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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

OP_95



Topics: Leadership, Well-being

OP368

Numerous studies about Leadership and Wellbeing

- Daily transformational leadership → + job resources and + work engagement (*Breevaart et al., 2014*)
- Transformational leadership → + job satisfaction and + motivation (*Judge & Piccolo, 2004*)
- Transformational leadership → - demands and + resources → 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*)

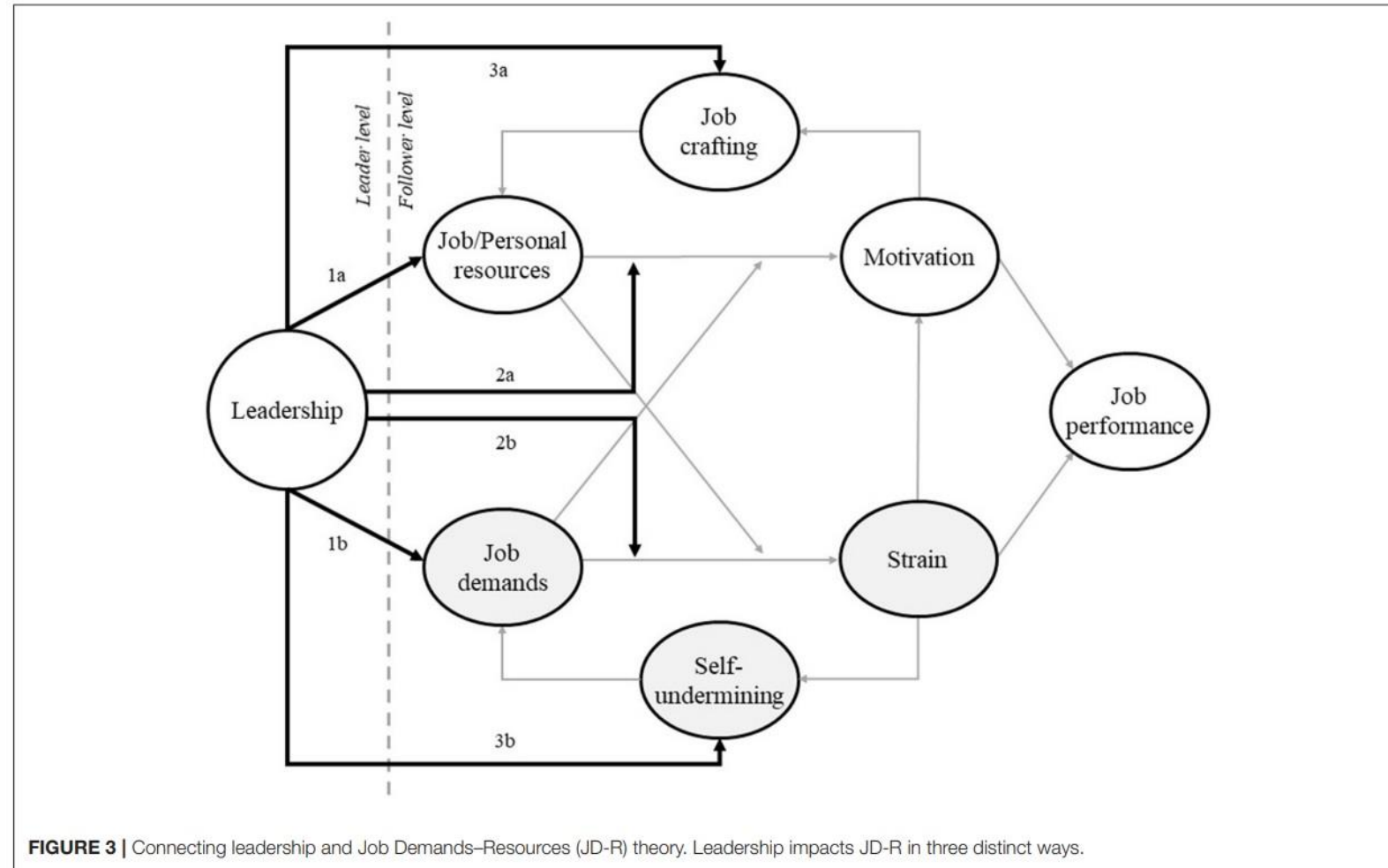
Within the theoretical framework of **JD-R theory**, the Leadership role and position seem **unclear** (until the review by Tummers & Bakker, 2021)

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

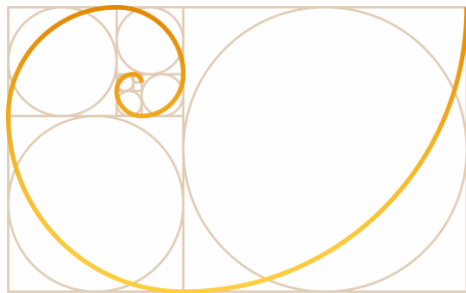
1. **Antecedent** of resources and demands: direct impacts
2. **Moderate** link between demands/resources and wellbeing outcomes
3. Direct influencing **job crafting** and **self-undermining**



Tummers, L. G., & Bakker, A. B. (2021). Leadership and job demands-resources theory: A systematic review. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 722080.

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

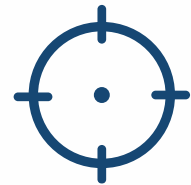


Abusive supervision: a drive of resource loss

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

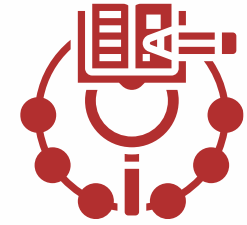
Abusive supervision: 15 items (*Gatti et al., 2019; Tepper, 2000*)

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: → *OccSE* (-.10**); → *WE* (-.15***)
→ *Wload* (.10**); → *EE* (.20***).

OccSE → *WE* (.12***)

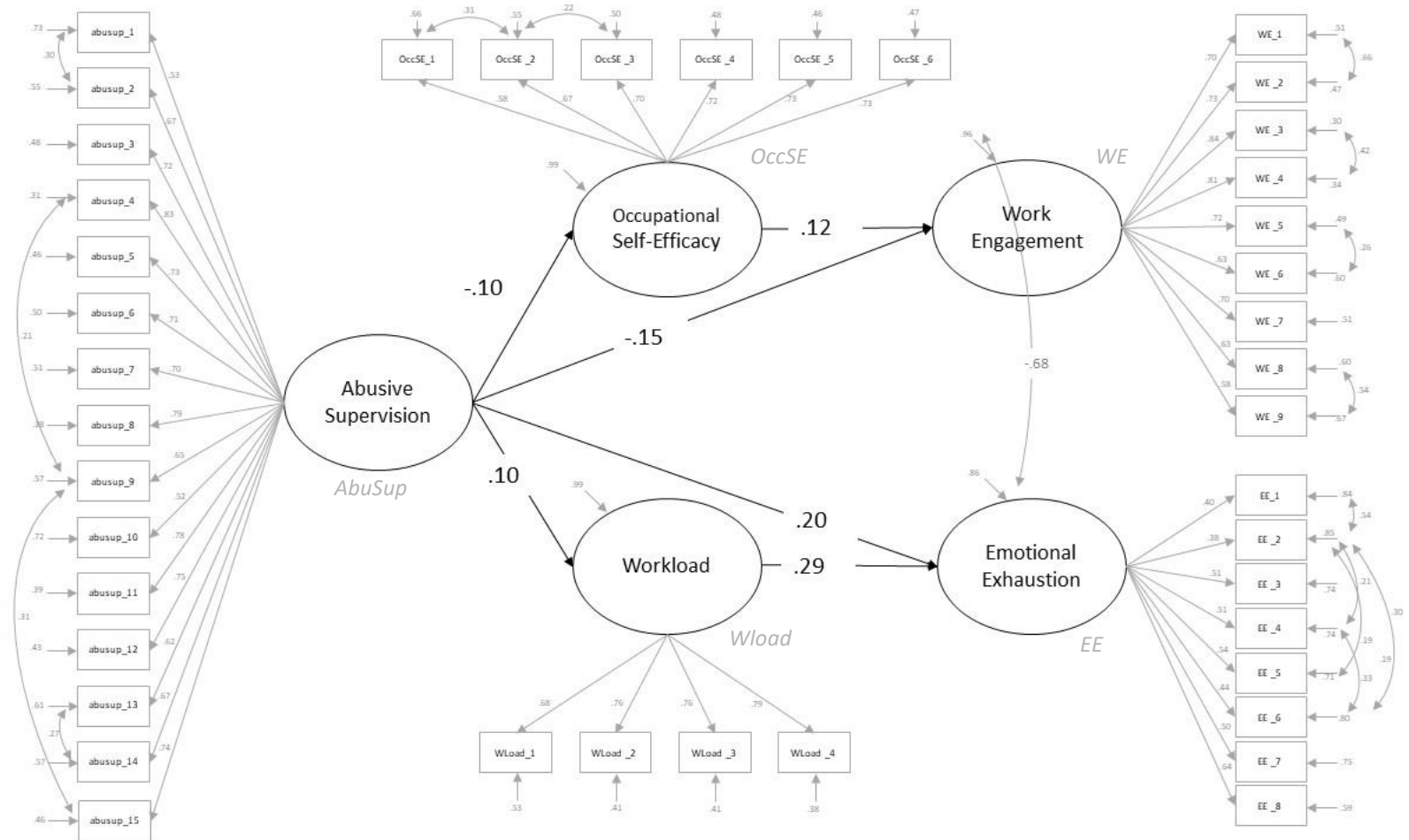
Wload → *EE* (.29***).

INDIRECT EFFECTS

AbuSup → *OccSE* → *WE*: -.012*

AbuSup → *Wload* → *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

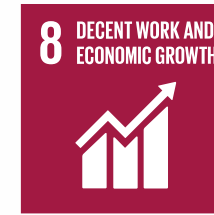
- Cross-sectional study
- In order to confirm the role of leadership in JD-R and the mechanism of spirals (COR theory), the leadership <-> job crafting (gain spiral) and leadership <-> undermining (loss spiral) relationships could have been explored

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

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Thank you for your attention

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