



Tell me who you are, I'll tell you how you lead: Beyond the Full-Range Leadership Model, the role of corporate psychopathy on employee attitudes



Cynthia Mathieu^{a,*}, Paul Babiak^b

^a Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Canada

^b Anubis-Research, Hopewell Junction, NY, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 13 July 2015

Accepted 15 July 2015

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Corporate psychopathy

B-Scan 360

Employee attitudes

Job satisfaction

Turnover intentions

Work motivation

Job neglect

ABSTRACT

The role of corporate psychopathic traits in supervisors on employee attitudes has yet to be studied. The goal of the present study is to test the impact of corporate psychopathy in leaders on their employee's attitudes and its impact above and beyond the influence of leadership styles associated with the Full-Range Leadership Model (Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership). A total of 74 supervisors and 423 subordinates participated in this study. Employees completed self-report measures of job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work motivation and job neglect. They also rated their immediate supervisor on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the B-Scan 360 (a corporate psychopathy measure). Hierarchical linear regressions indicated that the B-Scan 360 total score was the best predictor of employee's job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work motivation and job neglect (beyond the influence of the Full Range leadership Model). These results indicate that, for our sample, the B-Scan 360 is a stronger predictor of employee attitudes than the three leadership styles comprising the Full-Range Leadership Model. These results represent a stepping stone for future research trying to unravel the factors associated with dark leadership and its impact on employee attitudes.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Employee attitudes are important predictors of an organization's performance (Ricketta, 2002) and effectiveness (Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001). Early research has reported that unsatisfied employees show lower job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001) and leave their jobs more often than satisfied employees (Hellman, 1997). Reichheld, Markey and Hopton (2000) explain how employee retention, through job satisfaction, reinforces customer retention, and conclude that, in most industries they have studied, retention (both employee and customer) explains profits better than market share or any of the variables traditionally associated with competitive advantage. Clearly, voluntary employee turnover can be harmful to organizational performance (Glebbeek & Bax, 2004) and the cost of replacing an employee can range from a few thousand dollars to double the employee's salary (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000).

Saari and Judge (2004) report that "The major practitioner knowledge gaps in HR area are (1) the causes of employee attitudes, (2) the results of positive or negative job satisfaction, and (3) how to measure and influence employee attitudes." Recent research suggests that

employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are related to perceived supervisor leadership style (Bligh et al., 2007; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006), supporting Saari and Judge's contention that understanding the relationship between leadership style and employee attitudes, as well as the ability to influence this relationship, is critical to human resource management.

This study proposes to measure the simultaneous influence of supervisors' Full-Range Leadership Model styles (Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership) as well as the potentially incremental influence of psychopathic traits in leaders on employees' job satisfaction, turnover intentions, motivation and job neglect.

1.1. Positive leadership and employee attitudes

The impact of leadership on organizational and employee performance is often studied; however, studies measuring the influence of leadership style on employee attitudes are relatively scarce. Nevertheless, there is evidence that *employee-oriented* leadership has a more direct effect on employee job satisfaction than does *task-oriented* leadership (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006), and that *supportive* supervision lowers work-family conflict (Frye & Breugh, 2004). Bono, Folds, Vinson, and Muros (2007) reported that employees with supervisors high on Transformational leadership (a leadership style defined

* Corresponding author at: Business Department, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, P.O. Box 500, Trois-Rivières, Québec, G9A 5H7, Canada.
E-mail address: cynthia.mathieu@uqtr.ca (C. Mathieu).

by individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence; Avolio & Bass, 2004) experienced more positive emotions throughout the workday and were less likely to experience decreased job satisfaction, than were those with supervisors low on Transformational leadership (Bono et al., 2007). In fact, Transformational leadership has been associated with reduced stress in employees (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000) and with improved psychological well-being (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway & Mckee, 2007). A study by Kidwell and Bennett (2001) showed that employees who perceived their supervisors as exhibiting expertise as well as consideration were less likely to neglect their work. It thus seems that positive leadership styles have a positive influence on employee attitudes. Lately however, researchers have developed an interest in the debilitating effects of negative leadership styles or “Dark Leadership.”

1.2. Negative leadership and employee attitudes

Abusive supervision (hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors, indifference and rudeness) is related to lowered levels of job satisfaction, less normative and affective commitment, and increased psychological distress (Tepper, 2000). Bligh et al. (2007) also reported that perceptions of aversive leadership were positively related to employees' resistance to change and negatively related to employees' job satisfaction. As concluded by Martin and Schinke (1998), it is not surprising that employees experience psychological distress when their leaders engage in sustained verbal and non-verbal hostility or deliver harsh criticism.

However, poor leadership is not only related to abusive leadership behaviors, it could also be associated with *avoidance* of the leader to intervene, referred to as Laissez-Faire leadership style (defined as the “absence of leadership;” Bass & Avolio, 1994) when, in fact, active leadership is needed. Only a few empirical studies have looked into the impact of Laissez-Faire leadership on employee attitudes. So far, studies have found it associated with lower job satisfaction (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and lower satisfaction with one's immediate supervisor (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Yammarino, Spangler & Bass, 1993). A study by Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland and Hetland (2007) has shown that Laissez-Faire leadership also influences employees' psychological distress through the increase in conflict with coworkers, bullying, role conflict, and role ambiguity. It thus seems that absent leaders who, as described by Avolio and Bass (2004), delay making decisions and do not give feedback or reward employee performance, have a similar impact on their employees as dark or abusive leaders do. Frequently in the literature, Laissez-Faire leadership is studied separately from abusive leader behavior. We hypothesize that abusive or dark leaders would score high on Laissez-Faire leadership based on recent findings of a positive relationship between Laissez-Faire leadership and corporate psychopathy (Mathieu, Neumann, Babiak & Hare, 2014b; Westerlaken & Woods, 2013).

1.3. Corporate psychopathy and leadership

Psychopathy is a clinical construct defined by a cluster of personality traits and dispositions, including grandiosity, egocentricity, deceptiveness, shallow emotions, lack of empathy or remorse, irresponsibility, impulsivity, and a tendency to ignore or violate social norms (Hare & Neumann, 2008). Ten Brinke, Black, Porter and Carney (2015) found, in a sample of business students, that individuals presenting psychopathic traits were selfish and unfair when negotiating distributive issues, leaving their partner with less than they took for themselves. Black, Woodworth and Porter (2014) also found that psychopathic individuals have a negative view of others. Their lack of fairness and a negative view and evaluation of others are likely to be associated with negative leadership style as well. In fact, Babiak et al. (2010) found that psychopathy scores were *positively* associated with in-house ratings of Charisma/Presentation Style (creativity, good strategic thinking

and communication skills) but *negatively* associated with ratings of Responsibility/Performance (being a team player, management skills, and overall accomplishments). Mathieu et al. (2014b) found perceived psychopathic traits in leadership to be positively correlated with employee ratings of the supervisor on Laissez-Faire leadership style and negatively correlated with employees' ratings of the supervisor on Transformational and Transactional leadership styles. Using a self-report measure, Westerlaken and Woods (2013) also report that psychopathic traits are associated with higher levels of passive leadership behaviors (Management-by-Exception-Passive and Laissez-Faire leadership) and with lower levels of individual consideration (a subscale of Transformational leadership). Furthermore, Mathieu et al. (2014a) found that corporate psychopathic traits in leaders lead to lower levels of employee job satisfaction and higher levels of psychological distress and work-family conflict in employees. It thus seems that while corporate psychopathy traits may positively influence ratings of how one is perceived on social skills, they seem to have a negative influence on ratings associated with how they actually perform as leaders.

Whether it is associated with dark leadership or absence of leadership, the human and financial costs of “bad bosses” are considerable (Quick, Quick, Nelson & Hurrell, 1997). Whatever their exact nature and style, such bosses have a significant impact on employees' mood, psychological well-being, and job performance (Spector, 1997). Supervisors also contribute to work-family conflict, which in turn is strongly related to higher psychological distress (De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman & Bongers, 2003; Simon, Kümmerling & Hasselhorn, 2004), lower job satisfaction (Bruck, Allen & Spector, 2002; Grandey, Cordeiro & Crouter, 2005), and higher levels of job neglect (Kidwell & Bennett, 2001). In fact, Lim (2002) suggests that when employees think that their contributions to the organization or their daily work is not being recognized by their supervisor, they may retaliate by spending more work time on non-work behaviors, an outcome referred to as job neglect.

Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière and Raymond (2015) found that person-oriented leadership (as opposed to task-oriented leadership) had a significant effect on employee turnover intentions through its influence on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In essence, they found that supervisors' negative interactions with their employees had a greater impact on employee attitudes than task-oriented leadership behavior, a fact noted by Hogan and Hogan (2001) who observed that “...we believe [managerial] failure is more related to having undesirable qualities than lacking desirable ones.” Miner, Glomb and Hulin (2005) conducted a study on the links between employees' mood and supervisor behavior. Their findings revealed that employees rated their interactions with their supervisor as 80% positive and 20% negative, yet the 20% negative interactions affected the employees' mood five times more than the positive interactions. It thus seems reasonable to hypothesize that negative leadership behavior may have a more significant impact on employees than positive leadership behaviors or even absence of leadership (as is the case for Laissez-Faire leadership style).

Babiak and Hare (2006), commenting on the role of management development programs in organizations, suggested that the negative behaviors of some supervisors are often simply due to a *lack* of leadership skills and therefore capable of remediation. However, they added that negative supervisory behaviors that are manifestations of an *underlying personality disorder*, in this case psychopathy, are especially problematic and difficult to both identify and change. In consideration of the above findings, we hypothesize that Laissez-Faire leadership will have a stronger influence on employee attitudes than Transformational and Transactional leadership styles, but that employee ratings of psychopathic traits in their supervisors will have an even stronger impact on their job satisfaction, turnover intentions, job neglect and work motivation than their ratings of their supervisor on the Full-Range Leadership Model.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7250863>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7250863>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)