



## The impact of life stage and societal culture on subordinate influence ethics: A study of Brazil, China, Germany, and the U.S.

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, we investigate the effects of societal values and life stage on subordinate influence ethics. Based on the evolving crossvergence theory of macro-level predictors of values evolution, we demonstrate the applicability of crossvergence theory in the micro-level context. Furthermore, our study provides the first empirical multi-level analysis of influence ethics utilizing a multiple-country sample. Thus, we illustrate how the breath of crossvergence can be expanded to provide a multi-level theoretical foundation of values and behavior evolution across cultures. Specifically, we integrate micro-level life stage theory and macro-level societal culture theory to concurrently assess the contributions of each theory in explaining subordinate influence ethics across the diverse societies of Brazil, China, Germany and the U.S. Consistent with previous research, we found significant societal differences in influence ethics. However, we also found that life stage theory played a significant role in understanding influence ethics. Thus, our findings expand the crossvergence perspective on societal change, indicating that key micro-level predictors (e.g., life stage) should be included in cross-cultural research.

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### 1. Introduction

“Ethics is the discipline that examines one’s moral standards or the moral standards of a society (Velasquez, 2002). If something is ethical, this means it is of an acceptable standard in terms of one’s personal and social welfare” (Alas, 2006: 238). An appreciation of ethical issues in business is important because ethical congruence is crucial to a successful relationship whether at societal or individual level. At the societal level, the relevance of cross-national differences in ethical behavior can be seen in corruption perception indices that clearly show that corrupt societies are not successful in developing relationships (e.g., attracting foreign direct investment) from the more ethically and economically advanced global business community (Davis and Ruhe, 2003). Similarly, individual-level research has shown that ethical congruence is crucial for successful work relationships (Fu et al., 2004). In this paper, our focus is on ethics in the workplace and specifically on perspectives on the ethics of different means used by subordinates to influence superiors in an organization.

Previous studies have investigated upward influence ethics across a variety of countries (e.g., Egri et al., 2000). Other studies have investigated ethics among different demographic groups within a single country (e.g., Higgins et al., 2003). However, to the best of our knowledge, only one study (Ralston et al., 2005) has started to integrate these two research tracks by investigating ethics across two countries and between two age groups in each country.

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The present study has both an empirical and a conceptual objective for advancing the current state of the international business literature. Our empirical objective is to extend previous research to the next level of complexity with a multi-level and multi-country design. As such, this study provides a stronger empirical test of the generalizability of previous study findings that were substantially more limited in terms of scope and depth. Conceptually, the integrated micro and macro design of the present study has its foundation in crossvergence theory, even though crossvergence theory was initially developed as a macro-level predictor of individual values (Ralston, 2008). Thus, our conceptual goal is to use our study on subordinate ethics to exemplify how crossvergence theory can be expanded to be a multi-level (macro and micro) predictor of values/behavior, in general. As such, we take crossvergence theory to its next level of development by providing a more encompassing, multi-level interpretation of the theory. This multi-level extension provides a theoretical foundation for future multi-level investigations of cross-cultural phenomena as called for repeatedly during the past quarter of the century (Meglino and Ravlin, 1998; Negandhi, 1983; Tung, 2008).

Specifically, we investigate influence ethics compatibility across different life stage (micro-level) and socio-cultural (macro-level) groups. Our overarching empirical goal is to assess the relative contributions of life stage and societal culture for predicting differences in subordinate influence ethics. To this end, we explore answers to the following two questions. [1] Is micro-level “life stage” a significant predictor of subordinate influence ethics in the cross-cultural context? [2] Is macro-level “society” a significant predictor of subordinate influence ethics, and if so, is society sufficiently robust to be the *only* explanatory macro-level predictor needed?

To answer these questions, we investigated subordinate influence ethics in four diverse cultures (Brazil, China, Germany, and the U.S.) across the two life stage groups (early adulthood and middle adulthood) that are most relevant in a workforce assessment. We present three sets of sequential analyses. First, we analyzed our data as though we were solely testing for a life stage effect with a multi-society dataset. Second, in traditional cross-cultural research fashion, we analyzed our data to test for a society difference effect. Third, we took our four societies and two life stage periods per society to form eight society-by-life stage groups to simultaneously test the relationships and differences among these groups. The first two analyses provide us with baseline replications of previous studies that looked solely at either life stage or societal differences. The third analysis takes these previous approaches a step further by integrating life stage and society effects into the same analysis to provide a more complete explanation of the subordinate influence ethics phenomenon.

In the following sections of this paper, we briefly describe the subordinate influence ethics measures that are used as the dependent variables in the study, and we identify the societies selected and the reason for selecting these societies. Identifying the measures and the societies, lays the groundwork for our discussion of the literature germane to subordinate influence ethics in these societies, which in turn leads to our development of three sets of hypotheses predicting subordinate influence ethics behavior from the perspectives of life stage theory, macro crossvergence theory, and the multi-level, integrated life stage and crossvergence theories. We conclude the paper with a discussion of study results, as well as implications for future research and managerial practice.

### 1.1. The selection of measures for the study

In our study, we use as our dependent measures the three dimensions of the subordinate influence ethics hierarchy. This three-step hierarchy of subordinate ethicality has been confirmed across a wide variety of countries in prior research (Egri et al, 2000; Ralston et al., 2005, 2006b, 2001, 2009; Ralston and Pearson, 2003; Terpstra et al., 2002), and it has the added advantage of being cross-culturally conceived and developed (Ralston and Pearson, 2003). The dimensions of the hierarchy, from most ethical to least ethical are: organizationally beneficial behaviors, self-indulgent behaviors and destructive behaviors.

#### 1.1.1. Organizationally beneficial behavior

These are the standard prescribed and sanctioned behaviors for employees in organizations. They may be viewed as the “organizational person” approach to subordinate influence because these behaviors tend to be directly beneficial to the organization. Organizationally beneficial behaviors include: demonstrating the ability to get the job done, behaving in a manner that is seen as appropriate in the company, and maintaining good working relationships with other employees.

#### 1.1.2. Self-indulgent behavior

These behaviors are self-serving for the individual within the organization. They epitomize the “it’s me first” approach in that these behaviors show self-interest being above the interests of others or the organization. Whether they help or harm the organization is subject to interpretation and may be determined by the situation. Self-indulgent behaviors include: spreading rumors about someone or something that stands in the way of their advancement, trying to influence the boss to make a bad decision, if that decision would help them to get ahead, and blaming another for their own mistakes.

#### 1.1.3. Destructive behavior

These are extremely self-serving behaviors that directly hurt others, and often times, the organization. In many industrialized societies, these behaviors would also be considered illegal. They may be described as a “burn, pillage, and plunder” approach to gain influence because of the harm these behaviors can bring to others and the organization. Destructive behaviors include: threatening to give valuable company information to someone outside the organization if their demands are not met, offering sexual favors to a superior, and stealing secret corporate documents and give them to another company in return for a better job at the other company.

## 1.2. The selection of societies for the study

Since the objective of this study is to explore two very different predictors of subordinate influence ethics, micro-level life stage theory and macro-level crossvergence theory, we wanted to ensure that our selection of societies was appropriate to accomplish these objectives. In addition, we wanted to select societies that are highly relevant in today's global economy. Thus, our primary selection criteria were threefold: (1) to select a set of societies that are: (1) socio-culturally diverse, (2) economically and politically diverse, and (3) relevant representatives of the economic triad of Asia, Western Europe, and the Americas (including both North and South). The result was that the four societies selected for this study were: Brazil, China, Germany, and the U.S. Taken as a group, these societies met our criteria of diversity, as well as being societies that are crucial to the global economy.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

The roles of individuals' life stage and societal culture in predicting subordinate influence ethics are investigated in this study. Whereas societal culture—operationalized as country—has been substantially explored as a predictor of differences in the cross-cultural literature (e.g., [Inglehart and Welzel, 2005](#); [Kelley et al., 2006](#)), other relevant predictors, such as age level, have gone largely unexplored. However, previous cross-cultural (e.g., [Egri and Ralston, 2004](#)) and single-country research (e.g., [Meglino and Ravlin, 1998](#)) has found that age is a significant predictor of behavior differences. In our review, we start with our micro-level predictor, age-group difference, based on life stage theory followed by our macro-level predictor, societal difference, based on crossvergence theory. We conclude our discussion by proposing that crossvergence theory can be expanded to create a multi-level crossvergence theory that can serve as a foundation for integrating these micro-level and macro-level predictors of subordinate influence ethics behavior.

### 2.1. Life stage: micro-level predictor of subordinate influence ethics

We investigate the age construct using a chronological perspective, as it is operationalized in life stage theory. The life stage model proposes that there is a universal sequence of the four stages of human development throughout the human life cycle, and that each life stage is distinctive in terms of its values and behaviors (cf [Erikson, 1997](#); [Levinson, 1980](#); [Settersten and Mayer, 1997](#)). Childhood and adolescence (from birth to 19 years of age) is a period of biological, psychological, and social growth as well as learning the values and competencies necessary for being a responsible and independent adult. Early adulthood (from 20 to 39 years of age) is a period of experimenting and making important decisions about advancing one's career, as well as developing a lifestyle and personal relationships. Critical developmental tasks include learning how to be a self-sufficient adult. Middle adulthood (from 40 to 60 years of age) is a period of personal mastery and assuming leadership in family, work, and community social systems. One major theme of middle adulthood is caring for others and being a stable, responsible, compassionate, and productive member of society. Late adulthood (over 60 years of age) is a period of stewardship, mentoring, and passing on values to younger generations. Although [Erikson \(1997\)](#) proposed that these life stages are universal, research on age, aging, and the life course has been primarily conducted in the West.

#### 2.1.1. Selection of life stages for the study

We focused on the early adulthood (20–39 years) and middle adulthood (40–60 years) stages because of their relevance to the work context. Our review of the single-country literature clearly indicated that age has an impact on the values held and behaviors exhibited in the work environment (e.g., [Mellahi and Guermat, 2004](#); [Ralston et al., 1999a](#)). Conversely, we found only a few cross-cultural studies that explicitly investigated age-related personal values differences ([Egri and Ralston, 2004](#); [Inglehart and Welzel, 2005](#); [Loscocco and Kalleberg, 1988](#); [Ralston et al., 1999a](#); [Smith et al., 1996](#)). And, only [Ralston et al. \(2005\)](#) specifically addressed the impact of age level on influence ethics. Thus, while age—operationalized as life stage—is an important predictor of values and behaviors, it has been understudied in the cross-cultural context. Further, cross-cultural research on the relationship between age and values orientations has yielded mixed results. [Settersten and Mayer \(1997, p. 237\)](#) note that “chronological age has the strongest salience for those who are part of modern, industrialized societies.”

#### 2.1.2. Life stage hypotheses

In essence, life stage theory proposes that regardless of the predominant values orientation in a society, individuals in a particular life stage will have similar values orientations and behaviors that are significantly different from the values and behaviors of individuals in another life stage. Thus, according to the theory, age level, not society, is the driving force in individual values and behavior formation. Interestingly, the micro-level, life stage argument parallels the macro-level argument proposed by convergence theory ([Dunphy, 1987](#)). That is, there are macro, micro and meso levels influences that result in the same individual values and behaviors outcome, whether they be societal technology level—as proposed by convergence theory—or individual life stage, or corporate culture. We raise this issue now to serve as a precursor for our discussion of our third set of hypotheses, where we demonstrate that crossvergence theory can be advanced to be a multi-level model.

In developing our life stage hypotheses regarding subordinate influence ethics behaviors, we note that life stage research has shown that individuals in early adulthood tend to be more ambitious and more focused on climbing the corporate ladder than those in middle adulthood. Further, those in early adulthood tend to be more individualistic and self-interested than their counterparts in middle adulthood ([Erikson, 1997](#)). Conversely, individuals in middle adulthood tend to be more nurturing,

collectivistic, and even universalistic-oriented. Thus, individuals in early adulthood would tend to be more likely to engage in both self-indulgent and destructive behavior than their older counterparts who would tend to be more likely to engage in organizationally beneficial behavior. Thus, based on life stage theory (e.g., Erikson, 1997 and Settersten and Mayer, 1997), we propose the following trans-cultural hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1a.** Organizationally beneficial ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by respondents in middle adulthood age groups than by respondents in early adulthood age groups, irrespective of society.

**Hypothesis 1b.** Self-indulgent ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by respondents in early adulthood age groups than by respondents in middle adulthood age groups, irrespective of society.

**Hypothesis 1c.** Destructive ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by respondents in early adulthood age groups than by respondents in middle adulthood age groups, irrespective of society.

## 2.2. Societal difference: macro-level predictor of subordinate influence ethics

During the past four-plus decades, the IB literature on the societal influences on work values, which includes subordinate influence ethics, has revolved around two competing theoretical perspectives: divergence theory and convergence theory (Dunphy, 1987; Webber, 1969). More recently, the synergistic crossvergence theory has been developed to more fully explain values evolution (Ralston et al., 1999b, 1993a, 1997, 2006a).

### 2.2.1. The crossvergence model

Societal divergence theory argues that the socio-cultural influence is the sole determinant of individual-level values (Ricks et al., 1990). This literature has shown that individualism and collectivism are the two most universally accepted values dimensions differentiating societal cultures, and that these are best viewed as separate dimensions (Oyserman et al., 2002; Schimmack et al., 2005; Triandis, 1995). In this study, we focus on individualism because it has been shown to be the one cultural value potentially more subject to business ideology influence, and thus the one that can better reflect both socio-cultural and business ideology effects (Ralston, 2008; Schimmack et al., 2005). Conversely, societal-convergence theory argues that a business ideology influence (e.g., technological/economic development level) is the sole determinant of a society's values (Dunphy, 1987). Subsequently, crossvergence theory has shown that it is important to take both socio-cultural and business ideology (i.e., economic, technological and political) influences into consideration when determining the source, as well as the evolution, of individual-level values (Andrews and Chompusri, 2005; Kelley et al., 2006; Ralston et al., 1997, 2006a). Thus, we chose to base our hypotheses on crossvergence theory. As such, we concurrently evaluated the socio-cultural influence, as represented by individualism, and the business ideology influence, as represented by economic development level (GDP per capita). We utilized economic development level for the business ideology influence because, first, it is more commonly used than technology as a predictor measure, and second, technology level and economic development are very highly correlated (World Economic Forum, 2006). Thus, for each society, we used the information derived from this integrated socio-cultural (i.e., individualism) and business ideology (i.e., GDP per capita) perspective to provide a starting point for developing directional hypotheses.

### 2.2.2. Societal-level crossvergence hypotheses

We present the integrated socio-cultural and business ideology relationships among these four societies in Fig. 1. The individualism values scores are based upon Schwartz Values Survey data collected by the authors, as a part of a large multi-country research endeavor between 2000 and 2005. The GDP per capita statistics are based on World Bank estimates for 2007 (Wikipedia, accessed November 4, 2008).

As shown in Fig. 1, Brazil has a moderate economic development level and a moderate level of individualism, China has a moderate economic development level and a low level of individualism, and Germany has a high economic development level and a low level of individualism, remembering that Germany of today is the integration of the former socialistic East and capitalistic West (Glatzer and Bos, 1998), with our German respondents growing up in two very different societies. Finally, the U.S. has a high economic development level and high level of individualism. Germany provides an interesting focal point for comparison, as Germany and the U.S. are the two high economic development level countries, while Germany and China are the two low individualism countries. Thus, convergence theory would predict that Germany and the U.S. will be similar to one another and different from Brazil and China, who will be similar to one another [(Germany~U.S.) ↔ (Brazil~China)]. Conversely, divergence theory would predict that Germany and China would be similar. Also, these countries would be different from Brazil and most different from the U.S. [(Germany~China) ↔ Brazil ↔ U.S.]. Crossvergence theory predicts that both of these influences will have an integrated effect in determining the societal views on subordinate influence ethics and thus in determining the relationships among these countries. As shown in this figure, China and the U.S. are the most different, with Brazil and Germany sharing varying degrees of similarity with both China and the U.S. While the definition of crossvergence has evolved to mean that the integration of the socio-cultural and business ideology influences results in “different” not “in between” outcomes, for parsimony in developing the crossvergence hypothesis, we utilize the simpler “in-between” perspective (Ralston, 2008).

Previous cross-cultural research on influence strategies between Eastern and Western countries has found that destructive influence strategies were relatively more acceptable in an Asian (Hong Kong) culture than in an Anglo (U.S.) culture (Ralston et al.,

		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEVEL <sup>1</sup>		
		High	Moderate	Low
INDIVIDUALISM <sup>2</sup>	High	U.S.		
	Moderate		Brazil	
	Low	Germany	China	

<sup>1</sup> Economic Development Level: US = 45,790 (4<sup>th</sup>), Germany = 33,154 (21<sup>st</sup>), Brazil = 9,570 (66<sup>th</sup>), China = 5,345 (90<sup>th</sup>) [GDP per capita at PPP in USD, World Bank: 2007]

<sup>2</sup> Individualism: US = 4.37 > Brazil = 4.18 > (Germany = 4.04 ~ China = 3.97) [Schwartz Values Survey, data collected by authors: 2000-2005]

**Fig. 1.** Economic development level and individualism used as joint predictors of subordinate influence ethics.

1995). Conversely, U.S. managers viewed organizationally beneficial influence strategies as having higher acceptability than Hong Kong managers did. A subsequent six-country study that included a German sample (Ralston et al., 2001) found that German managers viewed destructive influence behavior as more acceptable than U.S. managers but less acceptable than Hong Kong managers. For organizationally beneficial influence behavior, the relationships were reversed. Thus, previous research indicates that U.S. managers view organizationally beneficial behavior as more ethical and destructive behavior as less ethical than both German and Chinese managers. While the relative ethicality of these types of influence behaviors for Chinese and German managers has not been previously investigated, we utilize the relationships presented in Fig. 1 to order these societies. Further, since no previous studies on subordinate influence ethics for Brazil were identified, we will follow the exploratory perspective presented in the logic developed in Fig. 1. Although self-indulgent behaviors appear to be closely associated with capitalistic/individualistic cultures (Inglehart, 1997), the findings on self-indulgent influence ethics (Ralston et al., 2005, 2006a,b) indicate that U.S. respondents score lower than Asian respondents and that self-indulgent and destructive influence ethics share some level of similarity. Thus, for the self-indulgent ethics hypothesis, we follow the logic presented for the destructive ethics behavior. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 2a.** Organizationally beneficial ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by U.S. respondents than by German and Brazilian respondents, who in turn view them as more ethical than Chinese respondents, irrespective of life stage group.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Self-indulgent ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by Chinese respondents than by German and Brazilian respondents, who in turn view them as more ethical than U.S. respondents, irrespective of life stage group.

**Hypothesis 2c.** Destructive ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by Chinese respondents than by German and Brazilian respondents, who in turn view them as more ethical than U.S. respondents, irrespective of life stage group.

### 2.3. Life stage and societal difference integration: a multi-level crossvergence perspective

Persuasive arguments have been proffered, most recently by Tung (2008), regarding the need to integrate the societal (macro) and individual (micro) levels for empirical analysis of IB issues. However, we are not aware of any cross-cultural theory that expressly attempts to conceptually integrate these levels of analysis; and, when there is no theoretical foundation, empirical investigation is less likely to occur. Therefore, in this section of the paper we propose a theoretical foundation that is applicable for the integration of micro, meso and/or macro levels, in general, and, specific to this study, for the integration of life stage and societal culture to determine subordinate influence ethics behavior.

#### 2.3.1. The development of multi-level crossvergence theory

Although solely focused on societal-level predictor variables, crossvergence theory is philosophically rooted in the need to integrate diverse factors that can affect values/behavior (Ralston, 2008). In the broad context, crossvergence theory proposes a

synergistic process of values/behavior evolution resulting from the interaction of socio-cultural influences and business ideology influences (Ralston, 2008). Thus, we propose that crossvergence theory, which has been based on macro-level predictors, can be expanded to integrate micro-level predictors. To take crossvergence theory from being focused only on the integration of differing types of macro-level predictors (socio-cultural and business ideology) to one focusing on the integration of predictors at differing levels (macro, meso and micro) appears to be a logical and progressive extension of this robust theory of values/behavior formation and evolution. Further, in the specific context of this study, we propose that life stage is an individual-level influence that behaves similarly to the business ideology influence (e.g., technology) in creating a converging effect. Our logic is that while convergence theory argues that similarities across-cultures in economic/technological development will result in societal similarities in values/behaviors (Ricks et al., 1990; Webber, 1969), life stage theory argues that similarities across groups in the age demographic will result in age-group similarities in values/behavior, regardless of culture (Egri and Ralston, 2004). We do *not* contend that life stage equates to societal-convergence theory, but we do note that the logic for understanding the life stage effect on values/behavior parallels the logic for societal convergence. We see being able to develop this parallel in logic to be important since it illustrates that crossvergence theory is sufficiently robust to be expanded to be a multi-level predictor of values/behaviors.

When we developed the second set of hypotheses in the previous section, we integrated the underlying premises of societal-based convergence and divergence theories to develop a macro-level based crossvergence theory. We now expand the logic of the crossvergence perspective to develop our multi-level hypotheses. To do so, we begin by taking into consideration the relationships proposed in our first two sets of hypotheses. However, unique to the micro-level predictor, life stage, we also need to integrate the findings of Inglehart and Welzel (2005), which substantially modified Inglehart's (1997) earlier proposed modernization theory. In their current perspective, Inglehart and Welzel argue that in developed societies, younger generations emphasize secular-rational values much more highly than do older generations who place greater emphasis on traditional values. However—and this is where the important departure from the previous theory takes place—in low-income, less-developed societies, these differences are not found. Thus, “the presence of intergenerational differences depends on whether a society has attained high levels of socioeconomic development” (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Germany and the U.S. are in the high economic development category, with Brazil and China in the lesser-developed category. But, as noted, Germany today is a mixed-bag of former economically deprived, socialists from the East with affluent capitalists from the West (Glatzer and Bos, 1998; Uhlig, 2006). Nonetheless, even if the Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) reformulation of modernization theory is correct, the question that is still not fully answered is: How stable and how economically developed do societies have to be before a life stage effect may be expected? We do not portend that our data can prescriptively answer this question; we simply note that it is a relevant question that future research needs to explore. Finally, while a multitude of scenarios exist that would equate to a multi-level crossvergence finding, we will use the logic provided for the previous two hypotheses, plus the Inglehart and Welzel (2005) findings to propose directionality for this set of proposed outcomes. However, we also reiterate that while directionality will be proposed, these hypotheses are exploratory in nature and crossvergence theory argues for a “different” not necessarily “in between” outcome (Ralston, 2008).

### 2.3.2. Multi-level crossvergence hypotheses

In Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c, we proposed that the middle adulthood group would score higher than the young adulthood group for organizationally beneficial behavior, with converse findings proposed for the self-indulgent and destructive behavior dimensions. At the country-level, Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) findings would modify this perspective, by expecting these differences in life stage groups to be found in the U.S., not in China, and be uncertain for Germany and Brazil, where the questions, respectively, are: is the stability sufficiently long, and is the economic development sufficiently high? To this micro perspective, we integrate the societal relationships proposed in Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. Specifically, for organizationally beneficial behavior, the U.S. would score higher than Germany and Brazil, which would score higher than China, with the converse findings proposed for the self-indulgent and destructive behaviors. In sum, Germany and the U.S. are similar on economic development level, while Brazil and China are economically similar, and Germany and China are similar on individualism, while Brazil is between these countries and the U.S. Additionally, the U.S. and China are dissimilar in that a life stage effect is expected for the U.S., but not for China, with Germany and Brazil being similar in that they are in the “grey area” of uncertainty as to whether a life stage effect should be expected. Clearly, developing an integration of these varying perspectives is as complex as it is important. From the information discussed in the preceding paragraphs, regarding multi-level relationships we propose:

**Hypothesis 3a.** Organizationally beneficial ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by the U.S. middle adulthood age groups than by the U.S. early adulthood and the German and Brazil middle adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the German and Brazil young adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the China middle and early adulthood age groups.

**Hypothesis 3b.** Self-indulgent ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by the U.S. middle adulthood age group than by the U.S. early adulthood and the German and Brazil middle adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the German and Brazil young adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the China middle and early adulthood age groups.

**Hypothesis 3c.** Destructive ethics behaviors are viewed as more ethical by the China early and middle adulthood age groups than by the German and Brazil young adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the U.S. early adulthood and the German and Brazil middle adulthood age groups, who view them as more ethical than the U.S. middle adulthood age group.

In summary, a multi-level crossvergence effect would be supported if differences among the life stage-by-societal culture groups are found to *not* conform to either the life stage or the societal culture theory predictions regarding determinants of subordinate influence ethics behavior, while full support of [Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c](#) would indicate that life stage and societal culture are all that is needed to understand ethics behaviors across different cultures.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Societies and participants

The 1268 participants in this study were managers and professionals. For Brazil, 153 participants were in the young adulthood group and 135 were in the middle adulthood group; for China, 320 participants were in the young adulthood group and 84 participants were in the middle adulthood group; for Germany, 107 participants were in the young adulthood group and 95 participants were in the middle adulthood group; and for the U.S., 237 participants were in the young adulthood group and 137 were in the middle adulthood group. Data were collected in 2004 nation-wide in Brazil, China, Germany, and the U.S. using an anonymous mail-response method. The response rates across these societies ranged from 14% for the Brazil sample to 21% for the German sample. The demographics of the participants are presented in [Table 1](#).

#### 3.2. Instrument

Participants' views on influence ethics were assessed using the Strategies of Upward Influence [SUI] instrument. The SUI consists of 38 short scenario items (see [Egri et al., 2000](#)). Participants were instructed to, "... indicate how acceptable [ethical] you think that your co-workers would consider each strategy as a means of influencing superiors," using an 8-point Likert-type scale. The three influence dimensions (organizationally beneficial ethics behavior, self-indulgent ethics behavior and destructive ethics behavior) are formed from these items. As noted, the Appendix presents a description of these three dimensions as well as the items of each dimension. The English-language version was translated and back-translated for the questionnaires in Chinese, German and Portuguese. To encourage honest responses, we asked participants to describe co-workers' use of the influence strategies, rather than asking them to report on themselves. In studies that deal with sensitive information, such as influence ethics, this approach reduces the possibility of "faking" desirable responses ([Anastasi, 1982](#)).

The society means, standard deviations, and scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) for each SUI dimensions are presented in [Table 2](#). The Cronbach alpha statistics for the three SUI dimensions ranged from .60 to .89, which are comparable values to previous cross-cultural research ([Fu and Yukl, 2000](#)).

#### 3.3. Design and analysis

The data were analyzed in three separate stages. First, we analyzed our data to test for a life stage effect with the combined-society data set. Second, we analyzed our data in traditional cross-cultural fashion to test for a society difference effect. Third, we took our four societies and two life stage groups per society to form eight society-by-life stage groups to simultaneously test the relationships and differences among these groups. As noted, the first two analyses allowed us to replicate designs previously used in single-country life stage studies and cross-cultural comparison studies, respectively, with the focus of our study on the third analysis.

To test [Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c and 2a, 2b, and 2c](#), we performed a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with the three influence dimensions as the dependent variables, society and life stage as the two independent variables, and the

**Table 1**  
Demographic data for the eight society–life stage groups ( $n = 1268$ ) in the study.

	Country	Brazil		China		Germany		U.S.	
		Adulthood group (sample size)	Early ( $n = 153$ )	Middle ( $n = 135$ )	Early ( $n = 320$ )	Middle ( $n = 84$ )	Early ( $n = 107$ )	Middle ( $n = 95$ )	Early ( $n = 237$ )
Age	Mean	28.4	45.8	29.7	45.6	29.1	47.8	27.6	49.2
	SD	7.0	4.2	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.4	4.5	5.0
Gender	Male	66%	81%	67%	76%	61%	64%	56%	44%
Position level	Non-supervisory	51%	25%	41%	17%	56%	30%	65%	42%
	1st level Mgmt.	16%	17%	30%	30%	21%	25%	22%	17%
	Middle Mgmt.	24%	32%	24%	36%	13%	28%	9%	30%
	Top Mgmt.	8%	25%	5%	15%	8%	15%	3%	11%
Company size	< 100 employees	14%	8%	28%	7%	36%	41%	29%	34%
	100–1000 empl.	18%	19%	37%	30%	31%	34%	33%	28%
	> 1000 employees	67%	72%	34%	62%	32%	24%	37%	37%

Early adulthood = 20–39 years of age; middle adulthood = 40–60 years of age.

**Table 2**

Influence ethics dimensions: means, standard deviations and scale reliabilities for the society and life stage groups.

	Organizationally beneficial behavior			Self-indulgent behavior			Destructive behavior		
	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Mean	SD	$\alpha$
<b>Brazil</b>									
Total (society)	6.36	.85	.60	2.24	1.26	.89	1.42	.61	.71
Early adulthood	6.47	.84		2.35	1.24		1.48	.67	
Middle adulthood	6.23	.85		2.11	1.27		1.35	.54	
<b>China</b>									
Total (society)	6.47	.68	.60	3.01	1.15	.82	2.02	.97	.72
Early adulthood	6.52	.67		3.07	1.16		2.05	1.01	
Middle adulthood	6.30	.71		2.77	1.05		1.88	.80	
<b>Germany</b>									
Total (society)	6.65	1.01	.79	3.14	1.56	.88	2.11	1.32	.86
Early adulthood	6.58	1.00		3.23	1.39		2.25	1.32	
Middle adulthood	6.75	1.03		3.04	1.72		1.95	1.31	
<b>U.S.</b>									
Total (society)	6.96	.91	.70	2.09	1.11	.81	1.51	.81	.70
Early adulthood	6.83	.97		2.31	1.17		1.63	.93	
Middle adulthood	7.17	.74		1.71	.91		1.29	.47	

Early adulthood = 20–39 years of age; middle adulthood = 40–60 years of age.

demographic variables (gender, position level, and organization size) entered as covariates. If no covariate made a significant contribution to the model, the univariate analyses would be run as ANOVAs. If significance was found at the univariate level, the final step for the independent variable, society, would be to run the relatively conservative Tukey-B multiple comparison test ( $p < .05$ ) on any of the dimensions found to be significant in the univariate analysis. Since the independent variable, life stage, consists of only two groups, this additional analysis is not required for it. To test [Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c](#), we took the eight groups developed from our four societies and two life stages and then we ran analyses on these eight groups similar to the one described previously for [Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c and 2a, 2b, and 2c](#).

#### 4. Results

The MANCOVA to test [Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c and 2a, 2b, and 2c](#) identified life stage (Wilks'  $\lambda = .979$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $F = 8.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and society (Wilks'  $\lambda = .828$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $F = 24.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as significant factors, with gender significant as a covariate (Wilks'  $\lambda = .986$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $F = 5.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Since the MANCOVA analysis was significant, ANCOVAs including the gender covariate were conducted for both life stage and society. The ANCOVA results for life stage showed that organizationally beneficial behavior was not significant, but that both self-indulgent behavior ( $F = 19.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and destructive behavior ( $F = 17.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant, with the early adulthood group viewing both self-indulgent and destructive behaviors as more ethical than the middle adulthood group. The ANCOVA results for society showed that all univariate analyses were statistically significant (organizationally beneficial behaviors:  $F = 14.80$ ,  $p < .001$ , self-indulgent behaviors:  $F = 23.31$ ,  $p < .001$ , destructive behaviors:  $F = 17.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, for societal differences, Tukey-B multiple comparison tests were conducted for each of the three SUI dimensions. We found the following: organizationally beneficial ethics [U.S. > Germany > (Brazil ~ China)]; self-indulgent ethics [(Germany ~ China) > (Brazil ~ U.S.)]; destructive ethics [(Germany ~ China) > (Brazil ~ U.S.)]. A description of these findings and their support for [Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c and 2a, 2b, and 2c](#) are provided in the [Discussion](#) section of the paper.

The MANCOVA to test [Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c](#) identified the society-life stage groups (Wilks'  $\lambda = .911$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $F = 5.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as a significant factor with no covariates contributing significantly to the model. Since the MANCOVA analysis was significant, but no covariates were, ANOVAs were calculated for each of the three subordinate influence ethics dimensions. The ANOVA results showed that all univariate analyses were statistically significant (organizationally beneficial behaviors:  $F = 17.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , self-indulgent behaviors:  $F = 29.57$ ,  $p < .001$ , destructive behaviors:  $F = 21.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, Tukey-B multiple comparison tests were conducted for each of the three dimensions. These findings are reported in [Table 3](#). As noted in [Table 3](#), all significant findings are reported at the  $p < .05$  level. A complete description of the multiple comparison relationships and their support for [Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c](#) are provided in the [Discussion](#) section.

#### 5. Discussion and summary

##### 5.1. An overview of the findings

This is the first multi-society study, to our knowledge, to rigorously test the multi-level crossvergence theory effects of micro- and macro-level predictors on subordinate influence ethics behavior. And, as reported, we found that both life stage ([Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c](#)) and societal culture ([Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c](#)) contributed significantly to our understanding of subordinate influence ethics behavior, thus providing support to test the multi-level crossvergence hypotheses ([Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c](#)). As reported in [Table 3](#), we found that the contributions of life stage and societal culture had varying degrees of impact on the overall model across the

**Table 3**

Tukey-B multiple comparison results of the societal culture–life stage groups.

Dimensions	Groups	Means								
			Society <sup>a</sup> –life stage <sup>b</sup>	B-M	C-M	B-Y	C-Y	G-Y	G-M	U-Y
Organizationally beneficial ethics behavior	Brazil–middle	6.24								
	China–middle	6.32								
	Brazil–young	6.49								
	China–young	6.53	*							
	Germany–young	6.58	*							
	Germany–middle	6.74	*	*						
	U.S.–young	6.84	*	*	*	*				
	U.S.–middle	7.17	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
			U-M	B-M	U-Y	B-Y	C-M	G-M	C-Y	
Self-indulgent ethics behavior	U.S.–middle	1.72								
	Brazil–middle	2.12	*							
	U.S.–young	2.32	*							
	Brazil–young	2.36	*							
	China–middle	2.79	*	*	*	*				
	Germany–middle	3.06	*	*	*	*				
	China–young	3.08	*	*	*	*				
	Germany–young	3.25	*	*	*	*				
			U-M	B-M	B-Y	U-Y	C-M	G-M	C-Y	
Destructive ethics behavior	U.S.–middle	1.30								
	Brazil–middle	1.37								
	Brazil–young	1.51								
	U.S.–young	1.64	*							
	China–middle	1.88	*	*	*	*				
	Germany–middle	2.00	*	*	*	*				
	China–young	2.07	*	*	*	*				
	Germany–young	2.27	*	*	*	*	*			

\*Indicates that comparisons are significant at the  $p < .05$  level, controlling for experiment-wise error rate.<sup>a</sup> Society: B = Brazil, C = China, G = Germany, U = United States.<sup>b</sup> Life stage: Y = young adulthood, M = middle adulthood.

organizationally beneficial, self-indulgent, and destructive behavior dimensions. Our review of these findings indicates the degree of empirical support for the hypothesized relationships and how these relationships concurred and/or varied across dimensions. Following our discussion of the hypotheses, we identify the limitations and future opportunities provided by the study and epilogue our findings with a few concluding comments.

## 5.2. A review and interpretation of the hypothesized relationships

### 5.2.1. The life stage effect

For organizationally beneficial behavior (**Hypothesis 1a**), we predicted that the middle adulthood group would score significantly higher than the younger adulthood group across all societies. No significant life stage group difference was found, thus **Hypothesis 1a** was not supported. For self-indulgent behavior (**Hypothesis 1b**) and destructive behavior (**Hypothesis 1c**), we proposed, and found, that the young adulthood group would be significantly higher than the middle adulthood group. In sum, life stage was found to have a significant effect on two (self-indulgent and destructive behaviors) of the three subordinate influence ethics dimensions, while “working hard” was viewed comparably ethical by younger and older respondents alike.

### 5.2.2. The society effect

Based on societal-level crossvergence theory, it was predicted that for organizationally beneficial behavior (**Hypothesis 2a**), the U.S. respondents would be significantly higher than the German and Brazilian respondents, who would be significantly higher than the Chinese respondents. The results showed that the U.S. respondents were significantly higher than the German respondents, who were significantly higher than the Brazilian and Chinese respondents. However, the Brazilian respondents, albeit numerically higher, did not score significantly higher than the Chinese respondents. Thus, **Hypothesis 2a** was partially supported. For self-indulgent behavior (**Hypothesis 2b**) and destructive behavior (**Hypothesis 2c**), it was predicted that the Chinese respondents would be significantly higher than the German and Brazilian respondents, who would be significantly higher than the U.S. respondents. The results indicated that the German and Chinese respondents scored significantly higher than the Brazilian and U.S. respondents. Since the Chinese and German respondents being significantly higher than the Brazilian respondents were the only aspects of these hypotheses that were supported, **Hypotheses 2b and 2c** were marginally supported. Overall, significant differences were found for all three influence dimensions, but varying degrees of support were found for the hypotheses.

### 5.2.3. The multi-level crossvergence effect

As we noted in the hypothesis development section, the specific hypotheses that we developed are best described as exploratory given the dearth of directly related theoretical and empirical research. Nonetheless, we provided a logic underlying these integrated micro and macro relationships in order to postulate the directionality of these hypotheses to provide a starting point of inquiry for developing multi-level modeling.

Based on multi-level crossvergence theory, it was predicted that for organizationally beneficial behavior ([Hypothesis 3a](#)), the U.S. middle adulthood age groups would be significantly higher than the U.S. early adulthood and the German and Brazil middle adulthood age groups, who would be higher than the German and Brazil young adulthood age groups, who would be higher than the China middle and early adulthood age groups. We found that the U.S. middle adulthood group was significantly higher than all other groups, including the U.S. young adulthood group. The U.S. young adulthood group was significantly higher than both Brazilian and both Chinese groups. Also, the German middle adulthood group was significantly higher than the Brazilian and Chinese middle adulthood groups, with the young adulthood Chinese group higher than the Brazilian middle adulthood group. Thus, the findings show that significant effects were found for both life stage and society, indicating a multi-level crossvergent effect, with partial support found for the hypothesized relationships.

For self-indulgent behavior ([Hypothesis 3b](#)), the predicted relationships were the same as those for [Hypothesis 3a](#). We found that both Chinese and both German groups scored significantly higher than both Brazilian and both U.S. groups. Also, both Brazilian groups, as well as the young adulthood U.S. group, were significantly higher than the U.S. middle adulthood group. Thus, the self-indulgent ethics findings also showed significant effects for both life stage and society, indicating a multi-level crossvergence effect, with partial support found to endorse the hypothesized relationships.

Finally, for destructive behavior ([Hypothesis 3c](#)), it was predicted that the China early and middle adulthood age groups would be significantly higher than the German and Brazil young adulthood age groups, who would be higher than the U.S. early adulthood and the German and Brazil middle adulthood age groups, who would be higher than the U.S. middle adulthood age group. We found that both Chinese and both German groups scored significantly higher than both Brazilian and both U.S. groups, and the young adulthood U.S. group was significantly higher than the middle adulthood U.S. group. Additionally, the German young adulthood group was significantly higher than the Chinese middle adulthood group. Thus, these findings likewise show that significant effects were found for both life stage and society, resulting in a multi-level crossvergent effect, with partial support found for the hypothesized relationships.

In sum, this study tested the multi-level crossvergence hypotheses after having independently tested and the respective effect of the life stage and the societal differences on subordinate influence ethics behaviors. The groups at two life stages were consistently different across all three dimensions and in the direction predicted for the U.S., but not for the other three countries. The non-significant finding for China was as predicted ([Inglehart and Welzel, 2005](#)), but the non-significant findings for Germany and Brazil are more ambiguous. For organizationally beneficial ethics, consistent with the hypothesis, the German middle adulthood group was numerically higher than the young adulthood group, while for self-indulgent and destructive, both German and Brazilian young adulthood groups were numerically higher than the middle adulthood groups, which is also consistent with the hypotheses. The conclusions are not definitive. It is possible that life stage theory, which was developed in the U.S., is a U.S.-only phenomenon. It is also possible that, in the context of modernization theory ([Inglehart and Welzel, 2005](#)) that the social and economic changes taking place in Germany and Brazil, respectively, have not evolved (i.e., “modernized”) sufficiently for the life stage differences to be significant, not just numeric. One conclusion that is clear is that there is need for an expanded exploration of cross-cultural life stage relationships.

For societal difference effects, the results are mixed. For organizationally beneficial ethics behavior, the relationships closely follow those predicted by the business ideology (GDP) measure, with the Americans scoring highest, than the German respondents, who scored higher than the Brazilian and Chinese. For the self-indulgent and destructive ethics behaviors the socio-cultural (individualism) measure is the better predictor of the relationships, with the managers of the low individualism countries, China and Germany, scoring higher on these ethics dimensions than those from the U.S. and Brazil.

Looking at the big-picture of all results, we see that effects of both life stage ([Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c](#)) and society ([Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c](#)) contribute significantly to our understanding of subordinate influence ethics and provide nice “clean” findings, when viewed separately, as has been the approach of previous research. However, when we combine these—as is the real-world case—the results and their interpretations become much more complex. Based upon the findings of this study, we can make two assertions. One, life stage and societal culture both contribute to our understanding of subordinate influence ethics behavior across societies. Two, life stage and societal culture, by themselves, are not sufficient to fully explain behavior across societies. To develop a more complete, holistic understanding of the dynamics, we need to move beyond the simplistic country differences philosophy, used in much prior research ([Tung, 2008](#)), to develop more encompassing and complex cross-cultural models of behavior that incorporate information from the macro, meso and micro levels. Undoubtedly, this will be more challenging, but also clearly more reality-based, and therefore of greater value to both academicians and practitioners. Thus, we believe that this paper provides a modest step toward developing that complete, holistic approach to cross-cultural modeling.

### 5.3. Limitations and implications for future research

While our research design integrated a micro-level (life stage) and a macro-level (societal culture) variable into the design, it did not include any meso-level variables, such as corporate culture ([Ambrose et al., 2008](#)). [Terpstra-Tong and Ralston \(2002\)](#) indicated that the incorporation of all three levels of variables would provide a more complete understanding of subordinate

influence ethics behavior. Also, while the findings of this four-society study are consistent with those of Ralston et al.'s (2005) two-society study in that age group is a relevant predictor in cross-cultural research, our findings were sufficiently different to demonstrate a need for larger scale studies to fully assess the relative contributions of life stage and society effects. Specifically, future cross-cultural life stage research should identify clusters of societies where values and behavioral differences due to age are expected and are not expected, per the Inglehart and Welzel (2005) perspective on age group differences.

Also, given that most life stage research has taken place in the West, it may be that life stages are not similar across all societies or, as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) observe, they may not occur in certain business ideology environments (i.e., low economic development level). However, our life stage findings do ameliorate this concern to some extent. Furthermore, we do not purport that life stage is the only individual-level factor that is relevant to consider. Research is needed to address other key demographics, particularly gender, which has been identified as important in previous single society studies (Eagly et al., 2003), as well as being identified as an important covariate in this study. Ideally, a future study would have sufficiently large sample sizes to simultaneously investigate age, gender, and possibly even educational level, to ascertain the impact of these primary micro-level factors.

Additionally, it should be noted that while our assessment instrument is an other-report measure specifically structured to minimize socially desirable response bias, the other-report approach itself may bring into question other potential biases, such as respondents thinking of their own behaviors, instead of those of co-workers. However, this would not be detrimental to the objectives of this particular study.

Finally, the cross-sectional research design did not allow us to ascertain whether the crossvergence results are conforming, static or deviating (Ralston, 2008). A longitudinal design is needed to make this determination. Further, a longitudinal design, including a variety of societies, would assist in determining whether the relative contributions of the predictor variables incorporated in this study are impacted by major sociopolitical events that tend to define life stage (and generation) effects, and thus the impact of these on business ethics. And, the same sociopolitical impact issue might be raised concerning other potentially relevant predictor variables (e.g., education, corporate culture). Therefore, this study has limitations which concurrently provide a foundation and direction for future research opportunities, including the exploration of gender differences and a replication to longitudinally track changes in ethics behavior.

#### 5.4. Concluding thoughts

In response to the questions which we initially proposed regarding the most effective way to assess subordinate influence ethics in the multi-cultural context of today's business world, our findings show that multi-level crossvergence—combination of the life stage and the societal culture effects—explains subordinate influence ethics behavior substantially better than do either of these predictors alone. Thus, an important implication of this study's findings is that while not rejecting the importance of understanding societal differences, micro-level demographics (e.g., life stage), need to be taken into consideration when trying to assess behavioral differences across-cultures. Further, given the incorporation of both micro- and macro-level predictor variables, the previous point may be expanded to propose that it is important to incorporate multi-level (micro, meso and macro) predictors to fully understand the global differences in subordinate influence ethics, specifically, and cross-cultural behavior differences, in general (Ralston, 2008).

For practitioners, an important implication is that it is overly simplistic to assume relative consistency in worker behavior within a culture. Similarly, our findings caution against practitioners over-generalizing based on society alone, when considering the influence ethics of managers and professionals. This issue is particularly relevant in multinational corporations. Age (e.g., Egri and Ralston, 2004), gender (e.g., Eagly et al., 2003), geographic region (e.g., Ralston et al., 1996), organizational culture (e.g., Ralston, Terpstra-Tong, Terpstra, Wang and Egri, 2006c), and assuredly other factors, must be taken into account to attain a more sophisticated understanding of subordinate influence ethics, in the workplace. Thus, our findings should provide practitioners with a more certain roadmap of both the across-society and within-society ethics of their workforces.

In conclusion, this study provides substantial evidence that although subordinate influence ethics behavior differs across societies, life stage is clearly one of the relevant variables that should be included as part of a comprehensive model of global behavior. Further, this study suggested that the degree of impact that life stage and society effects have had varied across the three levels of subordinate ethicality. Therefore, a challenge for future research is to identify other cross-culturally relevant micro-level (e.g., education level), meso-level (e.g., organizational culture), and macro-level (e.g., political system) factors that will prove significant in helping to more completely explain global behavior (Tung, 2008). The accompanying challenge is not only determining whether a predictor is significant but where and to what degree it affects the various outcomes. More in-depth knowledge of these issues will assist in building a more comprehensive global model of behavior. To that end, our findings reinforce previous findings regarding the relative ethicality of these three subordinate influence ethics behavior dimensions.

Finally, we found, across all four societies and across both life stage groups, that organizationally beneficial behavior was viewed as the most ethical approach. Destructive behavior was viewed as the least ethical. And, self-indulgent behavior fell between these two extremes. These across-society and across-life stage findings of a hierarchy for the three dimensions of subordinate influence ethics are consistent with all findings from the research we have identified, as cited in this paper, that has studied these dimensions. This compilation of finding that unanimously reports a consistent hierarchy is one of the most promising outcomes from the stream of research. It indicates clearly that a consistent across-culture model of subordinate influence is evolving. The implications of these findings for future subordinate influence ethics research are two-fold. First, they provide researchers with a conceptual starting point for the rigorous testing of a universal model of subordinate influence ethics. And, second, they confirm the importance of adopting a multi-level perspective for the development of this model.

## Appendix A. Descriptions and items of the three dimensions of subordinate influence ethics

### A.1. Organizationally beneficial behavior

These are the standard prescribed and sanctioned behaviors for employees in organizations. They may be viewed as the “organizational person” approach to upward influence because these behaviors tend to be directly beneficial to the organization. Organizationally beneficial behaviors include working hard, volunteering, getting advanced education, developing good working relationships, getting the job done, and working overtime.

Items

1. Demonstrate the ability to get the job done.
2. Help subordinates to develop their skills so that the subordinates, in turn, will be in a position to help them attain their objectives.
3. Behave in a manner that is seen as appropriate in the company.
4. Ask to be given the responsibility for an important project.
5. Maintain good working relationships with other employees, even if they dislike these other employees.
6. Work overtime, if necessary, to get the job done.

### A.2. Self-indulgent behavior

These behaviors are self-serving for the individual within the organization. They epitomize the “it's *me* first” approach in that these behaviors show self-interest being above the interests of others or the organization. Whether they help or harm the organization is subject to interpretation and may be determined by the situation. Self-indulgent exploitative behaviors include supporting the views of important people, blaming others for mistakes, taking credit for others' work, and impression management.

Items

1. Spread rumors about someone or something that stands in the way of their advancement.
2. Try to influence the boss to make a bad decision, if that decision would help them to get ahead.
3. Use their network of friends to discredit a person competing with them for a possible promotion.
4. Withhold information to make someone else look bad.
5. Take credit for a good job that was done by their subordinates.
6. Blame another for their own mistakes.

### A.3. Destructive behavior

These are extreme self-serving behaviors that directly hurt others, and often times, the organization. In many industrialized societies, these behaviors would also be considered illegal. They may be described as a “burn, pillage, and plunder” approach to gaining influence because of the harm these behaviors can bring to others and the organization. Destructive behaviors include putting false information on a job resume, blackmailing a co-worker, stealing documents, using listening devices, and hiring a criminal to hurt someone.

Items

1. Threaten to give valuable company information to someone outside the organization if their demands are not met.
2. Offer sexual favors to a superior.
3. Try to create a situation where a competitor for a promotion might be caught using illegal drugs or engaging in some other illegal activity.
4. Steal secret corporate documents and give them to another company in return for a better job at the other company.
5. Make anonymous, threatening phone calls to psychologically stress a competitor for a promotion.

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