Abusive Supervision and the loss spiral: A study on the role of negative leadership in the JD-R model.

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Oral Session

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Topics: Leadership, Well-being

OP368
Numerous studies about Leadership and Wellbeing

- Daily transformational leadership $\rightarrow$ + job resources and + work engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014)
- Transformational leadership $\rightarrow$ + job satisfaction and + motivation (Judge & Piccolo, 2004)
- Transformational leadership $\rightarrow$ - demands and + resources $\rightarrow$ positive work attitudes and better performance (Fernet et al., 2015)

Thus, Leadership should be inserted in JD-R theory

(Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)
Leadership and Job Demands-Resource theory

Leaders can influence the work environment and employees’ wellbeing via influencing their job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)

Within the theoretical framework of JD-R theory, the Leadership role and position seem unclear (until the review by Tummers & Bakker, 2021)

Different roles tested or hypothesized:
• influencing wellbeing outcomes via resources/demands (e.g., Schaufeli, 2015)
• a resource or demand itself (Bakker et al., 2023)
Leadership & JD-R

1. **Antecedent** of resources and demands: direct impacts

2. **Moderate** link between demands/resources and wellbeing outcomes

3. Direct influencing **job crafting** and self-undermining

A possible underlying mechanism

Hobfoll’s (1989) *Conservation of Resources theory* has been linked to JD-R theory: «people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources» (p. 513)

**Gain spiral**: positive self-reinforcing path of resource gaining (→ job crafting). For example, a follower asking leader for feedback fosters motivation (*Tummers & Bakker, 2023; Van Wingerden et al., 2017*)

**Loss spiral** (→ self-undermining): stressors cause loss of resources, and this implies that there are increasingly less resources to face this loss, leading to stress outcomes
Abusive supervision: a drive of resource loss

Abusive supervision: «hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact» (Tepper, 2000, p. 178; Gatti et al., 2019), ridiculing, undermining, yelling at subordinates (Xu et al., 2015)

Stressor and source of resource loss spiral (Wang & Tang, 2022)

Aims of the study
to explore:
• the leadership role in JD-R theory (as antecedent of resources/demand [i.e., point 1])
• abusive leadership as drive of resource depletion and demands enhancer (COR theory)
Study hypotheses

Following Tummers and Bakker (2023)’s position of leadership in JD-R theory:

**Abusive supervision** has:

1. a **negative** direct relationship with job **Resources** (= Self Efficacy)
2. a **positive** direct relationship with job **Demands** (= Workload)
3. a **negative** direct relationship with **Work Engagement**
4. a **positive** direct relationship with **Emotional Exhaustion**
5. a **negative** indirect relationship with **Work Engagement** via **Resources** (= Self Efficacy)
6. a **positive** indirect relationship with **Emotional Exhaustion** via **Demands** (= Workload)
Method

Procedure & Sample
Self-report questionnaire.
1505 nurses (4 hospitals). 82.5% women, 17.4% men. Age mean = 43.41 (SD = 9.17). Unit tenure mean = 11.51 years (8.32)

Measures
Abusive supervision: 15 items (Gatti et al., 2019; Tepper, 2000)
Occupational Self-efficacy: 6 items (Rigotti et al., 2008)
Workload: 4 items (Bakker et al., 2004)
Work Engagement: 9 items (Schaufeli et al., 2006)
Emotional Exhaustion: 8 items (Demerouti et al., 2010).
Analysis and Results

Estimator: MLR
\[ \chi^2(861) = 21689.108; \ p < .001 \]
RMSEA = .040 [.039; .042]
CFI = .907 \ TLI = .900 \ SRMR = .057

DIRECT EFFECTS

AbuSup: \rightarrow \text{OccSE} (-.10**); \rightarrow \text{WE} (-.15***)
\rightarrow \text{Wload} (.10**); \rightarrow \text{EE} (.20***).

OccSE \rightarrow \text{WE} (.12***)
Wload \rightarrow \text{EE} (.29***).

INDIRECT EFFECTS

AbuSup \rightarrow \text{OccSE} \rightarrow \text{WE}: -.012*
AbuSup \rightarrow \text{Wload} \rightarrow \text{EE}: .03**

* \ p < .05; ** \ p < .01; *** \ p < .001
Discussion

Hypotheses confirmation

All hypotheses were confirmed.

Theoretical implications

• Abusive supervision confirms to be a drive of resource depletion

• Leadership seems to be an antecedent of resources/demands in JD-R
Limitation

• Cross-sectional study

• In order to confirm the role of leadership in JD-R and the mechanism of spirals (COR theory), the leadership <-> job crafting (gain spiral) and leadership <-> undermining (loss spiral) relationships could have been explored

Future Developments

• Use of parcels in SEM

• Multilevel research studies could reinforce evidence of the Tummers and Bakker (2021) review about leadership in JD-R
Practical implications & Conclusions

SDGs: Decent work \ Good health and wellbeing

• Awareness about abusive behaviors topic and its consequences

• Training for leaders to enhance followers’ wellbeing

• Countering the «Great Resignation» in public healthcare
References


Thank you for your attention

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