*Article*

# Building Cohesive Teams—The Role of Leaders' Bottom-Line Mentality and Behavior

**Katrin Riisla** [1,*] , **Hein Wendt** [2], **Mayowa T. Babalola** [3] **and Martin Euwema** [1]

1    Occupational & Organizational Psychology and Professional Learning, KU Leuven, 3000 Leuven, Belgium; martin.euwema@kuleuven.be
2    Korn Ferry Institute, 1019 Amsterdam, The Netherlands; hein.wendt@kornferry.com
3    Graduate School of Business, Nazarbayev University, Nur Sultan 010000, Kazakhstan; mayowa.babalola@nu.edu.kz
*    Correspondence: katrin.riisla@kuleuven.be; Tel.: +32-(0)44-750-4425

**Abstract:** Team cohesiveness plays a crucial role in effective teamwork, innovation, and improved performance, and as such, its development among team members is an essential part of team management. However, it may be disregarded by leaders with a high bottom-line mentality (BLM; a single-minded focus on the bottom line at the expense of other values or priorities). These leaders may show little interest in other priorities, such as ethical, social, or environmental considerations, and may be tempted to push their followers to go above and beyond what is expected, even if it means bending the rules, cutting corners, or engaging in other ethically problematic behaviors. We argue that although a team leader's BLM may motivate followers to come together around the pursuit of a common goal, it may come at the expense of nurturing healthy interpersonal relationships, trust, and other important social resources within the team. Specifically, we argue that the way leaders with a high BLM approach their goals may affect team cohesiveness, and that it is particularly negative for female leaders. Using a large multi-national study, we found that this happens through increased directive and lowered participative leader behaviors.

**Keywords:** leader bottom-line mentality; team cohesiveness; directive leadership; participative leadership

## 1. Introduction

Leaders play an essential role in fostering team effectiveness and organizational success. To employees, leaders' values, behaviors, and principles serve as important cues for organizational norms and culture [1], what kind of behavior is expected and preferred [2,3], and how to approach key organizational results [4,5]. As such, to create effective teams, leaders need to ensure that team members are motivated and willing to work together to achieve their team and organizational goals [1,6], and do so in a sustainable manner. However, when team leaders focus single-mindedly on getting organizational results and ignore important priorities and objectives along the way [4], it is possible that team cohesiveness (i.e., the extent to which team members stick together and remain united in the pursuit of a common goal [7]) may be negatively impacted. Although common goals can create a strong focus for team members and push them to better performance, they may do so at the expense of the team's interpersonal relationships, and may ultimately affect the wellbeing and productivity of its members, or even the overall long-term vitality of the organization [3,8,9].

These leaders, described as having a bottom-line mentality (BLM [4]), seem to highlight the tendency to strive for organizational results no matter the cost [5], which reflects a message that there are no other options [8] than achieving them. As team success can breed collegiality and team cohesiveness [10], leaders high in BLM may be tempted to push their followers to go above and beyond what is expected, even if it means bending the rules,

cutting corners, preferring quick-fix solutions, or engaging in other ethically problematic behaviors [4,5,9]. However, as their sole focus is on bottom-line results, leaders with a high BLM may show little interest in other priorities, such as ethical [6,11] or environmental considerations [4] thereby impeding the organization's long-term performance [3–5], as well as the wellbeing of followers [12] and co-workers [4]. This mentality dominates these leaders' discussions and decisions [5], while also guiding their behaviors. A BLM might thus motivate leaders to focus employees' efforts on productivity, efficiency, and quantitative performance [13,14] rather than empowering, guiding, or mentoring them, as this seems irrelevant in the pursuit of the bottom-line. As team cohesiveness is a vital part of team management [6], a leader who only focuses on bottom-line outcomes may ignore essential aspects of fostering healthy interpersonal relationships [15] within the team. To followers, this kind of leader mentality may come across as more transactional [8], and it may have a negative effect on their creativity [16,17], wellbeing [15], open communication [5,8], and overall engagement and work performance [18].

While our understanding of the dysfunctional implications of leader BLM on follower behavior is growing (e.g., [4,11,12,19]), little is known about how such a mentality affects the way leaders approach their leadership role and its impact on team cohesiveness [16]. Due to their power and status, leaders' values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms tend to become shared values and expected behaviors within organizations [3]. To promote more sustainable business practices, such as the triple bottom-line (i.e., the simultaneous pursuit of ethical, environmental, and financial considerations; [20], it is important to understand how leaders' focus on only certain organizational results (i.e., bottom-line outcomes) affects leader behaviors and, subsequently, team outcomes. As an important part of team functioning [15], team cohesiveness requires effective leadership [21], and thus, served as an interesting starting point for advancing our current understanding of BLM. To do so, we also explored how the relationship between BLM and team cohesiveness might be mediated by two vital leadership styles (viz. directive and participative leadership styles). We argue that a leader's BLM might manifest as more directive leadership, defined as task-oriented behavior with a strong emphasis on targets, close supervision, and control of subordinate actions [18,21]. In addition, we argue that leader BLM may impede participative leadership, that is, people-oriented behavior focusing on the delegation of responsibilities and shared influence on decision-making [22,23]. We expect that these leadership styles, in turn, explain why leader BLM may negatively influence team cohesiveness.

Our research contributes to the emerging BLM literature in several ways. First, prior studies have mainly focused on a BLM's effects on individual follower behavior, except for Greenbaum et al. [16], who looked at how a BLM negatively affects group psychological safety and creativity, and Lin et al. [24], who explored team performance and the team's response to supervisor BLM through team performance avoidance goal orientation. Team outcomes are increasingly important, as today's competitive business climate and growing market uncertainties drive organizations to become more productive, innovative, and sustainable than ever before [17,25]. We argue that leader BLM may have important implications for team cohesiveness due to its narrow focus on bottom-line outcomes alone [5]. Second, since BLM is a mentality, a frame of mind that revolves exclusively around achieving bottom-line results rather than a set of leadership styles [4], we explored the relationship with two much-studied leadership styles (i.e., directive and participative leadership styles). Thus, we explored how a single-minded focus on the bottom-line (i.e., BLM) is manifested in leader behavior. By building this connection, our research enhances the understanding of how leader BLM might affect team functioning (viz. team cohesiveness) by influencing how high-BLM leaders adopt these two leadership styles. As both styles have been linked with high levels of organizational outcomes [22,26] and induce effective work processes [26], they also provide an important basis for further, more complex BLM studies. Third, we utilize a unique dataset collected from 80 countries, allowing deeper insights into the BLM phenomenon in different parts of the world. In this vein, our research further advances the generalizability of BLM effects across cultures. In

sum, our research is novel and distinct from prior research on leadership styles and team outcomes [18,21], to the extent that we focus on BLM as a driver of leadership styles and the subsequent implications of BLM on team cohesiveness.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

### 2.1. Bottom-Line Mentality

Technically, the term bottom-line refers to the final and most important number on an income statement: the profit and loss number. While the bottom-line can also be defined more broadly as "whatever is worth paying attention to while everything else is discarded" ([5], p. 145), most studies relate it to financial results, such as profits. Further, it is often assumed that leaders high in BLM are obsessed with their personal success and, thus, see the attainment of the bottom-line as striving for personal gains [11,13], to which employees are only a means to an end [8]. This self-serving inclination might derive from the leader's remuneration being tied to organizational results and cues from the business environment [2,22] or more personal motives, such as reaching career milestones or achieving praise from top management. It is also possible that financial pursuits trigger a more self-serving inclination [27]. However, organizations differ with respect to how they construe the bottom-line, and we suspect it can also exist on a personal, team, and organizational level. We assume that BLM can exist in different output-focused industries, such as restaurants, hospitals, militaries, universities, and sports teams, thus highlighting the varied nature of this single-minded focus on results. In this sense, a BLM reflects a strong motivation and commitment towards attaining results, which may divert the leaders' focus from other priorities [14].

The growing body of research exploring BLM suggests that a leader's exclusive focus on bottom-line outcomes may be associated with several dysfunctional consequences, such as creating unethical and toxic climates [2,3] along with destructive interpersonal behaviors [4,19], abusive supervision [12], and unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB [11]). However, a focus on bottom-line goals may be beneficial and even necessary for organizational success and employee productivity. Goals, in general, have a focusing effect [14] on performance through their influence on the intensity, direction, and persistence of effort, and are most effective when leaders are committed to the goals [28]. Leaders' bottom-line goals often provide clear, unambiguous, and objective means for evaluating performance and clarifying performance expectations [28]. Along this line, some studies have also evidenced the benefits of leader BLM (e.g., increased employee focus on work, high performance, and thriving at work [2,13]), which implies that a BLM may be a double-edged sword.

Thus, ultimately, a focus on the bottom-line itself does not make a BLM dysfunctional, but rather how other processes and (moral) values are ignored in its pursuit [4,14]. To ensure team effectiveness, teams should have a team task, clear boundaries, a specified authority to manage work processes, and some degree of membership stability [29]. In this regard, leader BLM should enhance team effectiveness with its clear direction and shared understanding of performance standards [16,30]. When leaders possess high BLMs, they convey a strong message about the importance of striving for bottom-line outcomes [4], as well as assign accountability and communicae the responsibilities of their employees within the organization [5]. To understand how a BLM might affect managers' leadership styles and ultimately team cohesiveness, we first discuss the relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness. We then turn to two highly studied leadership styles, which embody relatively consistent leader behaviors, as an explanation for why leader BLM influences team cohesiveness.

### 2.2. Team Leader BLM and Team Cohesiveness

A team refers to two or more people who each have separate responsibilities and/or assignments, working together for a common and valued goal [31] and, by sharing their knowledge and skills, can work more effectively than any single individual. Often, this

common goal can be objectified as a (quantitative) measure of the team's performance [29], such as a bottom-line. Team cohesiveness (i.e., the degree to which members are attracted to the team and motivated to remain a part of it [7]) has been shown to correlate with effective teamwork [29], innovation within teams and organizations [32], increased exchange of information and ideas [33], and improved performance [6,34], and as such, its development among team members is an integral part of team management [6,21]. The social and motivational forces existing between team members are an essential part of cohesiveness [29,34] as well as psychological safety (i.e., the shared belief that the team is a safe space for personal risk-taking due to trust and respect among team members [35]) and, thus, facilitate or even determine better performance [6]. Members of cohesive groups value their membership and work to maintain positive relationships among group members [7] and coordinate activities [28] to ensure successful performance [34]. However, too much team cohesiveness has also been linked to adverse effects, such as groupthink (i.e., the pressure to conform to group norms and reduced critical thinking [36,37]), impaired decision-making and decision quality [38], low productivity [39], and wasting team resources [33].

As team cohesiveness relies largely on team members' willingness to work together, and is generally considered to consist of interpersonal attraction, task commitment, and group pride [6,29], we expected leader BLM to be negatively associated with overall team cohesiveness for two main reasons. First, leaders with a BLM focus only on achieving bottom-line results [4], and consequently, team members working under such leaders are likely to be preoccupied with the attainment of the bottom-line (task commitment) rather than on developing good interpersonal relationships with other team members. Although team cohesiveness can lead to better use of the group's resources since group members will have the opportunity to know each other better in cohesive teams and will be more likely to complete tasks successfully [6], building such interpersonal relationships may not be a priority for employees working under high-BLM leaders [4,8]. These leaders are likely more directional in their approach, instructing team members about their most important priority (i.e., the bottom-line) and creating a collective understanding of performance standards [16]. Following their leaders, team members also internalize this idea of focusing single-mindedly on the bottom-line [4], and while this may increase task commitment, it may come at the expense of building a cohesive team.

Second, leader BLM stimulates a competitive mindset that may indicate that team members need to outperform one another [13]. Leaders with a high BLM value the attainment of the botto-line and high performance above everything else [2,5,25] and hence signal to their followers that to gain recognition for their efforts, they must work harder than anyone else. Followers might believe that there can be "only one winner", as the leader's priority for the bottom-line sends a signal of what is valued within the organization and thus, sets the stage for motivation and behaviors within the team [11,25]. Team members who make the most contributions to the bottom-line (i.e., winners) get rewarded, while the losers might be punished [4]. In this regard, leaders with a high BLM typically use both carrots and sticks on their employees (i.e., incentivize, withhold rewards, punish [3,12]) to get the results they crave, thus potentially even pitting team members against each other. Indeed, prior studies have found a positive relationship between BLM and social undermining among employees [4], as well as a perceived competitive work climate [13] and performing tension [24], which are assumed to negatively affect team cohesiveness. BLM has also been found to trickle down [4], which may further impede the nurturing of healthy relationships, engagement, and conflict resolution [15] within the team. Thus, as team members try to outperform each other in order to appease their leader, who is very clear, assertive, and directional about his/her bottom-line goals, these team members are less likely to see the value of developing interpersonal relationships with other team members. Accordingly, we expected leader BLM to be negatively associated with team cohesiveness.

**Hypothesis 1.** *Leader BLM is negatively related to team cohesiveness.*

### 2.3. The Mediating Role of Leadership Styles

We further argue that the underlying reason leaders with a high BLM may reduce team cohesiveness derives from the leadership styles they use. As a BLM diverts the leaders' focus from other concentrations (e.g., ethical and interpersonal considerations [4]), it may well be that it also affects how leaders behave and how their behavior is perceived by their followers. Leadership refers to the abilities of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organizations they are part of [40]. Many leadership models identify two main types of leadership behaviors: task-oriented and people-oriented behavior. By some, these are translated as directive and participative leadership [1], which have been utilized in numerous cross-cultural leadership studies (e.g., [21,41,42]). These two leadership styles are considered independent of each other [43] and can also co-exist [44]. Leaders can be high on task- and people-orientation and demonstrate directive and participative leadership sequentially and simultaneously. Thus, it is possible that leaders utilize both leadership styles.

High-BLM leaders focus single-mindedly on attaining bottom-line results [4,5]. As only the results matter to these leaders, they are likely to closely monitor their team members to ensure that bottom-line results are achieved or even surpassed. Leaders might even resort to abuse if they notice that followers are hindering their efforts to attain bottom-line goals [12]. Thus, we assume that this kind of mentality may manifest as directive leader behavior, usually defined as task-oriented behavior with a strong tendency to dominate interactions, control discussions, and personally direct task completion [43,45]. Following Wendt et al. [21] and Euwema et al. [41], we define directive leadership as task-oriented behavior with a strong focus on targets, close supervision, and control of subordinate actions. As the high-BLM leader's primary focus is getting results, whatever the cost [4], they may ignore other leadership responsibilities and resort to actively structuring their followers' work, pressuring team members for results, and closely supervising details [45]. Thus, we hypothesized the following:

**Hypothesis 2a.** *Leader BLM is positively related to directive leadership.*

As leaders with a high BLM may be tempted to pursue their own agenda in determining what the team should focus on [5] due to compensation or career goals, they may care less about incorporating their followers in the decision-making processes, thus sending a message to followers that their opinions and input are less relevant [8]. This would imply a negative correlation with participative leadership, which strongly focuses on relationships, collaboration, and shared power [22,26]. Participative leadership consists of behaviors that encourage follower influence on decision-making [22,26,46], work unit operations, and problem-solving. As we argued earlier, high-BLM leaders may unite their teams around a common goal, but they may ignore other important team-building tasks, such as developing positive interpersonal relationships with their followers [46]. This unidimensional focus on results could thus lead to a decrease in participative leader behaviors, such as giving freedom and responsibility on how to execute assignments [47], and allowing enough space and time to make the best decisions together with, or at least listening to, their followers [46]. Therefore, we assumed the following:

**Hypothesis 2b.** *Leader BLM is negatively related to participative leadership.*

### 2.4. Implications for Team Cohesiveness

In turn, as high-BLM leaders become more directive and less participative in their approach, team cohesiveness is likely to be negatively affected. To the extent that team leader BLM increases directive and reduces participative leadership, we expect leader BLM to influence team cohesiveness through these two leadership styles. As team cohesiveness relies on its members' willingness to stay in the group while working and supporting each other in their pursuit of a common goal, it also requires coordinating efforts from the team

leader [46]. Leaders with a high BLM might promote more self-serving behaviors [3,5] and, thus, set an example of acceptable behavior for their followers. Directive behaviors may inhibit group-oriented behaviors [21,41] and together with a BLM's potential to trickle down to followers [4], they may further impede team members' willingness to nurture in-group relations or even cause social undermining [4,19]. While a leader's directive behavior may increase the team's efficiency [44,47], and team success can increase team cohesiveness through collegiality [10], followers under directive leaders may not feel appreciated and may question their willingness to stay in the team [21], especially if they feel used by their leader [8]. Thus, we argue that while a BLM and following directive behavior may temporarily increase team cohesiveness through task commitment, it may harm the overall team cohesiveness, which relies on team members supporting and trusting each other [10].

If a leader is preoccupied with attaining the bottom-line, they may not pay attention to team processes, psychological safety [35], or enforcing mutual trust, communication, and interpersonal relationships needed for effective team functioning [31]. Thus, they may also omit participative leader behaviors, such as delegating responsibilities and involving followers in decision-making [22], which have been linked with psychological empowerment [39], subordinates' feelings of trust [48], and creativity [49]. As participative leader behaviors aim to empower followers and engage them in decision-making [27], they might increase the development of trusted relationships within the team, which allow for the exchange of knowledge, resources, and opportunities [10], and increased performance [6] needed for team cohesiveness. However, a leader's high BLM might distract them from these behaviors and thus limit the team members' attraction to the team and their willingness to maintain a good relationship with each other, thus decreasing team cohesiveness.

Consistent with these arguments, prior studies have shown the importance of leadership styles for team cohesiveness [21,29,38]. In sum, to the extent that that leader BLM heightens directive leadership and reduces participative leadership, we expected these two leadership styles to mediate the relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness. Thus, we hypothesized the following:

**Hypothesis 3a.** *Directive leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness.*

**Hypothesis 3b.** *Participative leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness.*

### 3. Materials and Methods

*3.1. Sample and Procedure*

This study utilized data collected by a global consultancy firm. The dataset contains dyadic data of both leaders and their direct subordinates from a broad range of public and private industries (Appendix A). We mainly utilized the subordinate ratings of leadership behavior due to complications of leader self-ratings [50]. The final dataset included 83 countries, wherein 21 countries we had at least 25 respondents (the full list can be requested from the first author). The managers were located in different countries (Appendix B). The data collection was conducted as part of the assessment of management training programs within each organization and thus guaranteed us an almost 100% response rate, as providing feedback was a precondition to participating in these programs. Managers invited their subordinates to provide anonymous feedback for development purposes only. The sample contained 531 managers (70% male, 30% female) and 2653 corresponding followers (65% male, 35% female). This implies, on average, 5 employees directly supervised by each manager in this study.

### 3.2. Measures

*Leader BLM*. Leader BLM was measured using four items ($\alpha = 0.83$) from Greenbaum et al. [4]. We added contrasting statements, which indicate a more versatile focus on work. All items used a bi-polar 6-point scale [21,41,42] with alternate answers on the extreme poles. The following is an example item with both statements: "My manager only cares about the business results" versus "My manager cares about the business as well as other results". The scales for our variables are presented in Appendix C.

*Directive leadership*. Following the work of Euwema et al. [41], directive leadership was measured with five items ($\alpha = 0.72$). Similarly to leader BLM, all items were measured using a bi-polar (6-point) scale with opposing responses. The following is an example item: "Expects people to carry out their instructions immediately". We omitted the scores from the managers themselves to avoid self-serving bias.

*Participative leadership.* The five items ($\alpha = 0.78$) in the questionnaire were specifically developed by the consultancy firm (see Euwema et al. [41]) and have since been utilized in large cross-cultural studies (e.g., [42]). The following is an example item: "Encourages people to participate in most decision-making".

*Team cohesiveness*. Team cohesiveness was measured with five items ($\alpha = 0.81$), documented in Wendt et al. [21] and updated in 2015. The following is an example item: "There is a lot of personal loyalty to the team".

*Control variables.* We controlled for demographic variables that might have influenced the relationships and outcomes in our study, namely the leaders' ages, organizational level, and tenure. We also controlled for the industry and the level of countries' development to see if there were external factors that might explain the effects of leader BLM. Further, as gender and societal culture have been shown to have significant links to leader behavior [21,41,51], we also controlled for leader gender and societal culture (while we acknowledge the fluidity of gender and its construct, here we refer to gender in terms of biological sex (i.e., female and male)). However, because raters were only recommended to fill in demographic information, we had to work with many missing values.

We measured collectivism with GLOBE's [40] national scores. Similar to others [21], we used GLOBE country practice ("as is") rather than values ("should be") scores. These practice scores reflect the ways values are currently being displayed, thus more likely affecting people's behavior in each culture. GLOBE divides collectivism further into institutional (the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices "encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action" [40], p. 463) and in-group collectivism ("the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families"; [40], p. 12). However, for some cultures such as Belgium and Slovakia, there are no GLOBE cultural parameters in the work of House et al. [40].

### 3.3. Data Analysis and Measurement Issues

Language issues are always a critical concern in cross-cultural studies. Following prior studies that utilized the same database [21,51], we used the so-called application mode of translation [52], where native speakers translated all items from English to the language of the participating countries. This method implicitly assumes that the underlying construct is appropriate for each cultural group and that a simple, straightforward translation will suffice to get an instrument that adequately measures the same construct in the target group. The translators (consultants) were trained in the concepts and were familiar with the societies' cultures, which should increase the likelihood that their translations represented the concepts adequately.

### 3.4. Methods

We analyzed the data on three levels: teams are working in a culture, teams have a manager, and employees rate their manager. However, similarly to Somech and Wenderow [24], our BLM variables did not show an appropriate level of agreement among the respondents. We tested the interrater agreement of the subordinate responses using

intra-class correlation ICC(2), which estimates the reliability of mean differences across organizations, and within-group agreement ($R_{wg}$), which assesses interrater reliability among judgments by a single group of respondents on a single variable (in this case, followers assessing their leader) [53,54]. ICC(2) was too low (0.595) ($R_{wg}$ statistic 0.56) to justify aggregation. Thus, we treated our data at the individual level of analysis. Further, as we intended to explore a BLM's effects on team functioning, we treated cohesiveness as a group-level concept [6,34]. To justify this, we tested the interrater agreement with ICC(2), which returned (0.658), thus justifying the aggregation [34].

## 4. Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for all the measures included in the study on employee levels. To observe leader BLM's effects on teams, we aggregated team cohesiveness on a team level. As predicted, leader BLM shows a negative correlation with team cohesiveness (r = −0.40, $p < 0.01$), a positive correlation with directive leadership (r = 0.23, $p < 0.01$), and a negative correlation with participative leadership (r = −0.62, $p < 0.01$). Surprisingly, however, the correlation is rather low between leader BLM and directive leadership, and higher between leader BLM and participative leadership. We also found a low negative correlation (r = −0.11, $p < 0.01$) between leader BLM and gender, suggesting that female leaders show less BLM. Only in-group collectivism showed significant correlations with leader BLM, and thus we dropped institutional collectivism from our model. In-group collectivism shows a small but significant correlation (r = 0.06, $p < 0.01$) with leader BLM, indicating that this is more prevalent in collectivistic cultures.
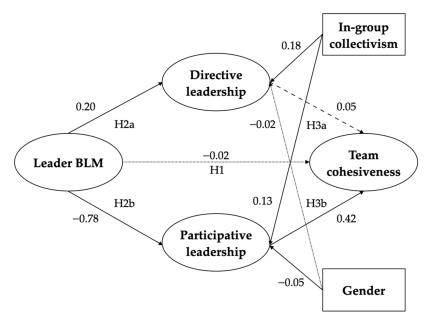
**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

| | N | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Directive | 2653 | 3.45 | 0.94 | | | | | |
| 2. Participative | 2653 | 4.60 | 0.95 | −0.23 ** | | | | |
| 3. Leader BLM | 2653 | 2.38 | 1.08 | 0.23 ** | −0.62 ** | | | |
| 4. Gender | 2402 | 0.35 | 0.48 | −0.05 * | 0.00 | −0.11 ** | | |
| 5. In-group collectivism | 2230 | 4.79 | 0.66 | 0.16 ** | 0.08 ** | 0.06 ** | −0.10 ** | |
| 6. Team cohesiveness | 2653 | 4.72 | 1.01 | −0.10 | 0.46 ** | −0.40 ** | 0.00 | 0.12 ** |

Note. Gender is coded: 0 = male, 1 female; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

We tested our hypotheses simultaneously through structural equation modeling (SEM), as the model assumes relations between both mediating variables and the dependent variable. We used SPSS AMOS [55] to conduct the analysis of the latent variables [56,57]. Latent variables are often used in psychological studies, as they provide a degree of abstraction to generalize relationships and test hypotheses among constructs [56,57]. We included the respondents' age, gender, qualification, tenure, organizational level, industry, societal culture, and level of country's development as control variables. We performed bootstrapping (10,000 samples and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals) to estimate the standard errors and confidence intervals of the indirect effects.

The final model with latent variables is presented in Figure 1. The model shows an acceptable fit ($\chi^2$ = 1176.353; df = 175; $p$ = 0.000; $\chi^2/df$ = 6.722; RMSEA = 0.054, CFI = 0.930, and TLI = 0.916), which means the model fits the data well [57].

The model shows all expected relations. To confirm Hypothesis 1 (negative relation between leader BLM and team cohesiveness), we needed a more detailed analysis, as the direct effect is insignificant. Hypothesis 2a (positive relation between leader BLM and directive leadership) and Hypothesis 2b (negative relation between leader BLM and participative leadership) are confirmed.

**Figure 1.** Structural equation modeling of the key research variables.

We also controlled for societal culture utilizing the most studied dimension in organizational research, individualism-collectivism [58], and gender. When controlling for culture and gender, BLM had a positive effect on directive leadership (Table 2). In-group collectivism had a positive effect on directive leadership. Participative leadership was negatively and significantly related to leader BLM. The effect remained negative when controlling for gender and societal culture. In-group collectivism had a positive effect on participative leadership. The results for our hypotheses tests remained the same with or without adding the other control variables.

**Table 2.** Direct and indirect effects of leader BLM on team cohesiveness.

|  | Standardized Effect | SE | p |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leader BLM and influence on team cohesiveness |  |  |  |
| Total effect | −0.337 | 0.022 | 0.002 |
| Direct effect | −0.023 | 0.057 | ns |
| Indirect effect | −0.314 | 0.049 | 0.002 |
| BLM > Directive > Team cohesiveness | 0.008 |  | 0.072 |
| BLM > Participative > Team cohesiveness | −0.238 |  | 0.002 |

To test Hypothesis 3a (directive leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness) and Hypothesis 3b (participative leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness), we explored the indirect and direct effects in more detail.

As the direct effect is insignificant ($p > 0.05$), there is full mediation. Hypothesis 1 is, therefore, only confirmed via the directive and participative leadership styles. We found a significant indirect effect (−0.314) between leader BLM and team cohesiveness (Table 2). However, with closer inspection, we found both a positive mediating effect through directive leadership ($p < 0.10$) and a more considerable negative mediating effect through participative leadership, which compensates for the positive effect of a BLM on team cohesiveness via directive leadership. However, since this indirect effect is clearly significant only for participative leadership ($p < 0.05$), Hypothesis 3b is confirmed. Hypothesis 3a required further analysis. The results for our hypotheses remained the same with or

without the control variables and therefore we have not reported the analyses where we included the various control variables.

We also performed a multi-group analysis based on the leaders' genders, where we constrained parameters to be equal across the two groups, except for the relationships between the main variables. In the AMOS package, this configuration is called Measurement Intercepts [55]. Interestingly, we found a significant negative direct effect ($-0.199$, $p < 0.01$) between leader BLM and team cohesiveness for female leaders (Table 3), but for male leaders, the direct effect is not significant (Table 4). Based on this more detailed analysis, we can confirm Hypothesis 1 only for female leaders. Moreover, for female leaders, we found only a significant mediating effect for participative leadership ($-0.258$). For male leaders, the positive mediating effect for directive leadership (0.010) is only significant at $p < 0.10$. Therefore, we cannot confirm Hypothesis 3a for either gender. We found a negative mediating effect for participative leadership ($-0.191$) for male leaders as well, and thus, Hypothesis 3b is confirmed for both genders. Fit for this model is good, CFI 0.935, TLI 0.931, and RMSEA 0.038. It seems that followers tolerate a BLM more from male leaders than from female leaders, given that the direct negative effect of BLM on team cohesiveness could only be found for female managers. For male managers, the direct negative effect was not significant, implying that their BLM is not as counterproductive on team cohesiveness as for their female counterparts. Table 5 sums up our research hypotheses and results.

**Table 3.** Direct and indirect effects of leader BLM on team cohesiveness for female leaders.

|  | **Standardized Effect** | *SE* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leader BLM and influence on team cohesiveness |  |  |  |
| Total effect | $-0.448$ | 0.048 | 0.002 |
| Direct effect | $-0.199$ | 0.069 | 0.009 |
| Indirect effect | $-0.196$ | 0.037 | 0.001 |
| BLM > Directive > Team cohesiveness | $-0.005$ |  | ns |
| BLM > Participative > Team cohesiveness | $-0.258$ |  | 0.008 |

Note: N = 428.

**Table 4.** Direct and indirect effects of leader BLM on team cohesiveness for male leaders.

|  | **Standardized Effect** | *SE* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leader BLM and influence on team cohesiveness |  |  |  |
| Total effect | $-0.350$ | 0.034 | 0.003 |
| Direct effect | $-0.080$ | 0.062 | ns |
| Indirect effect | $-0.271$ | 0.050 | 0.001 |
| BLM > Directive > Team cohesiveness | 0.010 |  | 0.071 |
| BLM > Participative > Team cohesiveness | $-0.191$ |  | 0.002 |

Note: N = 1198.

**Table 5.** Study hypotheses and results.

| Hypotheses and Proposed Relationships | Result |
|---|---|
| H1: Leader BLM is negatively related to team cohesiveness. | Partially confirmed |
| H2a: Leader BLM is positively related to directive leadership. | Confirmed |
| H2b: Leader BLM is negatively related to participative leadership. | Confirmed |
| H3a: Directive leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness. | Not confirmed |
| H3b: Participative leadership mediates the negative relationship between leader BLM and team cohesiveness. | Confirmed |

## 5. Discussion

The present study offers new insights on leader BLM by linking it to team cohesiveness and two fundamental patterns of leadership styles. We focused on directive leadership style, which refers to behaviors aimed at creating a psychological structure for subordinates by giving specific guidance and clarifying rules, policies, and procedures [43,45], and on participative leadership, which refers to joint decision-making or at least shared influence

on decision-making by a leader and his/her followers [27]. As expected, we found a negative relation between leader BLM and team cohesiveness, but only participative leadership negatively and significantly mediates this relationship. We also found a positive link between BLM and directive leadership and a negative link between BLM and participative leadership.

### 5.1. Theoretical Considerations

This study contributes to the emerging BLM research in several ways. First, our study explored the effects of this unidimensional mindset on team functioning through team cohesiveness. As BLM research is still in its early stages [13], most of the extant studies have looked at its effects on an individual level (e.g., [2,4,8]) and therefore, we add more understanding of its impacts on the team level. We further extend the recent works of Greenbaum et al. [16] and Lin et al. [24] by exploring how leader BLM might affect team cohesiveness, which has an important effect on team processes [31] and thus team functioning. As team cohesiveness consists of both social and task cohesiveness [34], we argue that highlighting only the task at hand (i.e., the bottom-line) might enforce the signal that followers and fellow team members are only a means to an end of their supervisor's goal-pursuit [8]. Team cohesiveness requires effective leadership [6,15], and thus, a leader with a high BLM may not consider it a priority. Even though team members might be united by success [10] and the shared goal of the bottom-line, the overall effect for team cohesiveness remains negative. Team leaders' attitudes, behaviors, and mentalities send an important message of what is expected and valued within the organization [3,13] and thus, a leader who only highlights the attainment of the bottom line may reflect a message that interpersonal relationships and social resources within the team are not important. This may, therefore, lead to lower overall cohesiveness.

Interestingly, we found that the relation between leader BLM and team cohesiveness is different for male and female leaders. Namely, we found a negative direct effect for female leader BLM, implying that team cohesiveness is particularly affected when the leader is a female with a high BLM. When looking at the mediating effects, we found a very low (for male leaders) or an insignificant mediating effect (for female leaders) for directive leadership. For both genders, there is a significant mediating effect of participative leadership, which indicates that it is the lowered interest in followers that may be particularly harmful to team cohesiveness. These findings are somewhat in line with large multi-national studies highlighting differences between male and female leaders and follower perceptions (e.g., [51,59,60]). These studies have found that female leaders tend to have a broader focus on organizational considerations, such that they can be simultaneously task-oriented and use directive behaviors while still showing care for others and use participative behaviors. Prior studies have also found that gender may have an interpersonal effect on leadership and that female leaders may face dual expectations of being both competent and nice to be perceived effective in a way that male leaders do not [59,60]. Thus, a female leader emphasizing only bottom-line results and engaging in less participative behaviors may even be viewed as less effective than their male counterparts and, therefore, they may have a more negative impact on ensuing team cohesiveness.

Second, we explored how a BLM might affect a leader's behavior through leadership styles. The general assumption behind BLM is that it is neutral [4], but its potential for shielding one's attention from anything else [14] and how it is manifested through leader behavior may lead to both positive and negative outcomes. By exploring a BLM's effects on directive and participative behavior, which have both been linked to positive and negative outcomes [22,27], we present avenues through which BLM may lead to different effects for organizational functioning. We also add to extant leadership research by presenting BLM as an antecedent of leadership behavior. Although the positive relationship with directive leadership strengthens the rationale of a BLM leading to task-oriented, controlling, and closely monitoring behavior [4,5], this correlation is relatively low and the mediating effect is only significant for male leaders ($p < 0.10$). Similarly, the negative

correlation with participative leadership indicates that followers and their relationships are a lower priority for BLM leaders. Both relationships were stronger in cultures with high in-group collectivism, suggesting that leadership is related to norms about leadership behavior and effectiveness [40]. These findings are similar to prior studies showing positive correlations between directive leadership and collectivism [21,40]. It appears that the dysfunctional effects of leader BLM [4,11,16] may be mostly attributed to the lowered levels of participative behaviors and, somewhat, to increased directive behaviors.

Third, we add more understanding to the effects of leader BLM on a team level. If leaders are only focused on their bottom-line pursuit, they might ignore other responsibilities of their leadership position, such as caring for employees' wellbeing or taking their opinions into account. A leader's BLM might lead them to focus more on achieving goals, and thus, utilizing directive behaviors getting there, rather than taking the time to build and nurture intra-team relationships [30]. While directive behaviors can be beneficial and needed, especially during crises [42] or early stages of team formation [61], their dominant use may be harmful in the long term. As a BLM may create a tunnel-vision towards other priorities [5], we argue that it might affect how leaders behave and treat their followers, thereby limiting their behaviors towards task completion (i.e., attaining the bottom-line). If leaders continue using directive behavior, their teams might develop a strong dependency on them [40]—depending on their leader to direct every aspect of their tasks, including how and when to move forward. Employees under directive leaders often demonstrate little personal initiative and fewer extra-role activities [40], and are more at risk of developing groupthink [35]. As a BLM may increase directive and lower participative behaviors, it can lead to lowered team cohesiveness through lower group-oriented behaviors and increased self-oriented approaches [5,21].

Fourth, as most of the studies around BLM have consisted of limited sample sizes from either one or two countries, our larger sample from different parts of the world adds to the current BLM research by enhancing the generalizability and applicability of the construct. Following the call from Babalola et al. [13], we controlled for societal culture and found that in-group collectivism also plays a role in the effects of leader BLM. Prior studies show the importance of multi-national studies [21,39,41,57], and thus, extending BLM research to different continents adds to its credibility within leadership research.

### 5.2. Practical Considerations

Research suggests that team cohesiveness plays a vital role in the team's productive capacity and requires effective leadership [21,45], and, therefore, it should be an important consideration for team leaders. Based on our findings, it appears that a BLM may lead to unilateral decision-making through lowered participative leadership behaviors, which may have adverse effects on creativity [48], empowerment [38], and feelings of trust [47]. Thus, although achieving organizational results is important, we encourage leaders to pay attention to how they are pursued, ensuring that they also highlight the importance of trust and social relations within the team. Social relations have been linked to innovation, competitive advantage [17], and psychological safety [35], and as such, they also require the leaders' attention. As work is increasingly organized into teams [25,62], and the attainment of organizational goals relies on the collaboration of team members, leaders should use caution when they communicate their profit or performance expectations. If followers perceive their leaders as having a high BLM, it may have negative consequences for overall team cohesiveness and may even increase competitiveness [13], performing tension [24], or other unethical tendencies within the team [3–5,9,11]. It appears that a perceived BLM, particularly in female leaders, leads to lower team cohesiveness, which could imply that a high BLM is more socially acceptable for male leaders than female leaders. The tone set at the top is essential for organizational culture, ethical conduct, and how results are pursued, as there is evidence that attitudes, behaviors, and mentalities such as BLM may trickle down to followers [3,4].

Moreover, as a BLM tends to shield a leader's focus from their followers' wellbeing and social relations [29], it might also shield their attention from other important considerations, such as broader ethical or environmental consequences, or even long-term vitality of the organization. Emerging research highlights that leaders with a BLM have a tendency for short-term, high-risk decision-making ([4,5], see also [3,60]). This "whatever it takes" dedication to short-term results (often revenues) above long-term sustainability is found to create a climate in which unethical behavior can increase and thrive [3], or in which interactions are considered in terms of wins and losses [5]. To ensure that leaders do not only fixate on bottom-line outputs, we recommend that management pays attention to setting and committing to organizational values that support the development and maintenance of a healthier organizational culture. As a BLM tends to narrow leaders' focus exclusively on results, we advocate using the triple bottom-line as a countermeasure. The triple bottom-line, which is also sometimes used synonymously with corporate social responsibility (CSR), relies on the idea that organizations should equally pursue social, environmental, and financial considerations [20]. Management should set these values and create a concrete strategy on how to attain them through discussions with key stakeholders, such as employees, customers, and suppliers, to not appear as only "greenwashing" with such initiatives (i.e., appearing to take environmentally responsible actions, which in reality, have a minimal positive impact [20]). Moreover, there is increasing evidence that leaders' moral values have important implications for organizational success [3,18,63]. As such, it is important that they align with the organization's values and long-term vision.

There seems to be a widely shared belief that participative leadership trumps directive leadership when it comes to organizational effectiveness [23]. However, both participative and directive leadership styles have been linked to high performance (e.g., [22,26]). Importantly, leadership is a complex behavioral process rather than a simple choice between seemingly contradictory behaviors [48], such as focusing on people vs. tasks, or benevolent vs. authoritarian [43]. A leader may be both participative and directive [22,43], and for instance, female leaders tend to show more both directive and supportive behavior [50], and thus while being task-oriented, they also integrate followers into the decision-making. However, issues might arise when any one style is applied for too long. Leadership styles have an important effect on team cohesiveness [21], and, therefore, organizations should encourage leaders to foster both types of leadership behaviors and ensure that leaders receive enough training in knowing when and how each style is effective.

*5.3. Challenges and Future Directions*

As with all studies, our study has some limitations. First, even though our study utilized a large dataset, there may be some common method bias [64], as all variables are based on subordinate ratings. Similarly, we cannot infer causality, as we adopted an experimental design. Thus, we encourage others to explore our ideas by incorporating several research methods and looking into the short-term and long-term effects of leader BLM on both leader behaviors and subsequent organizational functioning. Further, as discussed by others using the same database (e.g., [41,42]), the data was collected by a Western-based consulting company. Thus, there is an underrepresentation of African, Eastern-European, and Southern American countries. We also acknowledge that the data includes large multi-national companies and their foreign subsidies, which may imply that smaller or domestic companies may be underrepresented. We encourage future studies to collect data from more countries and from companies of different sizes and different ownership structures, such as privately owned, family-owned, and publicly owned, to explore how BLM, goal-setting, and management expectations might affect leaders and followers differently in these types of organizations.

Second, we do not have information about the team composition of our data. We know that the subordinates in our data are directly supervised by the manager they report to, but we do not know if they belong to the same team. Moreover, we do not know how their work is organized and whether all team members share a common goal. Is the work something

that people can fulfill individually, or does it require increased collaboration/coordination? We also do not know how their team goals are set. As noted by Beal et al. [6], patterns of team workflow can be important for team cohesiveness, as they can have different implications for followers' motivation, performance, and how they approach teamwork. Looking into how team goals are set and their effects on individual and team functioning would thus be an important avenue for future BLM research. We also suggest that future studies could pay more attention to the diversity and gender composition within teams and how the interplay of leader and follower gender might affect the perceptions and effects of leader BLM. As we found a direct negative effect between leader BLM and team cohesiveness only for female leaders, future studies should explore in more detail where this difference stems from. There is growing literature around the differences between male and female leadership (e.g., [51,59,60] and, thus, we encourage future studies to look deeper into how male and female leader BLM is perceived differently. These studies could use gender as a moderator or predictor for a BLM and explore how, when, and why a BLM might lead to different outcomes for team functioning. These differences could, for instance, derive from the interpersonal and intrapersonal effects of gender or gender stereotypes and norms (see [59,60]). More demographic information could be collected to explore whether there are individual differences or even personality traits that could explain how team members perceive leader BLM and how it affects team functioning.

Third, since the subordinates in our sample did not agree on their ratings on leader BLM, it could imply that leaders may treat their employees differently based on, for instance, gender or experience. Based on our findings, we expect that this disagreement might partly stem from gender differences, as higher diversity in team composition may lead to a higher standard deviation in perceptions. There is evidence that subordinates may perceive their leaders differently even when they are subjected to the same leadership style (e.g., [65]). It is important to note, however, that while leadership styles are more consistent patterns of behavior and are rather well studied [1,21], a BLM is more an underlying leader attribute [4]. Followers may make assumptions about this mindset, but it may be less straightforward to perceive than leadership styles. Therefore, we suggest that future studies also compare how leaders perceive their own BLM and how others perceive it (i.e., self-other-agreement, [65]).

Leaders may also vary in terms of how they espouse their BLM or push for bottom-line contributions. The types of bottom-line goals may affect team cohesiveness differently. For instance, it may be that financial goals may have a more negative impact on team cohesiveness than other types of performance goals due to the money priming effect [27]. It may also be that group-level bottom-line goals may have a more positive effect on team cohesiveness than a leader's personal bottom-line goal. Thus, we suggest that future studies could extend this measure and include a more versatile scope on organizational results, not just financial results, to truly capture Wolfe's [5] definition of BLM. We also suggest that future studies investigate more variables that could mitigate the effects between leader BLM and team outcomes, such as psychological safety, leader motivation, conflict resolution styles, risk-taking preferences, remuneration principles, employee autonomy, and work engagement. There is growing evidence that a BLM may be a double-edged sword [2,13], and thus, it would be important to explore how, when, and why leader BLM might lead to both positive and negative outcomes.

As organizations are becoming increasingly team-based, employees typically have multiple goals on both individual and team levels [62], making it more challenging to identify a BLM and the effects of a leader's BLM on team performance. Further, as leader behaviors often reflect what is expected within a culture [40], we may ask whether a BLM is a personal tendency or whether it is adaptive behavior to job requirements. It might also be that an organization may seek out leaders with certain tendencies, that is, a BLM, due to the needs of the business [66]. It could also be interesting to investigate other leadership styles, such as transformational, servant, and sustainable leadership, to explore their interplay with this single-minded focus on results. How would an ethical or sustainable leader

define the bottom-line? What kind of effects would they have on their teams if they push for that bottom-line? It could be that they have different effects on team functioning than a leader who is pushing for financial results. Another important question would be to find out who is susceptible to a BLM and whether it is tied to personality traits, environmental, or situational factors, or a combination of the three. Previous research has found that goals may mediate the effect of personality measures on work performance [28], and thus, this would be an important avenue for future research.

## 6. Conclusions

This study has explored the relationship between leader BLM and leader behaviors, as manifested by directive and participative leadership, and implications for team cohesiveness. We found that leader BLM is positively related to directive leadership and negatively related to participative leadership. This indicates that although a BLM might indeed induce controlling, task-oriented behavior, it has a more substantial impact on unilateral decision-making and lowered participation for followers, which then impede team cohesiveness. While it is still possible for leaders to use both leadership styles, our results indicate that the negative effects on team cohesiveness derive more from decreased participative behaviors, as leaders care more about the bottom-line than about their followers. Considering these results, we encourage leaders to increase social dialogue and other useful practices to empower and engage their followers as well as paying attention to how they communicate their profit or performance expectations, as a perceived BLM may lead to unintended consequences, such as unethical behaviors and lowered team cohesiveness. Moreover, we suggest that leaders incorporate the principles of the triple bottom-line and thus incentivize behavior towards a broader range of organizational results.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization: K.R., H.W., M.T.B. and M.E.; methodology and formal analysis: K.R. and H.W.; validation: K.R. and M.E.; resources: K.R., H.W. and M.E.; writing—original draft preparation: K.R.; writing—review and editing: K.R., M.T.B. and M.E.; supervision: M.E.; project administration: K.R. and H.W. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethical Committee of Korn Ferry Institute.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** Data can be requested from the corresponding author.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix A

**Table A1.** Sample size by industry.

| Industry | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Manufacturing | 933 | 35% |
| Mining | 461 | 17% |
| Public Administration | 392 | 15% |
| Services | 375 | 14% |
| Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate | 243 | 9% |
| Construction | 130 | 5% |
| Other | 119 | 4% |
| **Total** | 2653 | |

## Appendix B

**Table 2.** Sample size and mean scores per country, where N > 21.

| Country | N | % Female | BLM | Directive Leadership | Participative Leadership | Team Cohesiveness | In-Group Collectivism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 717 | 44% | 2.2 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 5.79 |
| Brazil | 426 | 20% | 2.5 | 3.7 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 5.17 |
| China | 149 | 30% | 2.8 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 5.12 |
| Netherlands | 133 | 41% | 2.6 | 3.1 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 5.39 |
| Mexico | 120 | 27% | 2.3 | 3.8 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 5.78 |
| Belgium | 109 | 50% | 2.3 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | — |
| Italy | 78 | 16% | 2.4 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 5.76 |
| Poland | 68 | 46% | 2.5 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 5.69 |
| Germany | 58 | 26% | 2.3 | 2.9 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 5.46 |
| France | 57 | 28% | 2.4 | 3.3 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 5.88 |
| Spain | 56 | 17% | 2.0 | 3.9 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 5.82 |
| Japan | 55 | 33% | 2.6 | 3.3 | 4.6 | 4.4 | 5.44 |
| Canada | 51 | 36% | 2.3 | 3.1 | 4.4 | 4.8 | 5.94 |
| United Kingdom | 40 | 50% | 2.4 | 3.0 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 5.66 |
| India | 34 | 29% | 1.9 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 5.2 | 5.22 |
| Russia | 30 | 60% | 2.3 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 5.0 | 5.90 |
| Slovakia | 24 | 38% | 2.2 | 3.2 | 4.7 | 4.9 | — |
| Other | 224 | 45% | 2.4 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 4.7 | — |
| Unknown | 224 | 18% | 2.4 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.8 | — |
| Total | 2653 | 35% | 2.4 | 3.4 | 4.6 | 4.7 | — |

## Appendix C

**Table A3.** Leader bottom-line mentality scale ($\alpha = 0.83$).

| |
|---|
| My manager is solely concerned with meeting the bottom-line. |
| My manager only cares about the business results. |
| My manager treats the bottom-line as more important than anything else. |
| My manager cares more about profits than employee well-being. |

Source: Greenbaum et al. [4].

**Table A4.** Directive leadership scale ($\alpha = 0.72$).

| |
|---|
| Expects employees to follow his/her instructions precisely. |
| Requires employees to submit detailed reports of their activities. |
| Makes most decisions for employees. |
| Supervises employees very closely. |
| Expects employees to carry out instructions immediately. |

Copyright Korn Ferry.

**Table A5.** Participative leadership scale ($\alpha = 0.78$).

| |
|---|
| Encourages subordinates to participate in most decision-making. |
| Keeps everyone involved and well-informed about organizational issues that may affect them. |
| Holds frequent meetings to share information and ideas with subordinates. |
| Gives capable subordinates the freedom to make decisions and mistakes without close supervision. |
| When making decisions, tries to get a great deal of input from subordinates. |

Copyright Korn Ferry.

**Table A6.** Team cohesiveness scale (α = 0.81).

| |
|---|
| People in the team are always warm and friendly toward each other. |
| People in the team are working toward a common objective. |
| People in the team trust each other. |
| People in the team almost always speak well of it. |
| There is a lot of personal loyalty to the team. |

Copyright Korn Ferry.

## References

1. Northouse, P.G. *Leadership*; Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2004.
2. Babalola, M.; Greenbaum, R.L.; Amarnani, R.; Shoss, M.; Deng, Y.; Garba, O.; Guo, L. A business frame perspective on why perceptions of top management's bottom-line mentality results in employees' good and bad behaviors. *Pers. Psychol.* **2020**, *73*, 19–41. [CrossRef]
3. Sims, R.R.; Brinkmann, J. Leaders as Moral Role Models: The Case of John Gutfreund at Salomon Brothers. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2002**, *35*, 327–339. [CrossRef]
4. Greenbaum, R.L.; Mawritz, M.B.; Eissa, G. Bottom-line mentality as an antecedent of social undermining and the moderating roles of core self-evaluations and conscientiousness. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **2012**, *97*, 343–359. [CrossRef]
5. Wolfe, D.M. Is there integrity in the bottom line: Managing obstacles to executive integrity. In *The Jossey-Bass Management Series. Executive Integrity: The Search for High Human Values in Organizational Life*; Srivastva, S., Ed.; Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, USA, 1988; pp. 140–171.
6. Beal, D.J.; Cohen, R.R.; Burke, M.J.; McLendon, C.L. Cohesion and Performance in Groups: A Meta-Analytic Clarification of Construct Relations. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **2003**, *88*, 989–1004. [CrossRef]
7. Schermerhorn, J.R.; Hunt, J.G.; Osborn, R.N. *Organizational Behavior*; Wiley: New York, NY, USA, 2002.
8. Quade, M.J.; McLarty, B.D.; Bonner, J.M. The influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee bottom-line mentality on leader-member exchange and subsequent employee performance. *Hum. Relat.* **2020**, *73*, 1157–1181. [CrossRef]
9. Rose, J.M. Corporate directors and social responsibility: Ethics versus shareholder value. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2007**, *73*, 319–331. [CrossRef]
10. Wise, S. Can a team have too much cohesion? The dark side to network density. *Eur. Manag. J.* **2014**, *32*, 703–711. [CrossRef]
11. Mesdaghinia, S.; Rawat, A.; Nadavulakere, S. Why Moral Followers Quit: Examining the Role of Leader Bottom-Line Mentality and Unethical Pro-Leader Behavior. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2019**, *159*, 491–505. [CrossRef]
12. Mawritz, M.B.; Greenbaum, R.L.; Butts, M.M.; Graham, K.A. I just can't control myself: A self-regulation perspective on the abuse of deviant employees. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2017**, *60*, 1482–1503. [CrossRef]
13. Babalola, M.T.; Ren, S.; Ogbonnaya, C.; Riisla, K.; Soetan, G.T.; Gok, K. Thriving at work but insomniac at home: Understanding the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee functioning. *Hum. Relat.* **2020**. [CrossRef]
14. Shah, J.Y.; Friedman, R.; Kruglanski, A.W. Forgetting all else: On the antecedents and consequences of goal shielding. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* **2002**, *83*, 1261–1280. [CrossRef]
15. Robijn, W.; Euwema, M.C.; Schaufeli, W.B.; Deprez, J. Leaders, teams and work engagement: A basic needs perspective. *Career Dev. Int.* **2020**, *25*, 373–388. [CrossRef]
16. Greenbaum, R.L.; Bonner, J.M.; Mawritz, M.B.; Butts, M.M.; Smith, M.B. It is all about the bottom line: Group bottom-line mentality, psychological safety, and group creativity. *J. Organ. Behav.* **2020**, *41*, 503–517. [CrossRef]
17. Mulligan, R.; Ramos, J.; Martín, P.; Zornoza, A. Inspiriting Innovation: The Effects of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Innovative Behavior as Mediated by Mindfulness and Work Engagement. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 5409. [CrossRef]
18. Asif, M.; Qing, M.; Hwang, J.; Shi, H. Ethical leadership, affective commitment, work engagement, and creativity: Testing a multiple mediation approach. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 4489. [CrossRef]
19. Eissa, G.; Wyland, R.; Gupta, R. Supervisor to co-worker social undermining: The moderating roles of bottom-line mentality and self-efficacy. *J. Manag. Organ.* **2020**, *26*, 756–773. [CrossRef]
20. Mishra, P.; Schmidt, G.B. How can leaders of multi-national organizations be ethical by contributing to corporate social responsibility initiatives? Guidelines and pitfalls for leaders trying to do good. *Bus. Horiz.* **2018**, *61*, 833–843. [CrossRef]
21. Wendt, H.; Euwema, M.C.; Van Emmerik, H. Leadership and team cohesiveness across cultures. *Leadersh. Q.* **2009**, *20*, 358–370. [CrossRef]
22. Somech, A. Directive versus participative leadership: Two complementary approaches to managing school effectiveness. *Educ. Leadersh. Q.* **2005**, *39*, 1–24. [CrossRef]
23. Somech, A.; Wenderow, M. The impact of participative and directive leadership on teachers' performance: The intervening effects of job structuring, decision domain, and leader-member exchange. *Educ. Adm. Q.* **2006**, *42*, 746–772. [CrossRef]
24. Lin, Y.; Yang, M.; Quade, M.J.; Chen, W. Is the bottom line reached? An exploration of supervisor bottom-line mentality, team performance avoidance goal orientation and team performance. *Hum. Relat.* **2021**. [CrossRef]
25. Sull, D. Are you ready to rebound? *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **2010**, *88*, 70–74.

26. Sagie, A.; Zaidman, N.; Amichai-Hamburger, Y.; Te'eni, D.; Schwartz, D.G. An empirical assessment of the loose-tight leadership model: Quantitative and qualitative analyses. *J. Organ. Behav.* **2002**, *23*, 303–320. [CrossRef]

27. Vohs, K.D. Money Priming Can Change People's Thoughts, Feelings, Motivations, and Behaviors: An Update on 10 Years of Experiments. *J. Exp. Psychol. Gen.* **2015**, *144*, 86–93. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

28. Locke, E.A.; Latham, G.P. Breaking the Rules: A Historical Overview of Goal-Setting Theory. *Adv. Motiv. Sci.* **2015**, *2*, 99–126.

29. Stashevsky, S.; Koslowsky, M. Leadership team cohesiveness and team performance. *Int. J. Manpow.* **2006**, *27*, 63–74. [CrossRef]

30. Greenbaum, R.L.; Babalola, M.; Quade, M.; Guo, L.; Kim, Y. Moral burden of bottom-line pursuits: How and when perceptions of top management bottom-line mentality inhibit supervisors' ethical leadership practices. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2020**, 1–15.

31. Salas, E.; Dickinson, T.L.; Converse, S.A.; Tannenbaum, S.I. Toward an understanding of team performance and training. In *Teams: Their Training and Performance*; Swezey, R.W., Salas, E., Eds.; Ablex Publishing: Stamford, CT, USA, 1992; pp. 3–29.

32. Chang, A.; Bordia, P. A multidimensional approach to the group cohesion-group performance relationship. *Small Group Res.* **2001**, *32*, 379–405. [CrossRef]

33. Khoshsoroor, S.; Liang, D.; Salami, G.E.; Chitsaz, E. Team cohesion: A double-edged sword in the relationship between rival estimation and escalation of commitment. *Soc. Behav. Personal.* **2020**, *47*. [CrossRef]

34. Dion, K.L. Group cohesion: From "field of forces" to multidimensional construct. *Group Dyn. Theory Res. Pract.* **2000**, *4*, 7–26. [CrossRef]

35. Edmondson, A. Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Adm. Sci. Q.* **1999**, *44*, 350–383. [CrossRef]

36. Janis, I. Groupthink. In *A First Look at Communication Theory*; Griffin, E., Ed.; McGraw Hill: New York, NY, USA, 1991; pp. 235–246.

37. Langfred, C.W. Is Group Cohesiveness a Double-Edged Sword? *Small Group Res.* **1998**, *29*, 124–143. [CrossRef]

38. Mullen, B.; Anthony, T.; Salas, E.; Driskell, J.E. Group cohesiveness and quality of decision making: An Integration of Tests of the Groupthink Hypothesis. *Small Group Res.* **1994**, *25*, 189–204. [CrossRef]

39. Gully, S.M.; Devine, D.J.; Whitney, D.J. A meta-analysis of team cohesion and performance. *Small Group Res.* **1995**, *26*, 497–520. [CrossRef]

40. House, R.J.; Hanges, P.J.; Javidan, M.; Dorfman, P.W.; Gupta, V. Culture, Leadership, and Organizations. In *The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2004.

41. Euwema, M.C.; Wendt, H.; Van Emmerik, H. Leadership styles and group organizational citizenship behavior across cultures. *J. Organ. Behav.* **2007**, *28*, 1035–1057. [CrossRef]

42. Stoker, J.I.; Garretsen, H.; Soudis, D. Tightening the leash after a threat: A multi-level event study on leadership behavior following the financial crisis. *Leadersh. Q.* **2019**, *30*, 199–214. [CrossRef]

43. House, R.J. Path-goal theory of leadership: Lessons, legacy, and a reformulated theory. *Leadersh. Q.* **1996**, *7*, 323–352. [CrossRef]

44. Li, G.; Liu, H.; Luo, Y. Directive versus participative leadership: Dispositional antecedents and team consequences. *J. Occup. Organ. Psychol.* **2018**, *91*, 645–664. [CrossRef]

45. Cruz, M.A.; Henningsen, D.D.; Smith, B.A. The impact of directive leadership on group information sampling, decisions, perceptions of the leader. *Commun. Res.* **1999**, *26*, 349–370. [CrossRef]

46. Kozlowski, S.W.; Bell, B.S. Work groups and teams in organizations. In *Handbook of Psychology*, 2nd ed.; Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2012.

47. Muczyk, J.P.; Reimann, B.C. The case for directive leadership. *Acad. Manag. Exec.* **1987**, *1*, 301–311. [CrossRef]

48. Huang, R.; Kahai, S.; Jestice, R. The contingent effects of leadership on team collaboration in virtual teams. *Comput. Hum. Behav.* **2010**, *26*, 1098–1110. [CrossRef]

49. Zhang, X.; Bartol, K.M. Linking empowering leadership and follower creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and creative process engagement. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2010**, *53*, 107–128. [CrossRef]

50. Fleenor, J.W.; Smither, J.W.; Atwater, L.E.; Braddy, P.W.; Sturm, R.E. Self—Other rating agreement in leadership: A review. *Leadersh. Q.* **2010**, *21*, 1005–1034. [CrossRef]

51. Van Emmerik, I.J.H.; Euwema, M.C.; Wendt, H.J. Leadership Behaviors around the World: The relative importance of gender versus cultural background. *Int. J. Cross Cult. Manag.* **2008**, *8*, 297–315. [CrossRef]

52. Van de Vijver, F.; Tanzer, N.K. Bias and equivalence in cross-cultural assessment: An overview. *Rev. Eur. Psychol. Appl.* **2004**, *54*, 119–135. [CrossRef]

53. James, L.R.; Demaree, R.G.; Wolf, G. rwg: An assessment of within-group interrater agreement. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **1993**, *78*, 306. [CrossRef]

54. LeBreton, J.M.; Senter, J.L. Answers to 20 questions about interrater reliability and interrater agreement. *Organ. Res. Methods* **2008**, *11*, 815–852. [CrossRef]

55. Arbuckle, J.L. *IBM SPSS Amos 26 User's Guide*; IBM SPSS: Chicago, IL, USA, 2019.

56. Bollen, K.A.; Hoyle, R.H. Latent variables in structural equation modeling. In *Handbook of Structural Equation Modeling*; Hoyle, R.H., Ed.; The Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 2012; pp. 56–67.

57. Weston, R.; Gore, P.A. A Brief Guide to Structural Equation Modeling. *Couns. Psychol.* **2006**, *34*, 719–751. [CrossRef]

58. Gelfand, M.J.; Erez, M.; Aycan, Z. Cross-Cultural Organizational Behavior. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* **2007**, *58*, 479–514. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

59. Shen, W.; Joseph, D.L. Gender and leadership: A criterion-focused review and research agenda. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.* **2021**, *31*, 100765.

60. Bullough, A.; Moore, F.; Kalafatoglu, T. Research on women in international business and management: Then, now, and next. *Cross Cult. Strateg. Manag.* **2017**, *24*, 211–230. [CrossRef]
61. Lorinkova, N.; Pearsall, M.J.; Sims, H.P. Examining the differential longitudinal performance of directive versus empowering leadership in teams. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2013**, *56*, 573–596. [CrossRef]
62. DeShon, R.P.; Kozlowski, S.W.J.; Schmidt, A.M.; Milner, K.R.; Wiechmann, D. A multiple-goal, multi-level model of feedback effects on the regulation of individual and team performance. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **2004**, *89*, 1035–1056. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
63. Barsky, A. Understanding the Ethical Cost of Organizational Goal-Setting: A Review and Theory Development. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2008**, *81*, 63–81. [CrossRef]
64. Podsakoff, P.M.; MacKenzie, S.B.; Lee, J.; Podsakoff, N.P. Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **2003**, *88*, 879–903. [CrossRef]
65. Atwater, L.E.; Ostroff, C.; Yammarino, F.J.; Fleenor, J.W. Self-other agreement: Does it really matter? *Pers. Psychol.* **1998**, *51*, 577–598. [CrossRef]
66. Graham, J.R.; Harvey, C.R.; Puri, M. Managerial attitudes and corporate actions. *J. Financ. Econ.* **2013**, *109*, 103–121. [CrossRef]