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The Role of Line Managers in Promoting and Protecting Employee Well-Being

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The integral role that leaders play in employee well-being has been the subject of numerous systematic reviews and meta-analyses in recent years (see for example Harms et al., 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2017; Montano et al., 2017). Due to this impressive body of work, it has become generally accepted that constructive styles of leadership promote positive employee well-being and mitigate negative employee well-being, while the opposite can be said for destructive styles of leadership (e.g., Arnold, 2017; Tepper et al., 2017).

Even with this expansive body of literature, many questions remain unanswered. Leaders of present-day organizations are challenged to support employee well-being amid contextual forces such as an increasingly globalized economy, changing gender norms, an unprecedented pace of technological change, and global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the field has emphasized the need to begin to address questions of ‘how’, ‘why’, and ‘when’ certain leadership behaviors can affect employee well-being using robust research designs and innovative methodologies (e.g., Fischer et al., 2017). Furthermore, given the extensive range of constructive and destructive leadership styles and behaviors in the extant literature (e.g., Dinh et al., 2014), researchers have called for examining patterns of leadership characteristics, styles, and behaviors to understand if, and how, they cooccur (e.g., Arnold et al., 2017) and how these combinations are related to employee well-being (e.g., Mäkikangas et al., 2016).

To consolidate the latest research on how line managers affect employee well-being, we examined empirical work published in the last decade focused on constructive and destructive leadership styles, behaviors, and characteristics as predictors of employee well-being. In this chapter, we summarize this recent literature, describe its strengths

and limitations, and highlight areas for future work. Based on the results of a comprehensive literature review, we offer frameworks linking constructive and destructive leadership to employee well-being, including a summary of explanatory processes and contextual factors affecting these relationships.

We begin with an outline of leadership in organizations as both constructive and destructive. Then we position the concept of a line manager within the broader leadership literature and outline the definition of employee well-being considered in our review. Next, we explain two research-supported frameworks linking leadership and employee well-being (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Finally, we integrate findings into key themes, discuss methodological issues, and future research directions which, if pursued, would advance our understanding in this area.

Construct Clarity: Leadership, Line Managers, and Employee Well-Being

Constructive and Destructive Leadership

Constructive and destructive leadership are typically viewed at opposite ends of the leadership continuum. Constructive leaders are said to enhance the motivation and well-being of followers by using engaging behaviors and encouraging involvement and participation in decision processes (Einarsen et al., 2007). As indicated by previous work on the desirable characteristics of leadership, constructive leaders are concerned with the welfare of their employees (e.g., Bass, 1985).

Destructive leadership, on the other hand, describes repeatedly harmful and/or deviant behaviors targeted towards followers, which may be either physical or verbal, active or passive, direct or indirect (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). These behaviors tend to take a toll on employee psychological well-being and motivation by depleting the stores of personal resources that allow individuals to cope with adversity and have negative associations with employee physical health (e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Einarsen et al., 2007; Hobfoll, 1989). The introduction of Tepper's (2000) abusive supervision measure over 20 years ago was an important development in the destructive leadership literature, but this work is still relatively new in comparison to over a century of research on constructive aspects of leadership.

Line Managers as Leaders: Direct Supervisors Matter

Leadership behavior at all levels of the organization is important, but the actions of immediate (i.e., direct) supervisors and/or managers are probably most salient to the well-being of those reporting to them (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989; Nielsen, 2013). This is likely due to the fact that an immediate supervisor is one of the most influential people in an employee's work environment (e.g., Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989).

Within this area of research, the term *line manager* is used in several different ways. Without a specific description of the *level* of leadership under study, this ambiguous pattern of usage can lead to confusion. For example, in a qualitative study of employees with depression, Sallis and Birkin (2014) described any direct supervisor below the senior management level as a line manager, effectively eliminating the middle manager category (e.g., Yammarino et al., 2005). Another study suggests a line manager can be anyone's immediate supervisor (Lundmark et al., 2017). In other cases, line manager is equated with team leader (e.g., Nielsen, 2013) or middle manager (e.g., Nielsen & Randall, 2009). Finally, in an examination of the mental health of Executive Directors in the nonprofit sector, the 'line manager' or the individual(s) to whom the Executive Director reports directly, was a representative of the Board of Directors (Olinske & Hellman, 2017).

Despite this lack of clarity, in much of the research in the area of leadership and employee well-being, researchers ask participants to rate their direct supervisors' leadership style or report frequencies of their supervisors' behaviors. This approach recognizes that actions taken by direct supervisors (as perceived and rated by employees) have implications for employee well-being. Throughout this chapter, the term line manager is used synonymously with direct or immediate manager/supervisor and leader, and where available, details are provided on the level of organizational hierarchy in each study. We revisit this issue later in the chapter.

Employee Well-Being

Well-being is a multidimensional phenomenon with a range of positive and negative states that relate to employees both at work and outside of work (e.g., Danna & Griffin, 1999; Ganster & Rosen,

2013; Mäkikangas et al. 2016; Montano et al., 2017). It is measured using a broad range of self- and other report scales and physiological measures. Warr (1999) described context-specific well-being as a limited view of people's feelings in relation to their job through focused measurements. Examples of context-specific constructs in well-being research include burnout, job satisfaction and engagement, employee performance, and others.

Context-free well-being is a broader concept that takes into consideration the 'whole person' by measuring life experiences that are not specific to one domain, such as work (Danna & Griffin, 1999). For example, the context-free equivalent of job satisfaction would be life satisfaction (Warr, 1999). Positive indicators of context-free well-being could include high ratings on indicators of psychological functioning or physical health, while negative context-free well-being is often conceptualized as stress, strain, negative affect, and a range of physical and psychological conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance abuse). Generally, there is a positive and reciprocal relationship between context-specific and context-free well-being, with some variation between individuals and contexts. This is grounded in the reality that experiences at work affect the overall person even when they are not at work, referred to as a 'spillover effect'. Indeed, recent studies show that high general, context-free well-being is associated with job-specific well-being (Liang et al., 2018; Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2020).

In this chapter, we focus on summarizing empirical research predicting *context-free* psychological and physical well-being. This approach emphasizes the importance of line managers in their employees' overall wellness – a phenomenon that is not limited to inside the (virtual) walls of organizations. Given these criteria, important context-specific outcomes such as burnout, job engagement, and other domain-specific variables are not reflected in this review.

Linking Line Managers' Behaviors with Employee Well-Being

Literature Search

Through examination of the literature in this area, we developed two frameworks that summarize the published research on leadership styles, behaviors, and characteristics as predictors of psychological and physical well-being. These frameworks are based on a comprehensive

literature search of peer-reviewed articles in 90 databases published in English between January 2010 and May 2020. An initial search retrieved a total of 615 titles. Our inclusion criteria required papers to be empirical studies in which leadership was a predictor and context-free well-being was an outcome. After eliminating duplicates and studies that were unrelated to the topic of interest, such as papers focused on the well-being of leaders themselves (see Chapter 4 of this book), or examinations of a leadership style without employee well-being outcomes, we retained 322 articles.

Consistent with literature emphasizing the need for employee well-being to extend beyond job-focused measures (Inceoglu et al., 2017; Mäkikangas et al., 2016; Montano et al., 2017), we excluded articles focused on outcome variables that were not aligned with our definition of well-being (job satisfaction, turnover intentions, employee performance, etc.). To supplement our initial search, we also performed searches of reference lists of systematic reviews and meta-analyses on related topics. Based on these further criteria, 76 papers were identified for inclusion in the present review.

Description of Studies Included for Review

Most of these studies employed quantitative methods ($N = 71$), followed by mixed methods ($N = 3$), with qualitative studies being the minority ($N = 2$). Of the 76 papers included in our review, nearly one-third ($N = 25$) drew samples of individuals from diverse or varied industries, while others did not indicate the context from which the sample was drawn ($N = 5$). Where industry was specified, healthcare ($N = 13$), manufacturing / technology industries ($N = 5$), and education ($N = 4$) were the most frequently studied industries. The majority of studies took place in western settings (North America [$N = 27$]; European Union [$N = 26$]), with another 21 in an Asian context.

In terms of analytic approach, 36 of 76 papers examined mediators using either simple mediation ($N = 23$) or moderated mediation ($N = 13$). Of these articles, 23 looked at one mediator, while the rest analyzed two or more. To understand the mediational processes through which leadership behavior affects context-free well-being, we used the five mediator groupings proposed in a recent qualitative review of leadership and well-being research by Inceoglu et al. (2017). These categories included: (1) social-cognitive, which is

grounded in social learning theory or social information processing and includes variables such as self-efficacy, confidence, perceptions of one's own abilities, and psychological empowerment; (2) motivational, which is rooted in self-determination theory and includes variables associated with job design, such as job autonomy and task variety; (3) affective, which is based on affective events theory and consists of emotional variables such as thriving, engagement, and vigor; (4) relational, which relies on social exchange theory and includes concepts such as justice, trust, and employee perceptions of leader-member exchange; and (5) identification, which is rooted in social identity theory and includes concepts relating to how employees identify with their leader, work group, or organization (e.g., job involvement and group identification). The theoretical rationale for when or why variables were found to occupy the positions of predictor, mediator, or moderator was often lacking or unclear, which at times made it challenging to assign mediators to the appropriate categories. Where a case could be made for assigning one variable to multiple categories (e.g., emotional intelligence), the three authors discussed alternative categorizations and eventually reached consensus. Challenges associated with categorizing mediating variables are discussed in a later section.

Of the 36 papers examining mediators, 15 studied relational mediators, 13 focused on social-cognitive variables, 13 on affective constructs, 6 analyzed motivational variables and 1 article explored a mediator that fell under the identification category. Moderators are discussed according to level, where micro includes individual factors pertaining to either the employee or the line manager, meso includes group/team factors, and macro encompasses factors at the organizational, industry, or national level (Miner, 2002). Twenty-nine of the 76 articles examined moderators. Of these, 21 focused on one moderator while the rest included two or more; 15 focused on micro, 12 looked at meso, and 4 analyzed macrolevel variables (sum of mediator and moderator categories greater than totals of 36 and 29 due to multiple mediators and moderators in some studies).

Constructive Leadership Studies

The most frequently studied constructive leadership styles were transformational and leader-member exchange. Constructive leadership behaviors, in general, have been associated with a number of

social-cognitive, motivational, affective, relational, and identification mediators. Relational mediators were studied most frequently. In this category, leadership behaviors that were positively associated with work–family enrichment and negatively related to employee perceptions of work–life/family conflict, related positively to employee well-being (Hill et al., 2016; Munir et al., 2012; Zhang & Tu, 2018). Other relational mediators include team cooperation (Diebig et al., 2017), relational social capital (Read & Laschinger, 2015), trust (Alilyyani et al., 2018), positive relationships with colleagues (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015), less bullying and incivility (Alilyyani et al., 2018), justice perceptions (Kiersch & Byrne, 2015; Tripathi & Ghosh, 2018), and attachment insecurity (Rahimnia & Sharifirad, 2015). It is important to note here that studies focused on mediation (regarding both constructive and destructive leadership) did not always utilize methodology appropriate to testing mediation (i.e., data collected over time to meet the temporal occurrence criteria). Hence, the relationships outlined in the following paragraphs and Figures 5.1 and 5.2 should not necessarily be interpreted as causal.

The second most frequently studied category of mediators was social-cognitive. This included different forms of personal resources such as: psychological capital (Alilyyani et al., 2018), empowerment

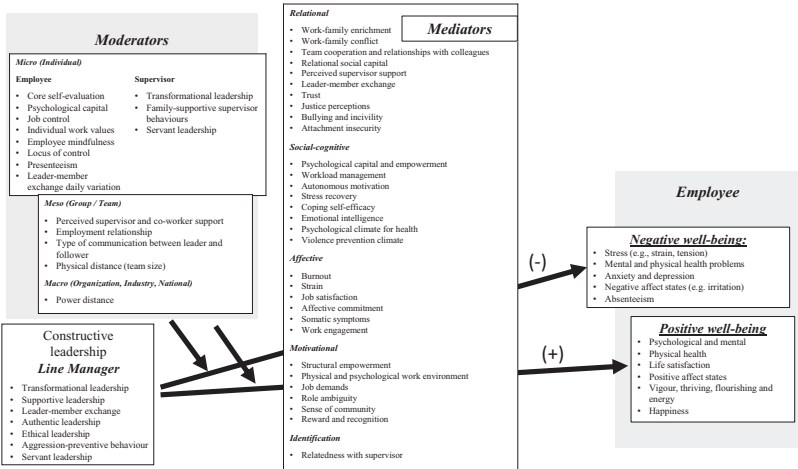


Figure 5.1 Summary of research linking constructive leadership and employee well-being

(Audenaert et al., 2017), autonomous motivation (Pauli et al., 2018), emotional intelligence (Rajesh et al., 2019), coping self-efficacy (Laschinger et al., 2015), stress recovery (Dunkl et al., 2015), psychological climate for health (Gurt et al., 2011) and violence-prevention climate (Yang & Caughlin, 2017). Thus, constructive leadership behaviors have a positive association with employees' personal resources and their psychological well-being.

In terms of affective mediators, both positive and negative states appear to play a role in explaining the relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being. Context-specific well-being factors such as work engagement (Adil & Kamal, 2016), job satisfaction (Gurt et al., 2011), as well as negative affective factors, such as burnout (Kara et al., 2013) and context-free well-being factors such as stress (Dunkl et al., 2015), have been proposed to explain this relationship. The most frequently studied affective mediators were burnout and satisfaction, followed by stress and affective commitment. Constructive leadership appears to facilitate employee well-being by decreasing levels of stress (Wang et al., 2019), burnout (Alilyyani et al., 2018; Laschinger et al., 2015), and somatic symptoms (Biron, 2013), which was positively related to levels of satisfaction (Rajesh et al., 2019; Yang, 2014), mental health (Laschinger et al., 2015), and well-being (Adil & Kamal, 2016).

In the motivational category, the literature focused on the mediating role of variables that were either inherent to one's role at work or related to factors that might be considered social but associated with the motivational aspect of job design. Thus, the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being has been found to be mediated by factors including structural empowerment (Alilyyani et al., 2018; Read & Laschinger, 2015), physical work environment (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015), psychological work environment (e.g., social support, meaningful work: Nielsen & Daniels, 2012; relationships with colleagues: Karanika-Murray et al., 2015), job demands (Ogbonnaya & Messersmith, 2019), role ambiguity (Gurt et al., 2011), sense of community (McKee et al., 2011), and reward and recognition systems (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015).

Finally, one article addressed an identification mediator by studying how relatedness with one's supervisor mediates the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and employees' well-being (Ellis et al., 2019). When employees perceived a higher quality

relationship with their supervisor, they reported a sense of belongingness and felt more vigorous.

In addition to these mediators, there were also a number of micro, meso, and macro factors that have been found to moderate the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being. Micro moderators were most commonly studied under the individual category of employee or supervisor. Some of these variables were related to employees' psychological states, for example, psychological capital (Adil & Kamal, 2016; Agarwal, 2019), core self-evaluation (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Wang et al., 2019), employee mindfulness (Walsh & Arnold, 2020), locus of control (Huyghebaert et al., 2017), and job control (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015).

Generally speaking, higher ratings on followers' positive psychological states, such as employee mindfulness (Walsh & Arnold, 2020), core self-evaluations (Booth et al., 2020), internal locus of control (Huyghebaert et al., 2017), and job control (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015), have been found to enhance the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being. On the other hand, follower ratings on external locus of control (Huyghebaert et al., 2017) and presenteeism (Nielsen & Daniels, 2016) tend to weaken this relationship. With regard to supervisor micro moderators, heightened employee perceptions of servant leadership (Wang et al., 2019) and supervisors who displayed family-supportive behaviors (e.g., Zhang & Tu, 2018) strengthened the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being. Similarly, employees who perceived low day-to-day variation in the quality of their relationship with their supervisor reported higher vigor (Ellis et al., 2019).

With regard to meso-level moderators, most studies focused on social support provided by either colleagues or supervisors and how this can bolster the well-being of employees who perceive their leader as constructive (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Biron, 2013; Hammer et al., 2019; Mohr & Wolfram, 2010; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Other factors in this category included leader-member exchange, employment relationship, communication, and team size. Likewise, mutual investment employment relationships (Audenaert et al., 2017), indirect communication between leaders and followers (Diebig et al., 2017), and a small team size (Vignoli et al., 2018) increased the positive association between constructive leadership and employee well-being. Finally, Zwingmann et al. (2014) studied power distance as a

macrolevel moderator and found that the positive association between constructive leadership and employee well-being was even stronger in high-power distance cultures.

Destructive Leadership Studies

Our review showed that abusive supervision was the most frequently studied destructive leadership style. The study of variables that mediate the negative relationship between destructive leadership and employees' well-being has received less attention than mediators associated with constructive leadership. Within destructive leadership, social-cognitive mediators appeared most frequently and included a range of measures of employees' personal resources. Thus, as shown in Figure 5.2, destructive leadership behaviors have been reported to decrease employees' well-being through employee personal resources such as coping strategies (Yagil et al., 2011), psychological capital (Agarwal, 2019; Li et al., 2016), and perceptions of safety climate (Mullen, 2018). Moreover, the literature also explored other social-cognitive mediators that explained the negative relationship between destructive leadership and positive well-being whereby destructive supervisor behaviors were mediated by factors such as employee perceptions of psychological distress (Rafferty et al., 2010) and surface acting (Adams & Buck, 2010). These mediators were then positively

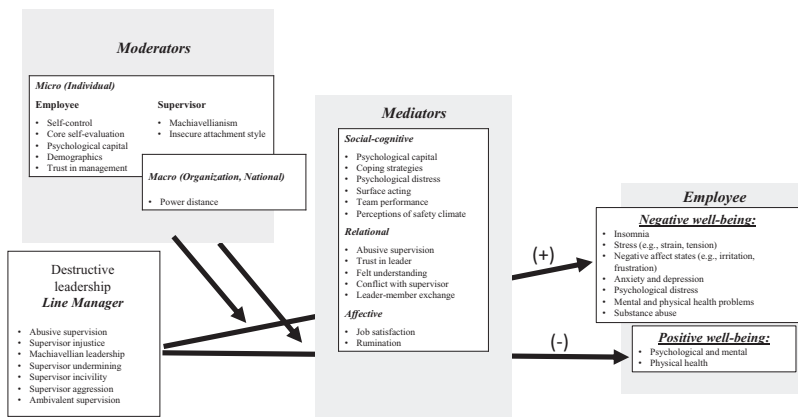


Figure 5.2 Summary of research linking destructive leadership and employee well-being

associated with increases in insomnia and strain and negatively associated with psychological health.

Under the umbrella of relational mediators, the literature suggests that destructive leadership has negative implications for employee well-being through a decrease in the quality of their relationships at work. Destructive behavior from leaders is associated with reduced levels of employee trust in their leader (Belschak et al., 2018), as well as lower perceptions of felt understanding from the supervisor (Booth et al., 2020) and leader–member exchange (Agarwal, 2019). Similarly, destructive forms of leadership were positively associated with conflict with one’s supervisor (Liu et al., 2013) and abusive supervision (Li et al., 2016), which can be detrimental to well-being. The motivational and affective categories were the least frequently studied mediating processes of destructive leadership. This category includes job satisfaction (Peltokorpi & Ramaswami, 2019) and rumination (Liang et al., 2018), such that destructive leadership relates to lower job satisfaction and greater rumination, each of which would have unfavorable outcomes for employee well-being. Finally, no mediators in the identification category were reported in the review of destructive leadership.

In terms of moderators, Figure 5.2 shows that the destructive leadership literature has explored mostly microlevel factors along with a handful of meso and macro moderators. There was some overlap with moderators that were studied in the context of constructive leadership (i.e., employee mindfulness, core self-evaluation, and psychological capital), and other moderating factors were specific to destructive literature, such as gender and trait self-control (Abubakar, 2018; Jimmieson et al., 2017). When employees perceived that their job was enriched along different aspects such as high trust in management (Booth et al., 2020) and supportive coworkers (Blomberg & Rosander, 2019), the negative relationship between destructive leadership and employees’ well-being was buffered. It appears that gender affects this relationship such that women experience greater detrimental effects on their well-being when they are exposed to destructive leaders than men (Abubakar, 2018). Furthermore, when employees perceive their supervisor as unsupportive (Blomberg & Rosander, 2019), or when leaders rate highly on Machiavellian personality type (Belschak et al., 2018), the already detrimental relationship between destructive leadership and employee well-being is worsened. Counterintuitively, employee

mindfulness seems to amplify the already damaging relationship between abusive supervision and vigor (Walsh & Arnold, 2020).

At the meso-level, outcomes of abusive supervision were more destructive when team performance was lower in comparison to higher-performing teams (Li et al., 2016). Investigations of the macro moderator, power distance, illustrated the negative relationship between destructive leadership and employee well-being was stronger when power distance orientation was low (Liu et al., 2013; Peltokorpi & Ramaswami, 2019; Zhang & Liao, 2015).

Summary and Future Directions

Towards a Model Linking Leadership and Employee Well-Being

Upon examination of the two frameworks (Figures 5.1 and 5.2) that were developed based on recent research, it is evident that certain constructs occupy multiple positions. For example, some variables have been positioned as *both* predictors and moderators (servant leadership and Machiavellian leadership); predictors and mediators (abusive supervision); mediators and moderators (psychological capital, perceived supervisor, and coworker support); mediators and outcomes (stress); or predictors, mediators, and moderators (leader-member exchange). This illustrates the complexity of this area of research and a clear need for a unifying theoretical model. Such a model would ideally provide a basis for examining and clarifying the roles that the different constructs measured in the reviewed literature could play in these relationships.

Another observation that resulted from examining constructive and destructive leadership categories as separate predictors of employee well-being was the overlap between these two frameworks. We found five common mediating variables (i.e., trust, LMX, psychological capital, job satisfaction, and coping) and four common moderating variables (i.e., employee mindfulness, core self-evaluation, psychological capital, and power distance), which suggests that these variables operate similarly in positive and negative leadership contexts. However, there were also some interesting differences noted between these two research streams. For example, the mediators most commonly studied in constructive leadership research were relational versus social-cognitive in destructive leadership research. Below we elaborate

on these observations, discuss limitations, and highlight additional areas for future research.

Predictors: Construct Validity

Our review illustrates that transformational leadership and leader–member exchange continue to dominate this area of research, which is consistent with previous leadership reviews (e.g., Barling et al., 2011; Dinh et al., 2014; Meuser et al., 2016). Both transformational leadership and leader–member exchange have been criticized for a lack of a clear conceptual definitions and problematic measurement scales (e.g., Gottfredson et al., 2020; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). To some degree this issue is reflected in the current review, where leader–member exchange was investigated as a predictor, moderator, and a mediator. This suggests a lack of parsimony and potential for construct redundancy, which may limit the potential of research to advance theory in this area (Banks et al., 2018).

Comparable theoretical and conceptual concerns were also present in the destructive leadership literature where abusive supervision remains a central construct that overlaps with related constructs, such as bullying (e.g., Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper et al., 2017). To introduce greater parsimony in both constructive and destructive leadership research, scholars are encouraged to perform thorough literature reviews before launching investigations, to conduct factor analyses to demonstrate that constructs are empirically distinct, and to focus on identifying conceptually distinct moderating factors to explain contextual differences before introducing new predictor variables (e.g., Meuser et al., 2016).

Setting these concerns aside, the research continues to support the broad premise that constructive leadership is associated with positive employee well-being, and destructive leadership is associated with reduced employee well-being. Arguably, the most interesting aspect of this research is not the direct relationships between predictor and outcome. It is the who, how, and when of these relationships that offer a more compelling focus for future research.

Mediators: How Is Leadership Linked to Employee Well-Being?

A theoretically driven categorization system was used to organize mediators, which allowed us to compare our findings with a recent review in terms of how frequently each mediator was examined

(Inceoglu et al., 2017). Mediators included in the relational category present a particular limitation. By definition, exchange-based constructs should require data from both parties in a dyad. Yet, the relational category includes mediating variables measured from one party's perspective (Inceoglu et al., 2017). While reflective of the current practice for researchers in this area to rely only on the follower perspective, this practice has been described as 'theoretically deficient' (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012, p. 741). It represents a departure from (intended) theoretical roots of exchange constructs (Gottfredson et al., 2020; Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012) and introduces high potential for bias, redundancy, and error. We return to this issue in a subsequent section.

Grouping similar mediators allowed us to infer that social-cognitive mediators were frequently examined in the destructive leadership literature, potentially due to the substantial personal resources required to respond to and/or protect oneself from destructive leadership. Similarly, the strong focus on relational mediators in the constructive literature may be reflective of the relationship focus that is a consistent theme throughout constructive leadership paradigms. As empirical investigation of mediators progresses, it would be desirable to reach a stage where results pertaining to one variable have been studied enough to allow for meta-analysis. Currently, the infrequency with which many of these intervening variables are studied makes it difficult to draw broad conclusions on how leadership is related to employee well-being. For now, this area of research will continue to benefit from integrative, systematic, and comprehensive study (both qualitative and quantitative) of mediating and moderating factors. Studies that test multiple categories of mediators in the same study that help us begin to understand whether certain categories are more important than others would be beneficial.

The least frequently studied mediating pathways fell into the affective and identification categories. Both categories would benefit from future studies that examine mediators within these currently understudied areas, such as leader–follower affect (e.g., mood and emotions) and personal identification with the leader, group, and organization. There is a theoretical rationale to support the notion that employees would be affected by constructs related to affect and identity in both constructive and destructive streams. For example, transformational leadership emphasizes the value of energizing and inspiring followers

to pursue a future state (i.e., vision) and the possibility of emotional contagion between leaders and followers (e.g., Huang et al., 2016). Similarly, in destructive literature, identity threat is a known predictor of abusive supervision and supervisor's displaced aggression (Tepper et al., 2017).

Moderators: The 'Who' and 'When' of Well-Being

Almost half of the published papers in our review examined moderating factors, which are critical to addressing questions of context. Of these studies, most were focused on microlevel characteristics of either leaders or followers, followed by meso-level factors. Compared to the micro and meso categories, macrolevel moderators were the least frequently examined. High-power distance was found to enhance well-being of employees with constructive leaders and protect well-being of employees with destructive leaders (Liu et al., 2013; Peltokorpi & Ramaswami, 2019; Zhang & Liao, 2015; Zwingmann et al., 2014). Gender and culture are known to play an important moderating role at the individual level of abusive supervisory behavior, and it would be worthwhile to investigate these as moderators of well-being outcomes at the meso and macro levels in future studies of this destructive behavior (e.g., Mackey et al., 2015; Vogel et al., 2015).

Outcomes: What Types of Well-Being Are Studied?

Sixty of the reviewed papers focused on negative well-being, while 32 investigated positive well-being (total is greater than 76 due to 13 papers that examined positive and negative indicators of well-being). Regardless of whether the focus was on constructive or destructive leadership, negative well-being outcomes were more frequently studied than positive well-being outcomes, and psychological well-being was studied more frequently than physical well-being.

Given the relatively novel conceptualization of well-being as having both positive and negative indicators (e.g., Danna & Griffin, 1999; Inceoglu et al., 2017; Mäkikangas et al. 2016; Montano et al., 2017), this area of research could become more balanced by including more focus on positive indicators of eudaimonic well-being and health-related occupational outcomes, such as thriving and vigor. Recent studies also suggest that other constructs from positive psychology, such as employee mindfulness, do not necessarily protect employees' psychological well-being from abusive supervision (Walsh & Arnold,

2020). At present, understanding the positive effects of leadership on employee well-being is limited by an abundance of research on negative well-being outcomes. It was encouraging to see use of both subjective and objective measures, indicative of a shift away from reliance on subjective self-report measures and increased focus on physical well-being (e.g., blood pressure, psychosomatic complaints; Busch et al., 2017).

Theory

From a theoretical perspective, most articles derived hypotheses from an integrated perspective consisting of both focal and supporting theories. Focal theories are the central phenomenon of interest, while supporting theories provide alternative and/or additional insights such as conceptualizing antecedents, outcomes, or moderators/mediators (Meuser et al., 2016). Approaching this area of research using both focal and supporting theories is useful for advancing this work given recent efforts to distinguish employee well-being from job-specific constructs, such as job satisfaction, and to treat well-being as a multi-dimensional construct with both positive and negative states.

As is common in employee well-being research, resource-based frameworks such as Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources and the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) were the most commonly used focal theories to predict outcomes of both constructive and destructive leadership behaviors. There was noticeable variety in the supporting theories used to justify predictions about outcomes of leadership styles, behaviors, and characteristics with some secondary theories appearing only once (e.g., functional leadership theory, Fiset & Boies, 2018; uncertainty management theory, Herr et al., 2019). In the name of parsimony and theoretical integration, more consideration should be given to the selection of appropriate theoretical frameworks to justify inclusion of mediators, moderators, and outcomes. Furthermore, research design and methodological approach should be informed by theory.

Methodological Directions

Research Design: Increasing Methodological Diversity

When selecting a study design and method of analysis, researchers should be guided by the research question(s) (e.g., Howard &

Hoffman, 2018). Complex issues in modern-day organizations are yielding new and different research questions that may require researchers to consider the full range of research designs and methodological approaches to address relevant questions in leadership and employee well-being research.

It was encouraging to see diverse methodological approaches such as experience sampling methodology (ESM), intervention studies, and experimental vignettes with increased frequency compared to a similar review completed a decade ago (Skakon et al. 2010). For example, consistent with calls for leadership research to recognize the dynamic (changing) nature of leader–follower relationships (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013), ESM approaches have illustrated that follower perceptions of the quality of their relationship with their leader (Ellis et al., 2019) and of transformational leadership can change throughout a workday (Diebig et al., 2017).

Similarly, intervention studies that embrace a participatory design show great potential to improve employee well-being (Nielsen, 2013) and provide causal evidence related to these relationships. As a highly salient local influence, line managers are in a position to encourage adoption of interventions targeted at employee health and well-being; ensuring buy-in of line managers can make or break the success of an intervention. For example, Busch et al. (2017) determined that line managers were less effective than senior managers at encouraging employees to participate in well-being intervention because the line managers felt too stressed about their own work situation and well-being to dedicate time to improving the health and well-being of their direct reports (see Chapter 4 of this book). This relates to the importance of specifying the level of leadership in this research area. There is also opportunity for qualitative methods to advance research questions of an exploratory nature (e.g., Sallis & Birkin, 2014) and progress towards theoretical integration (e.g., Meuser et al., 2016). Finally, increased usage of mixed methods approaches will be positioned to offer the empirical rigor required to match the complexity of organizational phenomenon (Molina-Azorin et al., 2017).

Despite these notable changes over the past decade, and consistent with previous reviews of leadership and employee well-being, quantitative survey methodology was still the most common methodology, and most papers in our review were based on cross-sectional data ($N = 62$) collected from followers about their perceptions of leadership (i.e.,

single source). Of particular concern is that many of the published papers examining mediators relied upon cross-sectional design, potentially generating biased estimates of longitudinal parameters (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). Shifting to longitudinal research designs will offer enhanced ability to understand mediating processes, as well as the role of time and the nature of variables that change over time (Bono & McNamara, 2011). This is especially important for leadership research due to the dynamic nature of leadership (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013) and paramount for theoretical precision and practical relevance (Fischer et al., 2017).

Rigor in Data Collection and Analysis

Further related to enhanced data quality offered by longitudinal designs, we echo the importance of recent movements towards collecting dyadic (e.g., Breevaart et al., 2016) and multisource data (e.g., Magalhães et al., 2019). Collecting data from only one party introduces simultaneity bias and amplifies existing concerns about endogeneity and confounded estimates in leadership research where outcomes are jointly influenced by the leader and follower (for a full discussion see Günter et al., 2020). Recommendations to address simultaneity bias and endogeneity include increased use of experimental designs and rigorous analytical techniques such as two-stage least squares regression analysis (Günter et al., 2020).

Multisource data offers an advantage over same source data because it provides a more balanced view in which multiple perspectives of the same reality are reflected in the data. Despite these advantages, this type of data can be more challenging to collect. Hence, our recommendation is tempered with this reality in mind. It may be more realistic in the study of destructive leadership where the source or event in which the untoward behavior occurs may be observed and reported by not only the perpetrator or the target, but also leaders, coworkers, or clients/customers (e.g., Beattie & Griffin, 2014). Thus, scholars could measure abusive supervision using supervisor self-reports, other reports, objective measures of well-being, and/or experimental designs in addition to follower self-reports (Tepper et al., 2017).

Organizational Context: Where to Situate Our Studies?

In our review, the majority of studies did not explicitly delineate the level of leadership being addressed. Similarly, from the perspective of

survey participants, it is uncertain whether they are responding to survey questions about ‘your supervisor’ or ‘your leader’ with reference to their direct supervisor, or a more remote supervisor without further specifications of the supervisor’s role or proximity (Yagil et al., 2011). Hence, future work should aim to provide clear descriptions of the level of leadership under investigation and use analytical techniques that take into account the nested nature of the data at multiple levels. Leaders at many organizational levels may have a combined effect on employee well-being, and it will take a deliberate approach to parse out and understand the role and magnitude of various levels due to the interconnected nature of these relationships.

In addition to this issue of level, much of the published work we reviewed was nonspecific about the industry and cultural composition of the sample. Given the significant moderators discussed in the frameworks (Figures 5.1 and 5.2), this is an important consideration going forward and we would encourage researchers to report details on the context from which the sample is drawn, such as organizational characteristics, industry description, and timing of data collection(s), as well as relevant demographic, cultural and geographic information.

Promising Future Research Directions

In addition to our suggestions regarding future work provided above, we have identified three areas of fruitful focus for future work in this area.

Cooccurrence of Leadership Behaviors

Leaders are not all good or all bad, yet research on leadership styles and behaviors as they relate to well-being are typically framed as either constructive or destructive (as they are in this review) (Einarsen et al., 2007). The concept of individual leaders engaging in multiple styles of behavior simultaneously (i.e., code switching: Anicich & Hirsh, 2017) is not new; for example, Bass (1985) theorized an augmentation effect where transactional leadership behaviors would be augmented by enactment of transformational leadership. Line managers, in particular, may tweak their style multiple times in a day – sometimes in the course of a single situation (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017; Peterson et al., 2020). Nonetheless, studies that examine employee well-being outcomes based on exposure to multiple kinds of leader behavior from one leader, *both constructive and destructive*, are rare (e.g., Fiset et al., 2019).

Person-centered methodologies, such as latent profile analysis, are useful for examining this type of cooccurrence (e.g., Arnold et al., 2017). Studies might adopt this methodological approach as it allows researchers to test competing combinations of leadership approaches as they relate to employee well-being (Mäkikangas et al. 2016; Meuser et al., 2016). Furthermore, this approach may answer calls for leadership theory integration by examining whether certain combinations of leadership styles/behaviors are more effective in achieving positive employee well-being outcomes than others.

Virtual Leadership

In the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, many workplaces have shifted to virtual or remote models of work (Wong, 2020). Investigations of this shift and what it means for employee well-being would provide important information for both leaders and organizations. The research we reviewed has not yet initiated specific examinations of virtual leadership; however, some work on virtual communication can provide useful direction in this area. Diebig et al.'s (2017) study on types of communication that moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and stress found that employees perceived less stress when leaders used indirect forms of communication (i.e., email and messenger) compared to direct communication (i.e., face-to-face interactions or telephone). Future research that draws from construal level theory to enhance our understanding of near or far leaders operating virtually (Bligh & Riggio, 2013), and how this relates to employee well-being, could be beneficial.

Gender and Well-Being

Gender inequalities in the workplace have been exacerbated by disproportionate effects on women during the pandemic (McKinsey & Company, 2020). This recent realization may have shed light on the need to understand gender and gender identity as an important consideration in employee well-being research. Few studies in our review offered a gender-based examination of the link between leadership and employee well-being ($N = 4$), with only some controlling for gender in the analysis ($N = 10$). Future investigations would offer value through a greater focus on examining and reporting gendered effects and incorporating gender into research questions and designs. Future research could also examine how these trends affect gender-diverse

individuals in the workplace with respect to leadership and employee well-being, reflecting current knowledge that gender is nonbinary (e.g., Hyde et al., 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the role of constructive and destructive leadership as predictors of employee context-free physical and psychological well-being and the theories, mediators, and moderators involved in these relationships. Key methodological issues were discussed and several areas have been suggested for future research. We look forward to an increase in robust research that is grounded in theory to further explain why, how, and when direct supervisors are important with regard to employee well-being, and the application of these findings to create healthier workplaces.

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