry for impression management reasons, this may not be the kind of activity supervisors want to encourage.

The findings also suggest that individuals who are high in attachment anxiety actively seek more feedback from their supervisor while those who are high in attachment avoidance engage in less feedback inquiry. Surface acting was also a mechanism through which avoidance related to feedback inquiry in a manner that suggested avoidant individuals engage in surface acting, and surface acting relates to increased feedback inquiry.

When considering attachment styles and stressors together, attachment styles demonstrated more relations with the study variables than did the stressor variables. The stressor variables exhibited no significant associations with surface acting in the overall model despite significant correlations suggesting that individual difference variables may have a stronger influence on the use of surface acting than do contextual variables. This assertion is in line with Diefendorff et al. (2005)'s study that found dispositional variables to be stronger predictors of surface acting than situational variables. Overall, the results suggest that attachment styles are useful variables to consider particularly in terms of employee well-being and work behavior.

## **Limitations**

There are several possible limitations to this dissertation. First, all study variables were collected in a similar manner (i.e., electronic survey), and employees provided self-reports to six of the eight study variables (i.e., independent variables, mediator variable, and one dependent variable) at the same time creating concerns of potential biasing effects due to common method variance. However, according to Spector (2006), accurately assessing individuals' internal states (e.g., attitudes, emotions, perceptions) can be challenging without the use of self-reports. Employees were arguably in the best position to accurately assess their own attachment styles, stressors, surface acting, and emotional exhaustion. In addition, several precautions recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) were taken in efforts to minimize any potential biasing effects due to method. For example, I assessed supervisor ratings of employee's feedback inquiry and OCB-I. Further, the subordinate survey included methodological separation by using a variety of scale formats and by separating the measurement of the independent and dependent variables on the survey, and all respondents were assured their responses would not be shared with their dyadic partner. Additionally, the CFA marker variable test (Williams et al., 2010) was employed to statically test for method effects. Results suggested there were no significant method effects or biases influencing the results. Studying these relations longitudinally would further alleviate concerns relating to method bias.

Another potential limitation is the dissertation samples. First, the samples were predominantly White (91.7% in the subordinate sample and 90.8% in the supervisor sample). Second, the wide range of industries represented could be seen as a limitation in that it may be that some of the relations tested are more likely to apply in some industries

than others which may have weakened or suppressed some of the results. On the other hand, examining data representing many industries may also be seen as a benefit in terms of study generalizability. Future research may benefit from using a more racially diverse sample and investigating possible industry differences in hypothesized associations. Third, although the sample was purposefully chosen to be full-time employees, this could be seen as a limitation as additional insight could have been gained from including part-time employees.

A final possible limitation to acknowledge is the manner in which the data were collected. As previously noted, my data were collected through a response service, Qualtrics Panels, in which participants who are registered with the panel service can choose to take a survey for compensation. This could lead to questions of data integrity and questions about respondents' motivation for taking the survey. However, as described in Chapter 3, care was taken to put systems in place to screen out insufficient effort responders, and Qualtrics also monitors respondents for data integrity. Further, Qualtrics and other response services such as StudyResponse have become increasingly popular as viable methods for data collection as evidenced by publications in top management journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal* (e.g., Long, Bendersky, and Morrill (2011) with Qualtrics and Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) with StudyResponse).

### **Future Research Directions**

In addition to the suggestions for future research already provided, this dissertation brings to light other suggestions for further study. First, as discussed in Chapter 2, attachment styles are believed to exist in a hierarchy ranging from general

attachment styles to relationship-specific attachment styles (N. L. Collins & Read, 1994). General attachment styles were examined in this dissertation because my intention was to capture attachment styles as a relatively stable individual difference variable (Game, 2008) and because general attachment styles are considered especially salient in times of stress or new situations (N. L. Collins & Read). However, it may be that employees' attachment style in their relationship with their supervisor has more of an impact than general styles on their feedback inquiry and OCB-I as interpersonal relationship variables. Lending support to this suggestion, Cozzarelli, Hoekstra, and Bylsma (2000) found in their study of romantic relationships that when overall psychological adjustment, a global outcome, was considered, general attachment styles exhibited stronger associations than romantic relationship-specific attachment. However, when relationship-specific outcomes were considered (e.g., relationship satisfaction), romantic relationship-specific attachment related more strongly than did general attachment. These researchers recommended measuring relationship-specific attachment styles when assessing relationship-oriented outcomes. Further research is needed to better understand the roles of general and relationship-specific attachment styles as they relate to organizational outcomes. Future researchers should also examine relationship-specific attachment styles such as supervisor- or coworker-specific in relation to the dissertation outcomes. Relating to the above, further insight could be gained from including OCB-O, organizationally directed discretionary behaviors and whether general versus specific attachment styles relate differently to OCB-I and OCB-O.

Also, this dissertation focused solely on the mediating role of surface acting but did not examine deep acting, another major form of emotional labor. Unlike surface

acting, when individuals engage in deep acting, they attempt to actually feel the emotion they display (Grandey, 2000). Drawing from COR theory, Hülshager and Schewe (2011) suggest that although deep acting drains cognitive resources, when individuals expend those resources to actually feel positive emotions, they also reap the reward from experiencing those emotions in terms of resource gain. Accordingly, future studies should also examine whether and how deep acting plays a mediating role in the studied associations.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation took an integrative approach to studying work stress in organizations by investigating key individual (i.e., attachment styles) and contextual (i.e., hindrance and challenge stressors) variables involved in the stress process to develop a better understanding of employee well-being and workplace behavior. The findings revealed direct positive associations between both attachment avoidance and challenge stressors with emotional exhaustion as well as a direct negative association between avoidance and feedback inquiry. Opposite to the hypothesized direction, results showed a direct positive relation between attachment anxiety and feedback inquiry. Further, attachment avoidance indirectly related to feedback inquiry through surface acting. Although a positive association existed between avoidance and surface acting and between surface acting and emotional exhaustion, as hypothesized, there was no significant indirect effect evident at a 95% CI although a significant indirect effect was detected at a 90% CI. Based on the dissertation findings several future research directions were offered. Hopefully this dissertation will spur further research into taking an

integrative approach to developing a more fine-grained understanding of stress processes in the workplace.

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## Appendix A

### Subordinate Survey Items

Attachment Anxiety (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree); Adapted from Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel (2007)

Instructions: The following six statements concern possible feelings that individuals might generally have in their relationships with *other people*. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below in terms of your relationships with *other people*.

1. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by others.
2. I find that others don't want to get as close as I would like.
3. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
4. I often worry about being abandoned by others.
5. I get frustrated if others are not available when I need them.
6. I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.

Attachment Avoidance (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree); Adapted from Wei et al. (2007)

Instructions: The following six statements concern possible feelings that individuals might generally have in their relationships with *other people*. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below in terms of your relationships with *other people*.

1. It does not help to turn to others in times of need.
2. I want to get close to others, but I keep pulling back.
3. I don't turn to others for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
4. I try to avoid getting too close to others.
5. I don't usually discuss my problems and concerns with other people.
6. I am nervous when others get too close to me.

Hindrance Stressors (1 = Produces No Stress to 5 = Produces a Great Deal of Stress); Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau (2000)

Instructions: The following five statements refer to things that may cause individuals stress at work. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements causes you stress at work.

1. The degree to which politics rather than performance affects organizational decisions
2. The inability to clearly understand what is expected of me on the job
3. The amount of red tape I need to go through to get my job done
4. The lack of job security I have
5. The degree to which my career seems "stalled"

Challenge Stressors (1 = Produces No Stress to 5 = Produces a Great Deal of Stress);  
Cavanaugh et al. (2000)

Instructions: The following six statements refer to things that may cause individuals stress at work. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements causes you stress at work.

1. The number of projects and/or assignments I have
2. The amount of time I spend at work
3. The volume of work that must be accomplished in the allotted time
4. Time pressures I experience
5. The amount of responsibility I have
6. The scope of responsibility my position entails

Surface Acting (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree); Diefendorff, Croyle, and  
Gosserand (2005) with adaptations similar to Ozcelik (2013)

Instructions: The following seven statements refer to ways in which individuals may behave at work. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I put on an act in order to deal with the people with whom I work in an appropriate way.
2. I fake a good mood when interacting with the people with whom I work.
3. I put on a “show” or “performance” when interacting with the people with whom I work.
4. I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job.
5. I put on a “mask” in order to display the emotions I need for the job.
6. I show feelings to the people with whom I work that are different from what I feel inside.
7. I fake the emotions I show when dealing with the people with whom I work.

Emotional Exhaustion (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree); Wharton (1993)  
with anchors used by Ozcelik (2013)

Instructions: The following five statements refer to ways individuals may feel at work. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the work day.
3. I dread getting up in the morning and having to face another day on the job.
4. I feel burned out from my work.
5. I feel frustrated by my job.
6. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.

Attitudes toward the Color Blue (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree); Miller and Chiodo (2008) with condensed scale used by Simmering, Fuller, Richardson, Ocal, and Atinc (2015)

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I prefer blue to other colors.
2. I like the color blue.
3. I like blue clothes.

#### Organization tenure

Instructions: How many months have you been employed by your current organization?

Please indicate the number of months in the box below. [Response box]

#### Supervisor tenure

Instructions: How many months has your current supervisor been your supervisor? Please

indicate the number of months in the box below. [Response box]

#### Hours worked per week

Instructions: Please indicate the number of hours you work per week in the box below.

[Response box]

#### Gender

Instructions: Please indicate your sex. (1 = Female, 2 = Male, 3 = Prefer not to answer)

#### Age

Instructions: Please indicate your age in years in the box below or select "Prefer not to answer." [Response box]

#### Race

Instructions: In which of the following categories would you most place yourself? (1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 = American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 6 = Prefer not to answer)

#### Industry

Instructions: Which of the following industry categories best represents the industry in which you currently work? (1 = Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, 2 = Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction, 3 = Utilities, 4 = Construction, 5 = Manufacturing, 6 = Wholesale Trade, 7 = Retail Trade, 8 = Transportation and Warehousing, 9 = Information, 10 = Finance and Insurance, 11 = Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, 12 = Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, 13 = Management of Companies and Enterprises, 14 = Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, 15 = Educational Services, 16 = Health Care and Social Assistance, 17 = Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, 18 = Accommodation and Food Services, 19 = Public Administration, 20 = Other)

## Supervisor Survey Items

Feedback Inquiry (1 = Never to 7 = Always); VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, and Brown (2000) with adaptations by Lam, Huang, and Snape (2007)

Instructions: The following five statements refer to types of feedback individuals may seek at work from their supervisor. Please indicate how frequently your employee asks you for feedback regarding the following statements.

1. [Your employee's] overall work performance
2. [Your employee's] technical performance on the job
3. Your role expectations of your [employee]
4. [Your employee's] social behaviors
5. Whether you feel that [your employee's] values and attitudes are appropriate for the organization

OCB-I (1 = Never to 7 = Always); Lee and Allen (2002)

Instructions: The following eight statements refer to ways individuals may behave at work. Please indicate how often your employee engages in the following behaviors.

1. Helps others who have been absent
2. Willingly gives their time to help others who have work-related problems
3. Adjusts their work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off
4. Goes out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group
5. Shows genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations
6. Gives up time to help others who have work or non-work problems
7. Assists others with their duties
8. Shares personal property with others to help their work

Gender

Instructions: Please indicate your sex. (1 = Female, 2 = Male, 3 = Prefer not to answer)

Age

Instructions: Please indicate your age in years in the box below or select "Prefer not to answer." [Response box]

Race

Instructions: In which of the following categories would you most place yourself? (1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 = American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 6 = Prefer not to answer)

## Appendix B

### Subordinate Information Letter



HARBERT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL  
INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE  
DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER  
for a Research Study entitled  
*“Attachment Styles and Workplace Stressors: An Individual and  
Contextual Approach to Employee Well-Being and the Mediating Role of  
Surface Acting”*

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine the influence of stress on employees’ well-being and workplace behaviors. The study is being conducted by Shelley Davis, Doctoral Candidate, under the direction of Dr. Kevin Mossholder, Professor and Management Department Head in the Auburn University Management Department. You are invited to participate because you are employed full time and are age 19 or older.

**What will be involved if you participate?** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately 15-20 minutes.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with completing the survey items. You will be asked to provide your first name and last initial and your supervisor’s first name and email address so that we may send a recruitment email to your supervisor and identify you as the referring employee. Providing this information is requested but is not required to receive compensation for completing the survey. Because your name will be used in recruitment emails to your supervisor, there is a potential risk that providing this information could adversely influence your relationship with your supervisor.

**Are there benefits to yourself or others?** There are no personal benefits to participating in this study.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** You will receive \$2.50 for completing this survey. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to provide your supervisor’s first name and email address so that your supervisor can be sent an associated survey. Once your supervisor has completed the survey, you will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card as an additional thank you.

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[www.auburn.edu](http://www.auburn.edu)

The Auburn University Institutional  
Review Board has approved this  
Document for use from  
11/11/15 to 11/10/16  
Protocol # 15-446 EP 1511



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**If you change your mind about participating**, you can withdraw at any time by closing your browser window. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Once you have submitted anonymous data, it cannot be withdrawn since it will be unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Management or Dr. Mossholder and/or me.

**Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.** We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by not recording any identifiable information about you through the survey software. At the survey's end, you will be asked to provide your supervisor's first name and email address and your first name and first initial of your last name. This information will only be used to facilitate the matching of the surveys by Qualtrics, the company hosting this survey, and will not be provided to me or the other researchers involved with this study. Your supervisor will not have access to your survey responses. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting.

**If you have questions about this study**, please contact Shelley Davis at 334-844-7445 or [sad0007@auburn.edu](mailto:sad0007@auburn.edu) or Dr. Kevin Mossholder at 334-844-6529 or [kwm0003@auburn.edu](mailto:kwm0003@auburn.edu).

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant**, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at [IRBadmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBadmin@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW. YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

<u>Shelley Davis</u> 1/20/16	<u>Kevin Mossholder</u> 1/20/16
Shelley Davis	Kevin Mossholder
Investigator	Co-Investigator
Date	Date

**The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from November 11, 2015 to November 10, 2016. Protocol #15-446 EP 1511.**

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## Supervisor Recruitment E-mail

Dear [insert supervisor name here],

I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Management at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to examine the influence of stress on employees' well-being and workplace behaviors. You have received this survey invitation because your employee [insert employee first name and last initial reported by employee in employee survey] indicated that you were their supervisor and may be willing to answer some questions. You may participate if you are 19 years of age or older.

Participants will be asked to take an electronic survey. In the survey, you will be presented with a series of statements regarding various topics including your employee's performance and other workplace behaviors. You will be asked to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement. It is expected that this survey will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.

There are no risks associated with this survey, and your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. No identifying information will be collected about you through the survey software. The information your employee provided so that we may contact will only be used to facilitate the matching of surveys by Qualtrics, the company hosting this survey, and will not be provided to me or the other researchers involved in this study. Your employee will not have access to any responses you provide. As a thank you for your time, you will receive a \$15 Amazon gift card upon successful survey completion. Your responses are very important and your participation will be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to know more information about this study, an information letter can be obtained by opening the survey through the link at the end of this letter. The information letter will appear on the welcome page of the survey. If you decide to participate after reading the letter, you can access the survey items by clicking the Next (>>) link from the welcome page (first page) of the survey.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [sad0007@auburn.edu](mailto:sad0007@auburn.edu) or 334-844-7445 or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Kevin Mossholder, at [kwm0003@auburn.edu](mailto:kwm0003@auburn.edu).

If you would like to participate in this study, please click on the following link: [link]

Thank you for your consideration,

Shelley Davis  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Management  
Raymond J. Harbert College of Business  
Auburn University

# Supervisor Information Letter



HARBERT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

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INFORMATION LETTER  
for a Research Study entitled  
*“Attachment Styles and Workplace Stressors: An Individual and Contextual Approach to Employee Well-Being and the Mediating Role of Surface Acting”*

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine the influence of stress on employees’ well-being and workplace behaviors. The study is being conducted by Shelley Davis, Doctoral Candidate, under the direction of Dr. Kevin Mossholder, Professor and Management Department Head in the Auburn University Department of Management. You are invited to participate because your employee, [insert employee’s first name and first initial of last name here], indicated that you are their supervisor and gave us permission to contact you. Please note that you must be at least 19 years old to complete this survey.

**What will be involved if you participate?** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately 10-15 minutes.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with completing the survey items.

**Are there benefits to yourself or others?** There are no personal benefits to participating in this study.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$15 Amazon gift card upon successful completion of the survey, and your employee will also receive an Amazon gift card.

**If you change your mind about participating** you can withdraw at any time by closing your browser window. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Once you have submitted anonymous data, it cannot be withdrawn since it will be unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop

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participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Management or Dr. Mossholder and/or me.

**Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.** We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by not recording any identifiable information about you through the survey software. Your employee provided your first name and email address and their first name and first initial of their last name. However, this information will only be used to facilitate the matching of the surveys by Qualtrics, the company hosting this survey, and will not be provided to me or the other researchers involved with this study. Your employee will not have access to any responses you provide. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting.

**If you have questions about this study**, please contact Shelley Davis at 334-844-7445 or [sad0007@auburn.edu](mailto:sad0007@auburn.edu) or Dr. Kevin Mossholder at 334-844-6529 or [kwm0003@auburn.edu](mailto:kwm0003@auburn.edu).

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Shelley Davis 1/20/16  
Shelley Davis Date  
Investigator  
Kevin Mossholder 1/20/16  
Kevin Mossholder Date  
Co-Investigator

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