THE ROLE OF LEADER-FOLLOWER DEFENSIVE PESSIMISM (IN)CONGRUENCE IN FOSTERING PERCEPTIONS OF FOLLOWERS' ISOLATION

ALDIJANA BUNJAK[1]
MATEJ ČERNE[2]

ABSTRACT: *This field study examines the joint effect of leaders' and followers' different cognitive characteristics (i.e., defensive pessimism) on followers' isolation. We examine the interplay between leaders' defensive pessimism and followers' defensive pessimism in fostering perceptions of followers' isolation. Data from 291 working professionals are analyzed following a series of hierarchical linear modeling and polynomial regression analyses. Polynomial regression analysis indicates that when both leaders and followers are in agreement in their defensive pessimism, the level of followers' perceived isolation is lower than when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviate from each other (i.e., high-low and low-high leader-follower defensive pessimism). However, when followers' defensive pessimism is higher than leaders' defensive pessimism, followers' perceived isolation also is higher. By suggesting that followers' perception of leaders' defensive pessimism may be more complex than previously recognized, we conclude that studies of leadership need to develop a much deeper understanding of leader-follower congruence in cognitive styles in order to decrease followers' isolation in the workplace.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The "Don't worry, be happy" message does not help everyone equally; on the contrary, forcing some people to think positively or to calm down, or even encouraging them, will make them perform worse. Norem & Cantor (1986a) defined defensive pessimism as a coping strategy which results in setting unrealistically low expectations for an upcoming event in an attempt to harness anxiety so that performance is not weakened or damaged. However, defensive pessimism does not undermine performance as a result of this negative approach (Norem & Cantor, 1986a). When followers' expectations are not congruent with leaders' behavior, followers tend to evaluate them negatively. Consequently, a lack

---

1 Corresponding author, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, PhD Graduate, Ljubljana, Slovenia, e-mail: b.aldijana@hotmail.com

2 University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana, Slovenia, e-mail: matej.cerne@ef.uni-lj.si

of mutual understanding and empowerment (Wong & Giessner, 2018), will result in increased perceived followers' isolation. Perceived isolation is defined by loneliness and a perceived lack of social support (Cornwell & Waite, 2009). In this study we conceptualize perceived isolation as a psychological construct that describes followers' perceptions of isolation from the leader and co-workers. Previous research has linked isolation with higher morbidity and mortality (Berkman et al., 2000; Brummett et al., 2001; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser 1996), depression (Heikkinen & Kauppinen 2004), cognitive decline (Barnes et al., 2004), and feelings of loneliness (Dean et al., 1992; Hawkley et al., 2006; Kraus et al., 1993; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). Similarly, followers' perceived workplace isolation leads to reduced organizational identification (Kirkman et al., 2002; Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001) and consequently to reduced identification with the leader.

However, the question arises as to whether leader-follower defensive pessimism (in) congruence interacts with followers' perceived isolation, and what impact a leader's defensive pessimism has on followers' perceived isolation. According to implicit leadership theory (ILT), leaders can act as role models (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984), therefore by default followers' defensive pessimism and perceived isolation are dependent on leaders' characteristics (i.e., defensive pessimism). Implicit leadership theory states that individuals emerge as leaders to the extent that they fit observers' predetermined prototypes of the characteristics that leaders are supposed to have (Lord & Maher, 1991).

People are perceived as leaders based on the perceived congruence of their actual characteristics and the prototype (i.e., schema) of a preconceived leader category (Rush & Russell, 1988). Moreover, leadership by definition implies that a leader influences one or more followers (Yukl, 2012), and leader characteristics may be a key issue in understanding how leaders influence followers and why leaders with equal skills and competences sometimes succeed and sometimes fail (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). Theories of leadership emergence, such as implicit leadership theory (Lord & Maher, 1991), address this phenomenon. ILT is a process formed early in life and influenced by interactions with previous leaders, role models (e.g., parents), or other authority figures (Keller, 2003; Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010).

This study explores the joint effect of leader and follower defensive pessimism in fostering perceptions of followers' isolation based on their (in)congruence of different cognitive styles. Drawing upon the literature on cognitive styles (i.e., defensive pessimism) and on research on dyadic interaction (Norem & Illingworth, 1993; Sanna, 1996; Spencer & Norem, 1996), we examine the effects of (in)congruence in leader-follower defensive pessimism in fostering perceptions of followers' isolation. Research has shown that regardless of their own outlook on life, most individuals would prefer to engage in a relationship with an optimist rather than with a pessimist (Dicke, 1998). However, one of the domains which remains unclear is the nature of interaction in leader-follower relationships with regard to their cognitive styles (i.e., defensive pessimism) and its impact on followers' perceived isolation. Therefore this study investigates the role of leader-follower cognitive style (i.e., defensive pessimism) in dyadic relationships and its influence on followers' perceived isolation as an outcome.

By hypothesizing and testing these relationships, we make three important contributions. First, we contribute to the literature on cognitive styles by conceptualizing and showing the need for leaders to be congruent with followers in their cognitive styles in order to decrease followers' perceived isolation. Followers are often neglected in the leadership research. However, this study includes leaders' and followers' cognitive styles in the model by acknowledging various outcomes that may occur (i.e., when a leader is either higher or lower in defensive pessimism than a follower). Therefore we contribute to understanding the complex effects that may result from (in)congruence in leader-follower cognitive styles, and particularly its influence on followers' perceived isolation.

Second, we build on the idea of a too-much-of-a-good-thing effect (Grant & Schwartz, 2011), which suggests that having too much of a characteristic (i.e., defensive pessimism) in a leader-follower relationship is not necessarily a good thing. While pessimism has been associated with lower levels of performance (Bandura, 1982), defensive pessimists' negative outlook can also be linked with several positive outcomes (Norem & Cantor, 1986a, 1986b). Considering potential negative outcomes of performance, defensive pessimism acts as a strategy for self-motivation, whereby defensive pessimists' low expectations act as self-protection by limiting the negative effects of anxiety and stress (Norem & Cantor, 1986b). It has been shown that defensive pessimism does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes and that its effects on performance depend on defensive pessimists' negative approach (Norem & Cantor, 1986a; Norem & Cantor, 1986b; Norem & Illingworth, 1993; Sanna, 1996). However, thus far, no attention has been paid to understanding why having the wrong dyadic relationship between leaders and followers can foster followers' perceived isolation. By explaining specific mechanisms of this interaction based on characteristics of the leader-follower relationship founded in their cognitive styles, we contribute to the theory and research on leader-follower relationship fit.

Marshall, Michaels, & Mulki (2007) showed that employees can develop isolation perceptions in a traditional office in which they are in proximity to their leader and other co-workers if the leader and co-workers are not able to provide work support that the follower needs. Even though professional isolation has been identified in the telework literature as a potential threat to the effectiveness of virtual work settings (Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Kurland & Egan, 1999), there is a call for considering theoretical and empirical frameworks of leader distance (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002) and thus of followers' perceived isolation in both traditional and virtual work-based settings. Building on previous findings, our third contribution is to investigate the role of leader-follower (in)congruence in cognitive styles in fostering followers' perceived isolation. By doing so, this research also contributes the theoretical mechanisms for perceived isolation theory development.

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Leadership is an individual and group process. Leaders and followers mutually influence each other's perceptions and behavior (Humphrey, 2002). Implicit leadership theory has

been defined as a cognitive structure (prototypes) identifying the characteristics that depict a leader (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984; Lord & Maher, 1991). These schemas are formed early on in life and influenced by prior experiences, socialization processes, and role models such as parents (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Keller, 2003; Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, & Blascovich, 1996). ILT also can be formed as a result of followers' previous experiences with the leader, i.e., expectations of the leader (Shondrick et al., 2010) by creating self-perceptions of current leadership. Hall and Lord (1995) stated that self-interpretation is crucial when indicating a leadership sense-making function. In other words, in order to understand how individuals view others, we need to understand how individuals perceive self and others at the same time.

Implicit leadership theory strives to explain personal characteristics and attributes that followers expect from their leaders (Ling, Chia, & Fang, 2000); therefore it might be the case that followers will prefer leaders who match their own self-perceived characteristics and attributes. Additionally, implicit leadership theory helps us to understand whether and under what conditions individuals are willing to follow a leader (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Those schemas that are built of followers' beliefs about leadership behavior will give the attributions to the leader and create an evaluation such as a good or bad leader (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Moreover, even when little or ambiguous information is provided about the leader's behavior, followers match the leader's behavior to preexisting leader categories or prototypes they hold in memory (Eden & Leviathan, 1975; Lord, 1985). On the other hand, incongruence between followers' prototype and the actual leader's characteristics will result in followers' low satisfaction or/and higher rates of turnover (Engle & Lord, 1997; Hunt, Boal, & Sorenson, 1990). Reis, Collins, & Berscheid (2000) suggested that individuals prefer to socialize with similar others (e.g., personality dimensions). Similarly, the cognition about another person has an important influence on the nature and development of a relationship between individuals (Reis et al., 2000). Because defensive pessimism stems from the "doing" side of the personality (Cantor, 1990), in this study we controlled for conscientiousness and agreeableness, defined as being on the "having" side of the personality. However, we assume that individuals (i.e., leaders and followers) will prefer to socialize with like-minded others (i.e., similar levels of defensive pessimism), although under specific conditions (i.e., followers' isolation) this relationship may be changed. In other words, we state that under high followers' perceived isolation, in order to decrease followers' isolation the relationship will require leaders who maintain a more open and positive attitude toward future expectations.

Defensive pessimism refers to a cognitive strategy in which one sets unrealistically low expectations for future performance even if one has done well in similar situations in the past (Norem & Cantor, 1986b). Most individuals who are followers of the positive-thinking doctrine regard pessimism as a fault, which usually comes with attributes such as giving up easily, fear, no hope, disappointment, self-pity, regrets, and doubt in everything (Aspinwall & Richter, 1999; Landier & Thesmar, 2009; Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986; Seligman, 2011). However, defensive pessimism differs from optimism, and thus from pessimism, by its connection to a goal, domain specificity, and temporal frame (Carver & Scheier, 2001). Therefore, unlike "simple pessimism," defensive pessimism is defined

as "good pessimism" in which a negative outlook is associated with good outcomes (Norem & Cantor, 1986a, 1986b; Showers, 1986). Consistently, the strategy works as a motivator while increasing effort in order to avoid negative outcomes, and it serves as self-protective function in order to keep anxiety under control (Norem & Cantor, 1986a; Showers & Cantor, 1984). Therefore defensive pessimism is recognized as a mindset with advantages used in everyday situations by many of us. Still, in real-life situations, people prefer optimism to pessimism, assuming that by default optimism comes with friendliness and social warmth, whereas pessimism is most often linked to depression. But that is not necessarily so. Defensive pessimists are prone to be cautious, with a strong urge to prepare for the worst even though they were successful in similar situations before. Moreover, defensive pessimists tend to be persistent in preparing for an upcoming event and working through all challenges, which eventually leads to successful outcomes (Lei & Duan, 2016). Similarly, defensive pessimists have been linked to a desire for success and a fear of failure (Norem & Cantor, 1986a), as well as to goal conflict, greater stress, and anxiety (Norem, 2008).

However, too much of a coping strategy such as defensive optimism (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986) and defensive pessimism (Norem & Illingworth, 1993; Sanna, 1996) does not necessarily mean that employees will maintain their happiness in the long run. Followers can develop isolation perception in a traditional office where they are in proximity to their leader and other co-workers if their leader and co-workers are not able to provide the work support that the followers may need (Marshall, Michaels, & Mulki, 2007). Perceived isolation is a state of mind or belief that one is out of touch with the leader and co-workers in the workplace (Diekema, 1992). Mulki et al. (2008) argued that perceptions of workplace isolation negatively affect trust in leaders and co-workers. Nonetheless, a feeling of belonging to a group or having a good connection with the leader reduces anxiety, contributes to performance, and enables followers to reach goals that otherwise would have been very difficult or impossible to attain (Beehr et al., 2000; Jex & Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, Jones et al. (2005) stated that availability of supervisory and team support is critical to successful performance. Professional isolation has been recognized in a wide variety of disciplines, including economics (Edwards, 1979), psychology (Rousseau, 1995), and communication science (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), but research has not focused on its interplay with other states of mind such as defensive pessimism.

Napier & Ferris (1993) stated that isolation includes perceptual congruence (i.e., mutual understanding) and latitude (i.e., the degree of follower empowerment). In addition, they argued that less isolation leads to higher performance and lower follower turnover. Similarly, from the followers' perspective, leader and team presence makes the relationship more natural and intimate, which also improves the identification effect with leader and organization. Therefore, building on implicit leadership theory, we argue that when followers have a similar cognitive style as do leaders, followers' perceived isolation will be lower and thus more in balance with the leader. This is because followers will perceive leaders as closer and more likable, because they share similar values, beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, when followers' have similar expectations as their leader (team), the followers' perception of isolation from the leader and the team becomes lower, and

identification with their leader becomes higher (Challagalla, Shervani, & Huber, 2000; Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001). In the case of discrepancy in leader-follower shared perceptions of values, beliefs, and attitudes, the perceived isolation will be higher. We thus hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived isolation is higher when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviate from each other (i.e., high-low and low-high leader-follower defensive pessimism) than when they are in agreement.

The idea of an inverted-U curve (Grant & Schwartz, 2011) suggests that having too much or too little of characteristics, virtues, or strengths is not necessarily a good thing. J.D. Brown & Marshall (2001) explained that high levels of optimism lead to underestimation of risks and thus to poor preparation and therefore poor performance. The alternative to optimism is pessimism, and thus the same logic of the inverted-U curve can be applied to pessimism as well. Similarly, high conscientiousness is positively related to job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000), whereas after some point conscientiousness may no longer be helpful to task performance but may make individuals rigid, inflexible, and non-productive compulsive perfectionists (Le et al., 2011). Furthermore, emotional stability indicates the extent to which people are calm, steady under pressure, and less likely to experience negative emotional states, including anxiety, depression, and anger (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

However, Le et al. (2011) suggested that emotional stability is likely to be curvilinearly related to task performance. Similarly, defensive pessimism is a cognitive strategy that helps people to manage their anxiety (Norem, 2008) and eventually helps them to achieve their goals. Defensive pessimists report high levels of anxiety and neuroticism, they often report more negative moods, and they have negative expectations of future tasks/situations (Cantor et al., 1987; Norem, 2001; Norem & Cantor, 1986a; Norem & Illingworth, 1993; Sanna, 1996). On the other hand, individuals who use strategic optimism do not like to reflect on upcoming events; they have high expectations for their performance (Spencer & Norem, 1996). Those individuals are self-confident that they will be able to repeat their past success and therefore they do not feel anxious (Spencer & Norem, 1996). However, as with other psychological processes (i.e., conscientiousness, emotional stability, optimism, etc.), having too much defensive pessimism could put it in "overdrive," leading to negative consequences.

Markus, Smith, & Moreland (1985) argued that people usually use the same categories when describing others and themselves. Furthermore, Schneider & Blankmeyer (1983) stated that an individual who forms a self-schema for leadership is prone to interpret actions of others (i.e., leader) in terms of their own. Similarly, "the effects of congruence in implicit theories should be greater for perceivers who are schematic with respect to an implicit theory" (Engle & Lord, 1997). Thus, leadership depends on both leader and follower (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Hollander & Offermann, 1990), and a follower's self-concept is an important predictor of the followers' behavior and perception of the leader (Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999). Moreover, how followers' perceive leaders becomes even

more important because leadership has been associated with organizationally relevant outcomes such as follower attitudes, performance, or motivation (Kelloway et al., 2012). Avey, Avolio, & Luthans (2011) showed that when leaders demonstrated the features of psychological capital (i.e., hope, optimism, resilience, and self-esteem), follower positivity and performance were enhanced. Similarly, leader and follower positivity resulted in followers reporting more trust in leaders (Norman, Avolio, & Luthans, 2010). Subsequently, individuals that demonstrate positive energy are more successful (Cross, Baker, & Parker, 2003), and attributes such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency are better predictors of individual motivation and commitment at work than is job satisfaction (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Luthans & Jensen, 2005). In the same vein, we argue that followers who are able to experience more joy, a positive attitude toward future, and less stress and anxiety will also feel less isolated and more identified with their leader (team).

Schaefer & Moos (1998) stated that social support (i.e., support from the leader and co-workers) may be a precondition of personal growth because of its influence on coping behavior and encouraging successful adaptation to life crises. Looking for social support improves social resources by fostering understanding between people and reducing the individual's feelings of isolation and loneliness (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009). It has been found that optimism predicts several aspects of subjective well-being, such as that optimism is negatively related to depression (Vickers & Vogeltanz, 2000), positively linked to self-esteem (Chang & Sanna, 2001), and is a more effective way of using problem-focused coping strategies and emotional regulation (Taylor & Armor, 1996).

Social support is also connected to well-being, depression, and physical and psychological functioning through certain cognitive mechanisms and coping strategies (Kahn, Hessling, & Russell, 2003; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Davis & Swan, 1999). Furthermore, it has been found that a higher level of optimism resulted in less stress and depression when mediated with social support (Brissette, Scheier, & Carver, 2002). In addition, optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and perceived social support of well-being (Karademas, 2006). Similarly, social support was linked to high self-esteem, which resulted in increased optimism and was associated with decreased depression (Symister & Friend, 2003). Based on that, one could say that compared with a pessimistic outlook, an optimistic outlook may result in "less painful" perceived isolation grounded in a more-efficient problem-focused coping strategy, an effective means of emotional regulation, and higher self-esteem. However, professionally isolated workers tend to be less self-confident, which can undermine their job performance. Similarly, isolated workers are prone to anxiety (Baumeister & Tice, 1990) and loneliness (Jones, 1990), and tend to experience psychological or physical health problems (DeWall & Baumeister, 2006; Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000).

Therefore, building on implicit leadership theory, this study assumes that followers' perceived isolation will be highest when a leader's defensive pessimism is lower than the followers' defensive pessimism. Accordingly, because of high levels of anxiety, stress, and nervousness (i.e., high level of defensive pessimism), followers' will feel less joy and pleasure

at their work place, which will increase their perceived isolation. The reason might be that less-pessimistic people maintain a greater level of confidence; show more persistence when faced different life challenges; and feel less stressful, anxious, and nervous than do pessimists, who tend to be doubtful and hesitant. Furthermore, less-pessimistic people have better social connections and thus larger social networks, tend to solve problems cooperatively, and are more likely to seek help in difficult situations. Optimists are also easier to approach, and in general are more likable, as well. Therefore, based on implicit leadership theory, we argue that high follower defensive pessimism interacts with leaders' positivity, which will lead to lower levels of followers' perceived isolation. This leads to our next hypothesis:
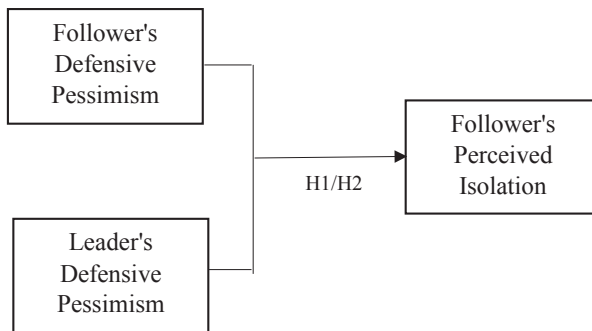
Hypothesis 2: Perceived isolation is higher when the leader-follower defensive pessimism discrepancy is such that follower defensive pessimism is higher than leader defensive pessimism than vice versa.

The conceptual 2x2 matrix of different conditions representing leader-follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence in fostering followers' perceived isolation, which overviews our hypotheses and expected outcomes of (in)congrence in leader-follower defensive pessimism is portrayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Followers' perceived isolation in different leader-follower defensive pessimism conditions*

We conducted a field study to test our hypotheses. The field study examined the direct effect of dyadic leader-follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence on followers' perceived isolation, testing Hypotheses 1 and 2. Figure 2 presents our conceptual model.

Figure 2: *The conceptual model*

3. METHOD

3.1. Sample

A field study was conducted via an online survey among working professionals, in accordance with the suggestions recommended by Wong et al. (2008). The mandatory requirement was that participants were employed. The online survey was completed by 291 employed professionals; 65% of respondents were female and approximately 45% were younger than 35 years old. The majority of participants had acquired a master's level degree (44.4%) and most of them were from the U.S. (21.4%), Slovenia (19.1%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (10.6%), the UK (6.4%), and Australia (4.8%). Their main fields of employment were education (34%), finance (17.2%), the service industry (12.4%), health care (10%), and government (9.3%).

3.2. Measures

Five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") were used in this study.

Follower's defensive pessimism. The defensive pessimism scale was adapted for the purposes of this study, where we used a seven-item scale from the Defensive Pessimism Questionnaire – DPQ (Norem, 2001). The DPQ contains several items designed to index the thinking process, as well as items designed to measure pessimism. A sample item would be "I go into these situations expecting the worst, even though I know I will probably do OK." ($\alpha = 0.40$).

Leader's defensive pessimism. Similarly to how follower defensive pessimism was assessed, the Defensive Pessimism Questionnaire – DPQ (Norem, 2001) scale was used. Because we wanted to assess how followers perceive their leaders, in the leader domain

the scale was adapted such that a sample item would be "He/she goes into these situations expecting the worst, even though he/she knows he/she will probably do OK." (α = 0.43).

Follower's perceived isolation. The sense of being isolated was elicited by a three-item scale (Connaughton & Daly, 2004). Sample items are "I often feel disconnected from what is happening on my team or in my firm" and "Despite the fact that my leader and I are co-located I often feel isolated." (α = 0.84).

Control variables. We controlled for age, gender, employee education, and work domain. These control variables were reported by the employees. We also controlled for agreeableness and conscientiousness (i.e., Big Five personality traits), which have been indicated to have a strong positive relationship with optimism (Sharpe, Martin, & Roth, 2011). We used the Ten-Item Personality Inventory – (TIPI) scale developed by Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann 2003, $\alpha_{agreeableness} = 0.40$; $\alpha_{conscientiousness} = 0.50$).

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

An online questionnaire of working professionals was conducted from March to May 2016. Participants were recruited via posts on social networking websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Potential participants also were targeted through various groups (e.g., Happiness at Work, Business Psychology at Work, Employee Engagement, Cognitive Neuroscience) and via personal contacts. The participants were notified that the aim of the research was to explore the dynamics that employees perceive at their work. After agreeing to participate, participants were directed to survey website. The survey took approximately 10 minutes on average to answer.

3.4. Data Analysis

Polynomial regression analysis with response surface modelling was applied to test the (in) congruence hypotheses (Edwards & Parry, 1993; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005; Shanock et al., 2010).[3] We centered all the scales before running the analyses, which reduces multicollinearity between the component measures (i.e., leader and follower defensive pessimism) and their associated higher-order terms (Aiken & West, 1991).

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the perceived isolation is higher when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviate from each other (i.e., high-low and low-high leader-follower defensive pessimism) than when they are in agreement. This hypothesis suggests that the linear slope, which is given by $a_3 = b_1 - b_2$, of the surface along the incongruence line (X = −Y) should be significant and positive. Hypothesis 2 predicted that the perceived isolation is higher when follower defensive pessimism is higher than leader defensive

---

3 A simple regression model examining a predictive role of followers' defensive pessimism indicated that this construct was positively related to followers' perceived isolation (β = 0.342, p < 0.05).

pessimism than vice versa. This hypothesis will be supported if the curvilinear slope on the incongruence line (X = −Y) given by $a_4 = b_3 − b_4 + b_5$ – where b_3 is the β for follower-ratings squared, b4 is the β for the cross-product of follower and leader ratings, and b_5 is the β for leader-ratings squared – is significant and positive.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and correlations) of all variables used in the study. We observed the factor structure of the focal variables using

confirmatory factor analysis procedures in AMOS software version 21. The expected three-factor solution (follower's defensive pessimism, leader's defensive pessimism, perceived isolation) displayed a good fit with the data [chi-square (86) = 187,976, CFI = 0.929, SRMR = 0.074, RMSEA = 0.064].[4]

Table 1: *Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations* [a, b, c]

	Variable	Mean	SD	Alpha	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Age	3.512	0.7850	n.a.	-							
2	Gender	1.656	0.4757	n.a.	−0.026	-						
3	Education	2.804	0.7962	n.a.	0.178**	−0.042	-					
4	Dyadic tenure	1.725	0.9720	n.a.	0.271**	0.071	0.042	-				
5	Agreeableness	3.517	0.7755	0.40	0.257**	0.175**	0.045	0.054	-			
6	Conscientiousness	3.931	0.7815	0.50	0.117	0.038	0.125	0.077	0.106	-		
7	Follower's defensive pessimism	3.354	0.4433	0.40	−0.295**	0.150*	−0.034	−0.038	−0.082	−0.057	-	
8	Leader's defensive pessimism	3.186	0.4345	0.43	−0.173**	0.168**	0.019	−0.019	0.046	−0.019	0.310**	-
9	Perceived isolation	2.413	0.9813	0.84	−0.015	0.047	0.088	−0.030	−0.115*	0.014	0.015	0.147*

[a] n = 291
[b] Age was classified into 5 classes: 1 = Less than 18, 2 = 18-24, 3 = 25-34, 4 = 35-54, 5 = 55 and over.
[c] 1 = male, 2 = female
** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

In terms of the correlations among the variables, follower age was positively related to education (r = 0.178, p < 0.01), dyadic tenure (r = 0.271, p < 0.01), conscientiousness (r = 0.117, p < 0.05), and agreeableness (r = 0.257, p < 0.01), and negatively related to follower's defensive pessimism (r = −0.295, p < 0.01) and leader's defensive pessimism (r = −0.173, p < 0.01). Education was positively related to conscientiousness (r = 0.125, p < 0.05). Gender

4 Within-construct items' (for example, items corresponding to the defensive pessimism scale with other items pertaining to the same scale) residuals were allowed to correlate. Without those modification indices, the results of the model fit are: chi-square (116) = 646,529, CFI = 0.633, SRMR = 0.1243, RMSEA = 0.126.

similarity was positively related to the subordinate's agreeableness (r = 0.175, p < 0.01), follower's defensive pessimism (r = 0.150, p < 0.05), and leader's defensive pessimism (r = 0.168, p < 0.01). Follower's defensive pessimism was positively related to leader's defensive pessimism (r = 0.310, p < 0.01).

Hypotheses testing. Hypothesis 1 predicted that when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviated from each other, follower's perceived isolation would be higher than when they were in agreement. This relationship is expressed via an inverted U-shaped parabolic surface along the incongruence (S = −L) line. Table 2 shows the results from the polynomial regression analysis. The linear slope a_3 of the surface along the incongruence line (X= -Y) was positive and significant (a_3 = .72, p < 0.01). This indicates that the level of follower's perceived isolation is lower when the levels of the leader's and followers' defensive pessimism are similar, as illustrated in the response surface based on the estimated coefficients (Figure 3). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table 2: *Polynomial regression analyses results predicting follower's perceived isolation*

Dependent variable	Follower's perceived isolation
Constant	2.41 (0.47)**
Age	0.04 (0.08)
Gender	0.70 (0.13)
Education	0.07 (0.07)
Job tenure	−0.01 (0.06)
Agreeableness	−0.12 (0.07)
Conscientiousness	0.00 (0.07)
Follower's defensive pessimism	0.18 (0.14)*
Leader's defensive pessimism	−0.13 (0.14)*
Follower's defensive pessimism²	0.08 (0.24)
Follower's defensive pessimism x leader's defensive pessimism	−0.22 (0.31)*
Leader's defensive pessimsim²	0.08 (0.18)
F	2.361
df	279
R²	0.085
Congruence (follower's defensive pessimism = leader's defensive pessimism) line	
Slope	0.09 (0.12)
Curvature	−0.37 (0.37)
Incongruence (follower's defensive pessimism = −leader's defensive pessimism) line	
Slope	0.72 (0.25)**
Curvature	1.40 (0.42)**

Note. N = 291. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; the items reported are standardized beta coefficients, standard errors are in parentheses.
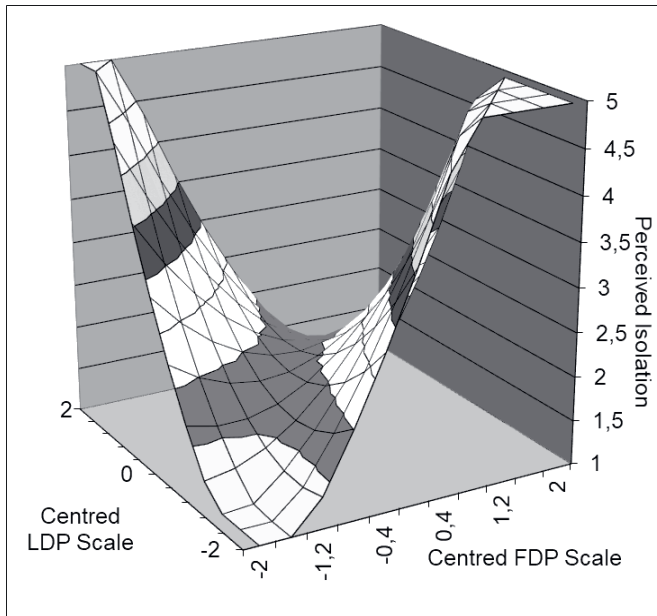
Figure 3: *Leader-follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence matrix based on polynomial regression analysis predicting follower's perceived isolation*

The asymmetric incongruence hypothesis (H2) posited that the follower's perceived isolation is higher when the follower's defensive pessimism is higher than the leader's [follower high–leader low], as opposed to when the follower's defensive pessimism is lower than the leader's (follower low–leader high). The curvilinear slope a_4 on the incongruence line (X= -Y), as shown in Table 2, was positive and significant (a_4 = 1.40, p < 0.01). This indicates a positive lateral shift of the level of perceived isolation toward the region where the follower's defensive pessimism is greater than the leader's. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined the role of leader–follower interplay in terms of their (in)congruence in defensive pessimism and followers' perceived isolation. The results of this study showed that the interaction of followers' and leaders' defensive pessimism plays a role in fostering followers' perceived isolation in the workplace. According to implicit leadership theory, leaders can act as role models (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984), depending on perceived leader characteristics (Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010). Similarly, the importance of ILT theory has been found in the interactional relationship between leaders and followers (Hunt, Boal, & Sorenson, 1990). However, research into leadership theories has focused mainly on the characteristics related to the leader prototype (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), whereas we argue that the followers' perceived isolation will depend not only on the

leaders' prototype, but also on whether leaders and followers share similar cognitive styles (i.e., defensive pessimism). Moreover, in order for leaders to be influential and perceived as leaders, it is important that there is a congruence between leaders' characteristics and followers' leader prototype (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). A congruence between leader characteristics and leader prototype characteristics will enable followers to be open to leaders' influence (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Medvedeff & Lord, 2007). On the other hand, incongruence between leaders' actual characteristics and followers' leader prototype will lead to followers' dissatisfaction (Engle & Lord, 1997). ILT enables individuals to make sense of another's intentions and behavior (Foti & Lord, 1987; Shondrick et al., 2010). We argued that different cognitive styles (in this case, defensive pessimism) might result in categorization differences, i.e., certain followers will prefer certain leader characteristics over others. Moreover, followers' perceived isolation was higher when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviated from each other (i.e., high-low and low-high leader-follower defensive pessimism) than when they were in agreement (Hypothesis 1). Therefore, by investigating followers' perceptual processes as the underlying mechanism, the current study provides theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature of implicit leadership theory and isolation in the workplace.

However, we wanted to examine leader-follower dyadic relationship more closely by focusing on specific interaction between a leader's and his or her followers' defensive pessimism and the followers' perceived isolation. The idea of an inverted-U curve (Grant & Schwartz, 2011) suggested that having too much or too little of virtues and strengths is not necessarily a good thing. Nonetheless, the research has reported some pitfalls and disadvantages with regard to defensive pessimism in the long run (Cantor et al., 1987; Norem, 2001; Norem & Cantor, 1986a; Norem & Illingworth, 1993; Sanna, 1996). Similarly, we found that followers' perceived isolation was higher when the followers' defensive pessimism was higher than the leaders' defensive pessimism than vice versa (Hypothesis 2). However, high defensive pessimism (in leaders or followers) could mean too much pessimism, and thus stress, negative affection, anxiety, avoidance motivation, and need for too much of control. Therefore the findings also shed light on the complexity of implicit leadership theory, while acknowledging potential benefits of positive leadership theory and practice. Taken together, we found support for the relevance of leader-follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence in fostering follower's perceived isolation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study suggests that leader-follower (in)congruence is an important and complex process when predicting followers' perceived isolation. If leader-follower defensive pessimism is congruent in smaller amounts (either low or high), followers tend to feel less isolated. However, followers' perceived isolation is highest when followers score higher in defensive pessimism than do leaders. Given that leaders should strive to maintain followers who will not feel isolated and will be in tune with their leaders, this study suggests that leader-follower defensive pessimism congruence will reduce followers' isolation, thus induce the balance in their relationship. Therefore leaders should pay more attention

to follower's perceived isolation, because the excessive presence of followers' perceived isolation could be detrimental.

6.1. Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the literature examining the role of individual differences at work in three distinct ways. The study contributes by explaining in more detail the "doing" sides of personalities in the workplace; previous research mostly has been concerned with the structural basis of individual differences that are "having" sides of personalities. This study explains how a coping mechanism such as defensive pessimism interacts with other concepts (i.e., followers' perceived isolation) in work settings.

First, defensive pessimism has been shown to be an adaptive and beneficial cognitive style for those who employ it (Norem, 2001). As noted, defensive pessimism does not appear to negatively affect an individual's performance (Norem & Cantor, 1986a). Similarly, research has showed that defensive pessimists set unrealistically low expectations in order to motivate and prepare themselves for potential failure (Norem & Cantor, 1986b). Building on those findings, we showed that similar expectations of future events in a dyadic leader-follower relationship even when defensive pessimism was high did not negatively influence followers' perceived isolation. However, followers who scored extremely high in defensive pessimism (i.e., the idea of a too-much-of-a-good-thing effect) felt more isolated than did followers' who scored lower in defensive pessimism. Therefore we contribute to positive leadership literature showing that leaders' optimistic attitudes could act as a trigger when reducing followers' stress, anxiety, and negative outcomes such as perceived isolation.

Defensive pessimists perform equally well as strategic optimists due to the motivational aspects of their preferred strategy (Norem & Cantor, 1986a, 1986b; Cantor & Norem, 1989). In line with this, one can say that the concept of defensive pessimism has made a shift in the well-known notion that pessimism is bad and optimism is good: defensive pessimism appears to be a beneficial, adaptive, and desired form of pessimism. However, the current study sheds light on the importance of congruence in cognitive styles (i.e., defensive pessimism) in a leader-follower dyadic relationship in terms of decreasing perceptions of followers' isolation. Previous theoretical and empirical research (e.g., Fuller & Marler, 2009; Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010) has shown that employees' personalities are beneficial for cultivating positive attitudes toward their jobs and organizations.

However, these studies have focused only on the leaders' role and thus prevented the possibility of examining leaders' individual characteristics as an important factor that interacts with followers' individual characteristics (i.e., defensive pessimism). Therefore, first we shed light on the importance of defensive pessimism as an individual difference in a work context, and second, while accounting for the role of leader-follower (in)congruence in their cognitive styles, this study represents an important extension of the existing personality and individual differences research in general. Previous work has emphasized the distinction between optimistic and defensively pessimistic strategies in persons

(Cantor et al., 1987; Norem & Cantor, 1986b), but no prior work has explicitly contrasted the seemingly adaptive strategy of defensive pessimism with other psychological processes associated with followers' perceived isolation in work settings.

Second, this study is also linked to the idea of a too-much-of-a-good-thing effect (Grant & Schwartz, 2011), which suggests that having too much of a positive characteristic such as defensive pessimism in a leader-follower relationship may reach a shift in phenomena to the point where positive effects eventually turn negative. Accordingly, having high levels of defensive pessimism on both sides, leaders and followers, might lead to high levels of anxiety and stress, which would take away from followers' joy at work and make them fell less supported and more isolated. In a similar vein, no attention has been paid to understanding why a suboptimal dyadic relationship between leaders' and followers' cognitive styles can foster followers' perceived isolation. Psychological factors, such as defensive pessimism, may be the main determinant of whether people work together well. In other words, self-concept affects not only how an individual behaves, but how individuals interact with each other within the team. Furthermore, when followers spend too much time on getting along with their leaders and co-workers, they probably will not have energy left for making progress or succeeding at work. When both leaders and followers were low (negative) in defensive pessimism, and therefore in accord at low levels of defensive pessimism, followers' perceived isolation was lower than when leaders' and followers' levels of defensive pessimism deviated from each other. However, the highest level of followers' isolation occurred when followers' defensive pessimism also was high, which supports the idea of the inverted Ucurve (Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Therefore this study suggests that followers' who score high in defensive pessimism and perceived isolation could diminish their negative thinking regarding isolation with leaders' positivity, which will result in decreased perceived isolation.

Defensive pessimism is a tool used to defend self-esteem, maintain motivation, and cope with stressful and potentially negative events (Cantor & Norem, 1989; Norem & Chang, 2002). Subsequently, this cognitive strategy helps people to feel more in control and reduce their anxiety (Norem & Illingworth, 1993). Moreover, individuals who employ defensive pessimism as a cognitive strategy despite their lower expectations and higher anxiety manage to function and perform just as well as optimists (Norem & Illingworth, 1993). Individuals who use defensive pessimism tend to proactively deal with the situation by acknowledging the possibility of low outcomes but at the same time working hard to prevent or diminish them (Showers & Ruben, 1990). In line with this, this study shows that perceived isolation is lower when a follower's defensive pessimism is lower than a leader's defensive pessimism. Therefore followers' perceived isolation decreased due to the fact that the leaders' defensive pessimism brought a balance to the leader-follower defensive pessimism relationship by managing the anxiety and fear of failure and by taking control regarding their expectations of future events. In other words, we showed the positive effects of leaders' defensive pessimism on followers' defensive pessimism, by which leaders were able to balance the relationship effectively by their thinking-through process and plan effective behavior for future events.

Third, this study sheds extra light on the isolation literature referring to the call for considering theoretical and empirical frameworks of professional isolation in the workplace and leader distance (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002; Golden, Veiga, & Dino, 2008). Building on the implicit leadership theory that is used by individuals to discern others as leaders based on characteristics (Lord & Maher, 1991; Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010), this study shows that when a leader's defensive pessimism was in agreement with a follower's defensive pessimism, and thus they perceived it at similar levels (i.e., low or high), the follower's perceived isolation decreased. Nonetheless, our results indicate that followers tend to feel more isolated when their defensive pessimism and perceived isolation, and thus their level of anxiety, stress, fear of failure, and disconnection from their leader and co-workers, were high. Followers' perceived isolation was higher when followers' defensive pessimism was high, whereas it was lower when their defensive pessimism was lower than the leader's defensive pessimism. A mechanism that may highlight this finding is that followers' positive expectations, beliefs, and attitude positively affect their perceptions, and thus decrease perceived isolation and increase motivational aspects in their behavior.

However, chronic optimism may result in ignoring negative information (Taylor & Brown, 1988); therefore, unlike defensive pessimists, optimists tend to avoid analysis, which makes them more stressed and less in control (Norem & Illingworth 1993). These individuals tend to respond to adversity with positive perceptions of themselves, including an unrealistic sense of personal control over the situation and overly optimistic expectations about the future (Taylor & Armor, 1996). Consequently, this may lead to greater followers' disappointment when the overly optimistic outcomes are not achieved. Therefore another finding of this study is the proposed balance in the leader-follower defensive pessimism relationship which leads to positive outcomes such as low followers' perceived isolation. Specifically, when followers' were low in defensive pessimism, leaders' high defensive pessimism created a balance with its positive effects in this relationship while probably making followers less unrealistic, less involved in future events, and less isolated. Revealing under what cognitive perspectives leaders and followers are likely to work effectively together might help when spotting the conflict points in a leader-follower relationship and thus allow them to develop their affinities. This all leads to superior levels of group achievement, which could not be achieved by individuals. Therefore this study makes a contribution in showing which mix of individual differences could achieve success and well-being in the workplace.

6.2. Practical implications

The results of this study suggest that followers' perceived isolation is higher when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviate from each other than when they are in agreement. Still, when followers were high in defensive pessimism and leaders were low in defensive pessimism, a follower's perceived isolation was higher than vice versa. Both leaders and followers face unpredictable challenges in their day-to-day activities, and thus they tend to experience stress, anxiety, and pressure to an extent that depends on their coping style and state of mind. However, a psychologically healthy environment (i.e.,

environments with fewer potential occupational stressors) is correlated with increased employee well-being (pleasant emotional experience, happiness, job satisfaction) and health (state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being), which is the key to collective success (Danna & Griffin, 1999). The research has found that when leaders are stressed, negative, and maintain a pessimistic outlook, this effect transfers directly to followers, causing negative consequences (Schaubroeck et al., 2007) which finally may result in increased followers' perceived isolation.

Positive leadership focuses on the application of positive principles emerging from the positive organizational scholarship (Cameron et al., 2003) and positive psychology (Seligman, 1999). It promotes spectacular levels of achievement, strengths, capabilities, and human potential, and fosters human virtues (Cameron, 2012). In line with this, this study shows that positive leadership may change the perception of followers, decreasing their feelings of being isolated. Therefore the findings have the potential to contribute to the positive and proactive mental well-being of followers. Moreover, leaders must make an effort to create a meaningful environment (environment which promotes health and well-being) in which their employees will feel socially supported and therefore satisfied with their work environment. For example, work-related stress combined with the stress of defensive pessimists can lead to negative outcomes because of the overbalanced physical and mental demands placed on the human body and mind (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Line managers have recognized that well-being can potentially affect followers in negative ways. Workers experiencing poor well-being in the workplace may be less productive and more prone to be absent from work (Boyd, 1997). Therefore it may be crucial for leaders and followers to be in accordance in their defensive pessimism (e.g., future expectations, values, beliefs, and attitudes) or/and for leaders to promote positive leadership doctrine, because that would help leaders to improve their team effectiveness and to be more effective themselves. Similarly, congruence with the leader in cognitive styles could make followers more cognitively engaged, and thus open to new information about how to improve their achievement in the workplace. The positive spillover of cognitive congruence (i.e., defensive pessimism) would have an impact on managers as well, helping them to develop effective management practices in their work teams. All this would contribute to better solutions to the problems and perhaps to innovative problem-solving decisions. In addition, various interventions and health programs may be advantageous in promoting positivity and learning stress-reduction techniques (Conrad, 1988).

This study also focused on characteristics of leadership that are related to cognitions, beliefs, values, and expectations. A leader's positive expectations have been shown to be an important indicator (George, 1995) influencing a follower's cognitive style (i.e., defensive pessimism), and thus followers' perceived isolation. Therefore leaders who are less defensive-pessimistic oriented are more likely to create positivity in those they lead. This perspective contributes to the internal processes related to positive leadership development and use, as well as to developing the positivity of followers. Along with the results previously reported by Norem & Cantor (1986a, 1986b), this study showed that individuals who set low expectations can still use their anxiety in a productive way and prevent negative outcomes (i.e., high followers' perceived isolation). However, having

too much defensive pessimism (i.e., when leaders and followers were high in defensive pessimism) resulted in high followers' perceived isolation as a negative outcome, whereas when both leaders and followers were low (negative) in defensive pessimism, and therefore with according low levels of defensive pessimism, isolation also was lower than when leaders' and followers' defensive pessimism deviated from each other (i.e., high-low and low-high leader-follower defensive pessimism). Therefore organizations should strive to promote leaders' positive influence on followers' because it could affect followers' perceived isolation, which can increase or decrease group performance.

6.3. Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the aforementioned contributions, this study is not without limitations. They are mainly related to the self-reported nature of the data. The study variables were all self-reported; however, due to the study's focus on (in)congruence in followers' perceptions about themselves and their leaders and the effect of this (in)congruence on another individually perceived psychological state, i.e. isolation, this fact might not be so problematic. Nevertheless, in attempting to minimize the problem of common method variance, we used several techniques, such as ensuring that participants were not able to guess the aims of the study, ensuring respondent anonymity, using a large-scale study design in which we were able employ counterbalancing question order, and improving scale items by keeping questions simple and concise (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Furthermore, the data that we gathered are cross-sectional in nature, thereby not enabling us to infer causality. As with several other psychological constructs, future field research into leader-follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence can benefit from a longitudinal study which could test the implications of causality in real life and examine a temporal dimension, i.e., how the interaction of defensive pessimism with perceived isolation can help leaders and followers to progress through their work. Furthermore, future research is warranted that implements an experimental design by manipulating leader–follower defensive pessimism (in)congruence. Another limitation was related to Cronbach's alpha. Noted, these indices are quite low, lower than the usual cut-off. However, as previously validated scales have been used, we have decided not to drop any items but rather add further explanation into this section regarding the low reliabilities of the used scales. These indeed indicate that the reliability of these scales in our sampled context is not at sufficient level, which is why future research should delve deeper into the issues related to the scales used for measuring these constructs.

Finally, this research focused only on the outcomes of defensive pessimism – i.e., examining how it can manifest in work through follower's perceived isolation. In addition to well-being outcomes (e.g., reducing follower's perceived isolation), job performance outcomes could perhaps be a fruitful topic for further research. Moreover, although this aspect is shown to be important, other work-contextual and interpersonal variables at various levels may also influence how followers perceive isolation in the workplace. For instance, other personality traits (e.g., locus of control, self-efficacy) may influence the

individual's perceived isolation, thus hypothesized relationships which were not part of this study.

REFERENCES

Aiken, L. S., West, S. G. & Reno, R. R. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions.* London:Sage.

Antonakis, J. & Atwater, L. (2002). Leader distance: A review and a proposed theory.*The Leadership Quarterly, 13*(6), 673–704.

Aspinwall, L. G. & Richter, L. (1999). Optimism and self–mastery predict more rapid disengagement from unsolvable tasks in the presence of alternatives.*Motivation and Emotion, 23*(3), 221–245.

Avey, J. B., Avolio, B. J. & Luthans, F. (2011). Experimentally analyzing the impact of leader positivity on follower positivity and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(2), 282–294.

Avey, J. B., Hughes, L. W., Norman, S. M. & Luthans, K. W. (2008). Using positivity, transformational leadership and empowerment to combat employee negativity. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 29*(2), 110–126.

Bandura, A. (1982). Self–efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American psychologist, 37*(2), 122.

Barrick, M. R. & Mount, M. K. (1991). The big five personality dimensions and job performance: a meta-analysis. *Personnel psychology, 44*(1), 1–26.

Barnes, L. L., De Leon, C. M., Wilson, R. S., Bienias, J. L. & Evans, D. A. (2004). Social resources and cognitive decline in a population of older African Americans and whites. *Neurology, 63*(12), 2322–2326.

Baumeister, R. F. & Tice, D. M. (1990). Point–counterpoints: Anxiety and social exclusion. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 9*(2), 165–195.

Beehr, T. A., Jex, S. M., Stacy, B. A. & Murray, M. A. (2000). Work stressors and coworker support as predictors of individual strain and job performance. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 391–405.

Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I. & Seeman, T. E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social science & medicine, 51*(6), 843–857.

Boyd, A. (1997). Stressed out? Take a sick day. *Management Review, 86*(7), 6.

Brissette, I., Scheier, M. F. & Carver, C. S. (2002). The role of optimism in social network development, coping, and psychological adjustment during a life transition. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 82*(1), 102.

Brown, J. D. & Marshall, M. A. (2001). Great expectations: Optimism and pessimism in achievement settings.

Brummett, B. H., Barefoot, J. C., Siegler, I. C., Clapp–Channing, N. E., Lytle, B. L., Bosworth, H. B. & Mark, D. B. (2001). Characteristics of socially isolated patients with coronary artery disease who are at elevated risk for mortality. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 63*(2), 267–272.

Cantor, N. (1990). From thought to behavior: "Having" and "doing" in the study of personality and cognition. *American psychologist, 45*(6), 735.

Cantor, N. & Norem, J. K. (1989). Defensive pessimism and stress and coping. *Social cognition, 7*(2), 92–112.

Cantor, N., Norem, J. K., Niedenthal, P. M., Langston, C. A. & Brower, A. M. (1987). Life tasks, self–concept ideals, and cognitive strategies in a life transition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*(6), 1178.

Cameron, K. (2012). *Positive leadership: Strategies for extraordinary performance.* Berrett–Koehler Publishers.

Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., Quinn, R. E. & Wrzesniewski, A. (2003). Developing a discipline of positive organizational scholarship. *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*, 361–370.

Carver, C. S. & Scheier, M. F. (2001). *On the self–regulation of behavior.* Cambridge University Press.

Challagalla, G., Shervani, T. & Huber, G. (2000). Supervisory orientations and salesperson work outcomes: The moderating effect of salesperson location. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 20*(3), 161–171.

Chang, E. C. & Sanna, L. J. (2001). Optimism, pessimism, and positive and negative affectivity in middle–aged adults: A test of a cognitive–affective model of psychological adjustment. *Psychology and aging, 16*(3), 524.

Cohen, S. & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological bulletin, 98*(2), 310.

Connaughton, S. L. & Daly, J. A. (2004). Identification with leader: A comparison of perceptions of identification among geographically dispersed and co–located teams. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 9*(2), 89–103.

Conrad, P. (1988). Worksite health promotion: The social context. *Social Science Medicine, 26*, 485–489.

Cooper, C. L. & Cartwright, S. (1994). Healthy mind; healthy organization—A proactive approach to occupational stress. *Human relations, 47*(4), 455–471.

Cooper, C. D. & Kurland, N. B. (2002). Telecommuting, professional isolation, and employee development in public and private organizations. *Journal of organizational behavior, 23*(4), 511–532.

Cornwell, E. Y. & Waite, L. J. (2009). Social disconnectedness, perceived isolation, and health among older adults. *Journal of health and social behavior, 50*(1), 31–48.

Costa, P. T. & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Normal personality assessment in clinical practice: The NEO Personality Inventory. *Psychological assessment, 4*(1), 5.

Cross, R., Baker, W. & Parker, A. (2003). What creates energy in organizations? *MIT Sloan Management Review, 44*(4), 51–57.

Danna, K. & Griffin, R. W. (1999). Health and well–being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of management, 25*(3), 357–384.

Davis, M. C. & Swan, P. D. (1999). Association of negative and positive social ties with fibrinogen levels in young women. *Health Psychology, 18*(2), 131.

Dean, A., Kolody, B., Wood, P. & Matt, G. E. (1992). The influence of living alone on depression in elderly persons. *Journal of Aging and Health, 4*(1), 3–18.

DeWall, C. N. & Baumeister, R. F. (2006). Alone but feeling no pain: Effects of social exclusion on physical pain tolerance and pain threshold, affective forecasting, and interpersonal empathy. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 91*(1), 1.

Dicke, A.K. (1998). Optimism and its effect on romantic relationships. (Doctoral Dissertation, Texas Tech. University, 1998). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 58*, 5697.

Diekema, D. A. (1992). Aloneness and social form. *Symbolic interaction, 15*(4), 481–500.

Eden, D. & Leviatan, U. (1973). Implicit leadership theory as a determinant of the factor structure underlying supervisory behavior scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 60*(6), 736–741.

Edwards, R. C. & Edwards, R. (1979). *Contested terrain: The transformation of the workplace in the twentieth century.* Basic Books.

Edwards, J. R. & Parry, M. E. (1993). On the use of polynomial regression equations as an alternative to difference scores in organizational research. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*(6), 1577–1613.

Engle, E. M. & Lord, R. G. (1997). Implicit theories, self–schemas, and leader–member exchange. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*(4), 988–1010.

Epitropaki, O. & Martin, R. (2004). Implicit leadership theories in applied settings: factor structure, generalizability, and stability over time. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(2), 293.

Epitropaki, O. & Martin, R. (2005). From ideal to real: a longitudinal study of the role of implicit leadership theories on leader–member exchanges and employee outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(4), 659.

Epitropaki, O., Sy, T., Martin, R., Tram–Quon, S. & Topakas, A. (2013). Implicit leadership and followership theories "in the wild": Taking stock of information–processing approaches to leadership and followership in organizational settings. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24*(6), 858–881.

Foti, R. J. & Lord, R. G. (1987). Prototypes and scripts: The effects of alternative methods of processing information on rating accuracy. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 39*(3), 318–340.

Fuller, B. & Marler, L. E. (2009). Change driven by nature: A meta–analytic review of the proactive personality literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 75*(3), 329–345.

George, J. M. (1995). Leader positive mood and group performance: The case of customer service. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 25*(9), 778–794.

George, J. M. & Bettenhausen, K. (1990). Understanding prosocial behavior, sales performance, and turnover: A group–level analysis in a service context. *Journal of applied psychology, 75*(6), 698.

Golden, T. D., Veiga, J. F. & Dino, R. N. (2008). The impact of professional isolation on teleworker job performance and turnover intentions: Does time spent teleworking, interacting face–to–face, or having access to communication–enhancing technology matter? *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(6), 1412.

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J. & Swann, W. B. Jr., (2003). A very brief measure of the big–five personality domains. *Journal of Research in Personality, 37*, 504–528.

Graen, G. B. & Scandura, T. A. (1987). Toward a psychology of dyadic organizing. *Research in organizational behavior.*

Grant, A. M. & Schwartz, B. (2011). Too much of a good thing the challenge and opportunity of the inverted U. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(1), 61–76.

Hall, R. J. & Lord, R. G. (1995). Multi–level information–processing explanations of followers' leadership perceptions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 6*(3), 265–287.

Hawkley, L. C., Masi, C. M., Berry, J. D. & Cacioppo, J. T. (2006). Loneliness is a unique predictor of age–related differences in systolic blood pressure. *Psychology and aging, 21*(1), 152.

Heikkinen, R. L. & Kauppinen, M. (2004). Depressive symptoms in late life: a 10–year follow–up. *Archives of gerontology and geriatrics, 38*(3), 239–250.

Hollander, E. P. & Offermann, L. R. (1990). Power and leadership in organizations: Relationships in transition. *American psychologist, 45*(2), 179.

Humphrey, R. H. (2002). The many faces of emotional leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 13*(5), 493–504.

Hunt, J. G., Boal, K. B. & Sorenson, R. L. (1990). Top management leadership: Inside the black box. *The Leadership Quarterly, 1*(1), 41–65.

Hurtz, G. M. & Donovan, J. J. (2000). Personality and job performance: The Big Five revisited. *Journal of applied psychology, 85*(6), 869–879.

Jansen, K. J. & Kristof–Brown, A. L. (2005). Marching to the beat of a different drummer: Examining the impact of pacing congruence. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 97*(2), 93–105.

Jex, S. M. & Thomas, J. L. (2003). Relations between stressors and group perceptions: Main and mediating effects. *Work & Stress, 17*(2), 158–169.

Jones, W. H. (1990). Loneliness and social exclusion. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 9*(2), 214–220.

Jones, E., Dixon, A. L., Chonko, L. B. & Cannon, J. P. (2005). Key accounts and team selling: a review, framework, and research agenda. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 25*(2), 181–198.

Kahn, J. H., Hessling, R. M. & Russell, D. W. (2003). Social support, health, and well–being among the elderly: what is the role of negative affectivity? *Personality and Individual Differences, 35*(1), 5–17.

Karademas, E. C. (2006). Self–efficacy, social support and well–being: The mediating role of optimism. *Personality and individual differences, 40*(6), 1281–1290.

Keller, T. (2003). Parental images as a guide to leadership sensemaking: An attachment perspective on implicit leadership theories. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*(2), 141–160.

Kelloway, E. K., Turner, N., Barling, J. & Loughlin, C. (2012). Transformational leadership and employee psychological well–being: The mediating role of employee trust in leadership. *Work & Stress, 26*(1), 39–55.

Kenney, R. A., Schwartz–Kenney, B. M. & Blascovich, J. (1996). Implicit leadership theories: Defining leaders described as worthy of influence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*(11), 1128–1143.

Kirkman, B. L., Rosen, B., Gibson, C. B., Tesluk, P. E. & McPherson, S. O. (2002). Five challenges to virtual team success: Lessons from Sabre, Inc. *The Academy of Management Executive, 16*(3), 67–79.

Kraus, L. A., Davis, M. H., Bazzini, D., Church, M. & Kirchman, C. M. (1993). Personal and social influences on loneliness: The mediating effect of social provisions. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 37–53.

Kurland, N. B. & Egan, T. D. (1999). Telecommuting: Justice and control in the virtual organization. *Organization Science, 10*(4), 500–513.

Landier, A. & Thesmar, D. (2009). Financial contracting with optimistic entrepreneurs. *Review of financial studies, 22*(1), 117–150.

Le, H., Oh, I. S., Robbins, S. B., Ilies, R., Holland, E. & Westrick, P. (2011). Too much of a good thing: curvilinear relationships between personality traits and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(1), 113.

Lei, Y. & Duan, C. (2016). Relationships among Chinese college students' defensive pessimism, cultural values, and psychological health. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 29*(4), 335–355.

Li, N., Liang, J. & Crant, J. M. (2010). The role of proactive personality in job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior: a relational perspective. *Journal of applied psychology, 95*(2), 395.

Ling, W., Chia, R. C. & Fang, L. (2000). Chinese implicit leadership theory. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 140*(6), 729–739.

Lord, R. G. (1985). An information processing approach to social perceptions, leadership and behavioral measurement in organizations. Research in organizational behavior.

Lord, R. G., Brown, D. J. & Freiberg, S. J. (1999). Understanding the dynamics of leadership: The role of follower self–concepts in the leader/follower relationship. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes, 78*(3), 167–203.

Lord, R. G., Brown, D. J., Harvey, J. L. & Hall, R. J. (2001). Contextual constraints on prototype generation and their multilevel consequences for leadership perceptions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 12*(3), 311–338.

Lord, R. G., Foti, R. J. & De Vader, C. L. (1984). A test of leadership categorization theory: Internal structure, information processing, and leadership perceptions. *Organizational behavior and human performance, 34*(3), 343–378.

Lord, R. G. & Maher, K. J. (1991). Cognitive theory in industrial and organizational psychology. *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, 2*, 1–62.

Luthans, K. W. & Jensen, S. M. (2005). The linkage between psychological capital and commitment to organizational mission: A study of nurses. *Journal of Nursing Administration, 35*(6), 304–310.

Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M. & Avolio, B. J. (2007). *Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge* (p. 3). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Markus, H., Smith, J. & Moreland, R. L. (1985). Role of the self–concept in the perception of others. *Journal of Personality and social Psychology, 49*(6), 1494.

Marshall, G. W., Michaels, C. E. & Mulki, J. P. (2007). Workplace isolation: Exploring the construct and its measurement. *Psychology & Marketing, 24*(3), 195–223.

Medvedeff, M. E. & Lord, R. G. (2007). Implicit leadership theories as dynamic processing structures. Follower–centered perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl, 19–50.

Mulki, J. P., Jaramillo, J. F. & Locander, W. B. (2008). Effect of ethical climate on turnover intention: Linking attitudinal–and stress theory. *Journal of Business Ethics, 78*(4), 559–574.

Napier, B. J. & Ferris, G. R. (1993). Distance in organizations. *Human Resource Management Review, 3*(4), 321–357.

Norem, J. K. (2001). Defensive pessimism, optimism, and pessimism. *Optimism and pessimism: Implications for theory, research, and practice,* 77–100.

Norem, J. K. (2008). Defensive pessimism, anxiety, and the complexity of evaluating self-regulation. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 2*(1), 121–134.

Norman, S. M., Avolio, B. J. & Luthans, F. (2010). The impact of positivity and transparency on trust in leaders and their perceived effectiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly, 21*(3), 350–364.

Norem, J. K. & Cantor, N. (1986a). Defensive pessimism: harnessing anxiety as motivation. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 51*(6), 1208.

Norem, J. K. & Cantor, N. (1986b). Anticipatory and post hoc cushioning strategies: Optimism and defensive pessimism in "risky" situations. *Cognitive therapy and research, 10*(3), 347–362.

Norem, J. K. & Cantor, N. (1990). Cognitive strategies, coping and perceptions of competence. In R. J. Sternberg & J. J. Kolligian (Eds.), *Competence considered* (pp. 190–204). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Norem, J. K. & Illingworth, K. S. (1993). Strategy–dependent effects of reflecting on self and tasks: Some implications of optimism and defensive pessimism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*(4), 822.

Oettingen, G., Mayer, D. & Portnow, S. (2016). Pleasure now, pain later: positive fantasies about the future predict symptoms of depression. *Psychological science, 27*(3), 345–353.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y. & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of applied psychology, 88*(5), 879.

Prati, G. & Pietrantoni, L. (2009). Optimism, social support, and coping strategies as factors contributing to posttraumatic growth: A meta–analysis. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 14*(5), 364–388.

Reis, H. T., Collins, W. A. & Berscheid, E. (2000). The relationship context of human behavior and development. *Psychological bulletin, 126*(6), 844.

Rousseau, D. (1995). *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements.* London: Sage.

Rush, M. C. & Russell, J. E. (1988). Leader prototypes and prototype–contingent consensus in leader behavior descriptions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 24*(1), 88–104.

Sanna, L. J. (1996). Defensive pessimism, optimism, and stimulating alternatives: Some ups and downs of prefactual and counterfactual thinking. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 71*(5), 1020.

Schaefer, J. A. & Moos, R. H. (1998). The context for posttraumatic growth: Life crises, individual and social resources, and coping. *Posttraumatic growth: Positive changes in the aftermath of crisis,* 99–125.

Schaubroeck, J., Walumbwa, F. O., Ganster, D. C. & Kepes, S. (2007). Destructive leader traits and the neutralizing influence of an "enriched" job. *The Leadership Quarterly, 18*(3), 236–251.

Scheier, M. F. & Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping, and health: assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. *Health psychology, 4*(3), 219.

Scheier, M. F., Weintraub, J. K. & Carver, C. S. (1986). Coping with stress: divergent strategies of optimists and pessimists. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 51*(6), 1257.

Schneider, D. J. & Blankmeyer, B. L. (1983). Prototype salience and implicit personality theories. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44*(4), 712.

Schneider, K. T., Hitlan, R. T. & Radhakrishnan, P. (2000). An examination of the nature and correlates of ethnic harassment experiences in multiple contexts. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*(1), 3.

Seligman, M. E. (1999). Positive social science. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 1*(3), 181.

Seligman, M. E. (2011). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life.* Vintage.

Sharpe, J. P., Martin, N. R. & Roth, K. A. (2011). Optimism and the Big Five factors of personality: Beyond neuroticism and extraversion. *Personality and Individual Differences, 51*(8), 946–951.

Shanock, L. R., Baran, B. E., Gentry, W. A., Pattison, S. C. & Heggestad, E. D. (2010). Polynomial regression with response surface analysis: A powerful approach for examining moderation and overcoming limitations of difference scores. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *25*(4), 543–554.

Shondrick, S. J., Dinh, J. E. & Lord, R. G. (2010). Developments in implicit leadership theory and cognitive science: Applications to improving measurement and understanding alternatives to hierarchical leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 21*(6), 959–978.

Showers, C. (1992). The motivational and emotional consequences of considering positive or negative possibilities for an upcoming event. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*(3), 474.

Showers, C. & Cantor, N. (1985). Social cognition: A look at motivated strategies. *Annual review of psychology, 36*(1), 275–305.

Spencer, S. M. & Norem, J. K. (1996). Reflection and distraction defensive pessimism, strategic optimism, and performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*(4), 354–365.

Sproull, L. & Kiesler, S. (1991). Computers, networks and work. *Scientific American, 265*(3), 116–123.

Symister, P. & Friend, R. (2003). The influence of social support and problematic support on optimism and depression in chronic illness: a prospective study evaluating self–esteem as a mediator. *Health Psychology, 22*(2), 123.

Taylor, S. E. & Armor, D. A. (1996). Positive illusions and coping with adversity. *Journal of personality, 64*(4), 873–898.

Taylor, S. E. & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well–being: a social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological bulletin, 103*(2), 193.

Thoits, P. A. & Hewitt, L. N. (2001). Volunteer work and well–being. *Journal of health and social behavior,* 115–131.

Uchino, B. N., Cacioppo, J. T. & Kiecolt–Glaser, J. K. (1996). The relationship between social support and physiological processes: a review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological bulletin, 119*(3), 488.

Uhl–Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B. & Carsten, M. K. (2014). Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25*(1), 83–104.

Vickers, K. S. & Vogeltanz, N. D. (2000). Dispositional optimism as a predictor of depressive symptoms over time. *Personality and Individual Differences, 28*(2), 259–272.

Wiesenfeld, B. M., Raghuram, S. & Garud, R. (2001). Organizational identification among virtual workers: The role of need for affiliation and perceived work–based social support. *Journal of management, 27*(2), 213–229.

Wong, M., Gardiner, E., Lang, W. & Coulon, L. (2008). Generational differences in personality and motivation: do they exist and what are the implications for the workplace? *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 23*(8), 878–890.

Wong, S. I. & Giessner, S. R. (2018). The thin line between empowering and laissez–faire leadership: An expectancy–match perspective. *Journal of Management*, *44*(2), 757–783.

Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behavior: What we know and what questions need more attention. *The Academy of Management Perspectives, 26*(4), 66–85.