

The Dark Side of Leadership

Abreu, José Luis

Abstract

Previous studies have ignored the leadership role in management and documented complex challenges in this field with respect to effective leadership. Related to the issue, destructive leadership has become an emerging area of research. The purpose of current study is to examine the impact of destructive leadership behaviors on turnover intentions and deviant behavior through the mediation of job stress of leaders. In addition, Self-leadership should be integrated within a nomological network, and its associations with the Dark Triad of personality comprising narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, explored. In this study, Narcissism was positively associated with self-leadership scales, whereas Machiavellianism and psychopathy were not. Findings are discussed and future lines of research are proposed.

Keywords

Destructive Leadership, Self-leadership, Dark Triad, Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy.

Destructive Leadership

Destructive leader behaviors are intended actions (carried out by an individual in leadership, line managerial or managerial position) which are perceived by most of the people as harmful and unusual towards supporters and/or institutions which could be both physical or verbal, active or inactive, intended or unintended . In addition it has been described that destructive leaders acting as an exemplar for their lower-ranking staff, delivers this message that undesirable conducts are needed in institutions. In researchers' opinion, destructive leadership goes beyond just the lack of positive qualities; instead, they exercise and exhibit particular destructive conducts, furthermore stated or unstated, intended on unintended having suggestions for production and

workplace attitudes. Leaders acting in harmony with the organizational objectives, jobs, mission and tactics, usually attaining results at the cost of juniors not through them are tyrannical leaders. Similarly, it was summed up that tyrannical leadership conducts may be tolerated by higher management in short run. Leaders exhibiting anti-subordinate conducts like bullying, embracing, exploiting, dishonesty or irritation, whereas concurrently executing antiorganizational conducts like truancy, shrinking, deception or embezzlement are derailed leaders. Previously it was stated that leaders may not have tactical proficiency but are capable to encourage friendly relations with juniors are supportive disloyal leaders. Abusive supervision has been defined as the degree to which superiors are involved in persistent execution of aggressive oral and nonverbal conducts, apart from physical interaction. Literature provides a vast range of views that have been utilized to elaborate the phenomenon of destructive leadership, petty tyrants, derailed leaders, abusive supervisors, bullies. Furthermore, it has been argued that with growing research on undesirable conducts in institutions, exploration in novel leadership style recognized as “Destructive leadership” progressively becomes a central topic among articles (Shahbaz Haider et al, 2018).

Destructive Leadership And Job Stress

Previously, number of studies have been carried out to explore the relationship of destructive leadership and job stress. It was found that subordinates of leaders being involved in destructive conducts exhibit greater stress. Resultantly, workers that are unprotected from destructive leaders undergo increased stress and its associated objections such as psychosomatic objections and nervousness than the workers which are less exposed towards such conducts. Destructive leadership is stressful act for workers. In the same vein, some studies have also indicated a significant relationship between destructive leadership and job stress (Shahbaz Haider et al, 2018).

Destructive Leadership And Turnover Intentions

The findings of meta-analysis indicated destructive leadership is negatively linked with constructive organizational associated conceptions and positively related with harmful

organizational conceptions (turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior, and justice). The researchers have slightly ignored the other constituents of destructive leadership. In another study, considerable negative relationship between destructive leadership and all measure of satisfaction was found but there was not considerable association found between negative effects on turnover level (propensity to stay in job) among junior population. It would be more compelling if researchers found theoretical context for the destructive leadership negatively affecting the turnover level. Similarly, another research findings indicated that workplace bullying and turnover intentions are positively associated. Role clarity, participative decision making and managerial relation demonstrated moderate relationship with bullying by line manager and turnover intention. Researcher could consider job stress as moderator in the current study to obtain better results. Additionally, according to the findings of a study there is a constructive relation between petty tyranny and turnover intention. Furthermore it was argued that the reason behind this is the ambiguity of petty tyrants which generates work isolation (Shahbaz Haider et al, 2018).

Destructive Leadership And Deviant Behavior

Organizational deviance has been defined as intended conduct that defies norms of organization and thus the organizational and its members' welfare is threatened. Abusive supervision is the degree to which superiors are involved in persistent execution of aggressive verbal and nonverbal conducts, apart from physical interaction and it is the significant factor contributing towards deviant behaviors. This study lacks the other destructive leadership constituents affecting the deviant behaviors. Some studies and results have indicated the considerable association between destructive leadership and deviant behaviors. Furthermore, regression analysis results also identified positive relationship between the destructive leadership and deviant behavior, whereas negative mediation was found by stress. In the above-mentioned research, researchers has slightly ignored the dimensions of destructive leadership. The results would be more fruitful if researchers considered all the other dimensions, as more than

one type of destructive behavior might involve in the organization (Shahbaz Haider et al, 2018).

Self-Leadership

SL's roots lie in self-management (Manz, 1986) and clinical self-control theory (e.g., Cautela, 1969), and it was inspired by Kerr and Jermier's (1978) notion of substitutes for leadership. In contrast to self-management, SL is much more focused on the aspect of self-influence. It thus combines behavior-focused strategies of self-management and self-control with concepts of intrinsic motivation and constructive thinking, so that it can be conceptualized as a trait domain dealing with self-influencing processes (Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

The Dark Triad

Of the abundance of socially undesirable, aversive, and offensive traits, the three traits narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy have been repeatedly found to be moderately intercorrelated (e.g., Paulhus & Williams, 2002) thus triggering the term Dark Triad of Personality. Even though these traits seem to be linked by low agreeableness, impulsivity, which is associated with low conscientiousness, and interpersonal manipulation, they need to be distinguished from one another (e.g., Paulhus & Williams, 2002 in Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

Narcissism connects several different but interrelated traits such as persistent attention seeking; exhibitionism; extreme vanity; arrogance; exploitation and manipulation in interpersonal relationships; and excessive self-focus with self-absorption and self-admiration, as well as perceived feelings of superiority, entitlement, leadership, and authority (e.g., Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Although most narcissism facets differ in social desirability and adaptivity, many are indeed adaptive for the individual, for example, self-enhancement, vanity, and manipulation, and some, for example, leadership, may even be socially desirable in Western countries (Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

Machiavellianism, based on Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, is an attitudinal domain dealing with pragmatic, cynical, and immoral world views; self-interest and self-beneficial behaviors; cold, long-term, strategic calculation and tactics to pursue one's own (agentic) goals; and cold heartedness and lack of empathy, as well as deception and interpersonal manipulation (Christie & Geis, 1970; Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006 in Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

Psychopathy, which was conceptualized by Cleckley (1988) and Hare (2003), comprises a primary (e.g., selfishness, deficiencies in interpersonal affect, remorselessness, superficial charm, exploitation) and secondary form (antisocial lifestyle and behaviors). This concept has been extended (Williams, Nathanson, & Paulhus, 2003), with (a) arrogant and deceitful behavior (i.e., interpersonal manipulation), (b) lack of affective experiences (i.e., cold affect), (c) impulsive or irresponsible behavior (i.e., impulsive thrill seeking), and (d) antisocial lifestyle and behaviors as hallmarks of the subclinical psychopathy trait continuum (Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

Conclusions

Shahbaz Haider et al (2018) explored the association of destructive leadership behaviors type i.e. tyrannical leadership, supportive-disloyal, abusive supervision and derailed leadership with turnover intention and deviant behavior. The study results signified that all destructive leadership constituents are positively and significantly linked with the turnover intention and deviant behaviors. Moreover, their study findings are in line with previous knowledge of body which also examined the destructive leaderships' impact on turnover intention; thus, it signified that destructive leadership is positively and significantly associated with turnover intentions. Study results revealed positive and considerable relationship between destructive leadership and deviant behaviors. The results of the study are in line with findings of previous studies.

Furthermore, Shahbaz Haider et al (2018) argued that job stress is a positive and significant mediator between the relation of destructive leadership and turnover

intention. Results of the study are in line with previous research. These studies signified that job stress and turnover intentions are positively associated. Similarly, their study argued that job stress mediates the relation between destructive leadership and deviant behavior. Results are consistent with previous studies. As the study is longitudinal, results of study became stronger and more significant in second time data collection indicating that responses of people have become more positive about the variables under study.

Narcissists and self-leaders are similar in certain dimensions such as self-goal setting being driven by a need for achievement, self-observation, with a focus on the self, and the utilization of self-regulation strategies for the pursuit and achievement of goals, whichever they may be. That goal achievement is an important factor in both constructs is probably due to different underlying motives. Self-leaders allocate and focus their cognitive and behavioral resources towards a specific goal mostly for an intrinsic value in the goal or the process of pursuing it. Narcissists, however, focus on the outcomes of goal-achievement rather than the process of achieving it, for reasons of attention, admiration, and enhancement from others so that their inflated self-view can either be maintained or further enhanced. The intrinsic motivation thus would differ between narcissists and self-leaders although both are high in goal-achievement and both use similar phenotypic strategies in goal pursuit, for example, heightened self-focus, self-goal setting, self-rewards (Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011).

Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse (2011) found no associations between SL and Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Impulsivity and a lack of reflection are associated with psychopathy so that dysfunctional self-talk and behavioral strategies may not be perceived and analyzed properly. This would consequently lead to low levels of SL. For Machiavellists it may often not be necessary to be overly self-leading in the sense of needing to achieve certain goals, as they may be able to use others to achieve the goals for them.

Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse (2011) suggested that the possible mediating role of the need for achievement in the SL-narcissism association should be explored systematically in future research. Relationships between SL and the Dark Triad were examined for the first time in this study, with the finding that narcissists and self-leaders may have characteristics such as goal striving, self-focus, and self-regulation in common. Self-loving self-leaders or self-leading self-lovers intrinsically pursue their goals.

Future Research

For the first time, the relatively new construct of SL has been linked to the Dark Triad traits that are usually deemed aversive and maladaptive. The association between SL and narcissism sheds further light on the nature of SL. However, future researchers may ask whether we should assume a narcissistic self-leader or a self-leading narcissist if we were to draw conclusions on causal relationships between the variables (Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011)

References

Cautela, J. R. (1969). Behavior therapy and self-control: Techniques and implications. In C. M. Franks (Ed.), Behavior therapy: Appraisal and status (pp. 323-240). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Christie, R., & Geis, F. L. (1970). Studies in Machiavellianism. New York: Academic Press.

Cleckley, H. M. (1988). The mask of sanity: An attempt to clarify some issues about the so called psychopathic personality (5th ed.). Augusta, GA: Emily S. Cleckley.

Hare, R. D. (2003). Manual for the revised Psychopathy Checklist (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.

Jakobwitz, S., & Egan, V. (2006). The Dark Triad and normal personality traits. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40(2), 331-339.

Kerr, S., & Jermier, J. M. (1978). Substitutes for leadership: Their meaning and measurement. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 22(3), 375-403.

Manz, C. C. (1986). Self-leadership: Toward an expanded theory of self-influence processes in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(3), 585-600.

Marco R. Furtner, John F. Rauthmann, And Pierre Sachse. 2011. The Self-Loving Self-Leader: An Examination Of The Relationship Between Self-Leadership And The Dark Triad. *Social Behavior And Personality*, 2011, 39(3), 369-380. Society for Personality Research.

Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 36(6), 556-563.

Raskin, R., & Terry, H. (1988). A principle-components analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and further evidence of its construct validity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(5), 890-902.

Shahbaz Haider, Qasim Ali Nisar, Faizan Baig, Muhammaz Azeem, Waseem-ul-Hameed. 2018. Dark Side of Leadership: Employees' Job Stress & Deviant Behaviors in Pharmaceutical Industry. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Research & Allied Sciences*, 2018, 7(2):125-138.

Williams, K. M., Nathanson, C., & Paulhus, D. L. (2003, August). Structure and validity of the Self-Report Psychopathy Scale-III in normal populations. Presented at the 111th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.