

Transactional and Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Occupational Stress

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Abstract

Judge and Colquitt (2004) argue that given that the potential ramifications of stress for companies and their employees are so substantial, it is crucial that managers act to aid their employees in the development of coping skills and to reduce the excessive stress in the job itself. Empowering leadership behaviors have been proposed as a primary intervention intended to help employees to deal with the adverse work experiences. Given the myriad of potential sources of stress in organizations, and the vast set of strategies and techniques included in the notion of “empowerment”, we content that for managers to act successfully against stress, a more detailed analysis of the particular behaviors leaders may exhibit, in order to help employees to cope with each source of stress, is needed. With this in mind, we analyzed a set of six components or potential stressors and five leadership behaviors (i.e., transactional and transformational) to find how each stressor responded to a particular set of leadership practices. Results from Pearson correlations and regression analyses supported the idea that in fact, different stressor can be dealt with specific leadership behaviors. Discussion of results and practical implications of the study are presented.

Stress, Stressors, Consequences, and Empowerment

While the definition has long been debated, stress can generally be defined as an aversive or unpleasant emotional and physiological state resulting from adverse work experiences, particularly experiences that are uncertain or outside the employee’s control (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985; Hart & Cooper, 2001). Past research has examined several sources of stress, including aspects of the employee role, particular job demands and characteristics, and facets of the physical work environment (Hart and Cooper, 2001; Kahn & Byosiére, 1992). Other stressors are more interpersonal in nature. For example, Spector and Jex (1998) described the interpersonal conflict at work stressors, which captures the degree to which other people are rude to a given employee. Similarly, their organizational constraints stressors include items tapping inadequate leadership and lack of social support. Recently, Harvey and Brown (2006) argue that the major stressors in the workplace include changes in technology, downsizing, sudden reorganization and unexpected changes in the work schedules, lack of participation in the decision making, and lack of employee empowerment. Furthermore, organizational justice has been proposed recently as a source of stress (Judge and Colquitt, 2004).

The negative effects of occupational stress have to do with effects on the employees' health and they have job and organizational consequences as well. Occupational stress contributes to low motivation and morale, diminished concern for colleagues and the organization, and a loss of responsibility (Greenberg and Baron, 2000; Ivancevich, Matterson, Freedman and Philips, 1990), sick leave, accidents, low job satisfaction, low quality products and services, poor internal communication and conflicts (Schabracq and Cooper, 2000; Murphy, 1995; McHugh, 1993), absenteeism (Johns, 1997), high turnover (Ongori and Agolla, 2008), and decrease in job performance (Gilboa and Shirom, 2008). "The potential ramifications of stress for companies and their employees are so substantial that it is crucial that managers act to aid their employees in the development of coping skills and to reduce the excessive stress in the job itself" (Judge and Colquitt, 2004, p. 55).

Types of interventions

Managers in various organizations are in dilemma over what interventions need to be employed to minimize the costs associated with occupational stress. There are many interventions used in managing stress in organizations but the interventions, which are commonly used, include the primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). Primary interventions emphasize on identifying the possible causes of stress and their subsequent risks to employees. Basically, primary interventions include redesigning jobs to modify workplace stressors, increasing workers decision-making authority (Jackson and Schuler, 1983) or providing co-worker support groups (Defrank and Cooper, 1987; Kolbell, 1995) rather than providing training to employees or, taking care of individuals who are already suffering from the effects of stress, which are the aim of secondary and tertiary interventions respectively. In this respect, Conger and Kanungo (1988) created a model including primary interventions that are assumed to deal with all potential job stressors.

Conger and Kanungo model of empowerment

Conger and Kanungo's (1988) seminal work on empowerment, proposed a model of 5 stages that goes from potential stressors or conditions leading to a psychological state of powerlessness (i.e., organizational factors, supervision, reward systems and the nature of job), to strategies and techniques to deal with the stressors (i.e., participative management, goal setting, feedback, modeling, contingent rewards, and job enrichment), which in turn will lead, through an increase in self-efficacy, to strengthen desired employee behaviors such as initiation and persistence of behavior to accomplish task objectives. According to the authors, the employment of the techniques and strategies (i.e., empowerment behaviors) is aimed not only at removing some of the external conditions responsible for powerlessness but also (and more important) at providing subordinates with self-efficacy information. The theory behind these ideas can be traced to Alfred Bandura (1977), who conceptualized the notion of self efficacy beliefs and their role in an individual's sense of personal power in the world.

So far, it seems well documented in the literature the power of empowerment as a motivational technique, which through the increase in self efficacy will make employees powerful to deal and to cope with obstacles at work; which in turn are a source of stress. So far then, we know the problem: anything that causes a sense of powerlessness (i.e., any stressor) and

the solution: “empowerment”; any strategy or technique that leads to a sense of power. Considering the myriad of sources of stress documented, and the many techniques and strategies proposed to deal with them (i.e., empowerment), what seems to be missing in the literature is a more precise understanding of the relationship between particular stressors and the particular leadership behaviors or strategies to deal with each stressor. We content that it is likely that some leadership behaviors might be a more adequate solution for some stressors than for others. We found support for our arguments from the notion of differential stressors. Following the theoretical work of Lazarus and his colleagues (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), it has been suggested that the appraisal of any stressor reflects two basic dimensions. The first dimension, associated with threat or hindrance, is hypothesized to be negatively associated with performance, and the second dimension, reflecting challenge, tends to be positively related to performance. Threat and challenge appraisals synergistically interact to produce stress appraisals. Stressors have been found to vary on the quantity of hindrance and challenge they have. For example, role overload has been found to have a higher proportion of the hindrance dimension, and as so the more difficult to deal with it by empowerment behaviors.

Our purpose is to study several stressors and to consider the possible relation each of them may have with several particular leadership behaviors. We achieve that by including in our study several stressors and several more particular leadership practices, than earlier studies have considered. As far as we know, our study is unique in this sense. Most studies so far have included either only a few or only one stressor or have studied a very ample set of leadership behaviors. For example, Jones, Katak, Futrell, and Johnston (1996) used two broad sets of behaviors: leadership consideration (i.e., people oriented leadership) and leadership role clarity (i.e., task oriented leadership). They conclude from their study that both leadership behaviors have an impact on role conflict, role ambiguity and job satisfaction.

The Study

The Management Standards

To include a set of stressors in our study, we used “The Management Standards.” The Management Standards represent a set of conditions that reflect high levels of health, well being and organizational performance. These conditions are split into six discrete but related areas, or potential stressors: Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role, and Change (Edwards, Webster, Van Laar, & Easton, 2008). The “Demands” condition includes issues like work-overload, work patterns, and the work environment. “Role” includes whether people understand their role within the organization and whether the organization ensures they do not have conflicting roles. “Managerial Support” includes encouragement, sponsorship, and resources provided by the organization and line manager. “Relationships” include promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behavior. “Change” includes how organizational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organization. “Control” covers how much say a person has in the way they do their work.

The Leadership Practices model

Leadership behaviors, for the study, were drawn from the Kouses and Posner (1987) model of leadership practices of effective leaders. Kouses and Posner (1987) created their model based on

the concept that leaders could be identified by their ability “to get extraordinary things done in organizations” and that certain practices (i.e. behaviors) were common to successful leaders. Fields and Herold’s (1997) analysis of the instrument to measure the 5 practices concluded that the instrument can be used to measure both transformational and transactional leadership approaches with more particular leadership behaviors. The five practices used by leaders, as identified by Kouses and Posner (1987), which include transformational as well as transactional practices, are: Challenging the Process—This practice involves 1) seeking new solutions to problems, and searching for opportunities, 2) encouraging innovation and taking risk. Inspiring a Shared Vision-- This practice involves 1) creating and communicating a vision of the future and 2) enlisting others to share that vision. Enabling Others to Act—This practice involves 1) fostering collaboration and cooperation within a group and 2) strengthening others’ capabilities to perform. Modeling the way—This practice involves 1) setting an example, behaving in ways consistent with stated values and 2) planning small wins, enabling followers to experience tangible success. Encouraging the Heart—This practice involves 1) recognizing contributions, holding and communicating high expectations, linking performance and rewards, and 2) celebrating accomplishments.

Hypotheses

As mentioned before, leadership behaviors have been proposed as a mean to affect stressors at work. We therefore predicted the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. The five leadership practices will be positively related to perceptions of existence of the six components of the Management Standards.

Specific hypotheses were set for only five of the six potential stressors and for only four of the five leadership practices. We did not include in our hypotheses the component “Demand”. This component includes role overload for which research, at least as related to performance, is ambiguous. Silboa and Simona’s (2008) results of a recent meta-analysis conclude that past studies (e.g., LePine et al., 2004; Spector and Jex, 1998) have reported positive, negative, and no associations between overload and job performance, possible to indicate that it may represent a challenge and/or hindrance to the focal individuals. In a similar manner, we did not find enough agreement in the literature to set hypotheses concerning how Challenging the Process may be positive related to the potential stressors (Podsakoff et. al., 1990).

Inspiring a Shared Vision. We argue that a well articulated and inspiring vision will enable followers to determine their role in that vision, perceiving the potential stressors as a challenge, thus as a motivator, rather than as a hindrance to performance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A vision will also help subordinates to know the direction of change and how their work contributes to this aim. We therefore predicted the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: Inspiring a Shared Vision will be positively related to Role

Hypothesis 2b: Inspiring a Shared Vision will be positively related to Change

Enabling others to Act. When Enabling others to Act, leaders set cooperative goals, reach integrative solutions. We argue that by exhibiting these behaviors leaders may promote role clarity and change. Relationships will be facilitated by the leaders’ building trust relationships, while by sharing power and information leaders may facilitate autonomy and consequently a

sense of control and perceived managerial support. We therefore predicted the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Enabling others to Act will be positively related to Role

Hypothesis 3b: Enabling others to act will be positively related to Relationships

Hypothesis 3c: Enabling others to Act will be positively related to Managerial support

Hypothesis 3d: Enabling others to Act will be positively related to Change

Hypothesis 3e: Enabling others to Act will be positively related to Control

Modeling the Way. When Modeling the Way leaders create a basic philosophy, share and set values, promote better relationships, and lead by example. We argue that by setting a basic philosophy and sharing values leaders may facilitate role clarity, while leader behaviors aimed at promote better relationships will lead to this aim. On the other hand, by breaking tasks into small parts leaders may facilitate change. We therefore predicted the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: Modeling the Way will be positively related to Role

Hypothesis 4b: Modeling the Way will be positively related to Relationships

Hypothesis 4c: Modeling the Way will be positively related to Change

Encouraging the Heart. When Encouraging the Heart leaders link rewards with performance, recognize contributions, coach, celebrate accomplishments, create social networks, and involve themselves personally. We argue that by recognizing contributions leaders may promote role clarity, by coaching, celebrating, and being involved, they may promote “Relations”, and by linking rewards to performance they may promote “Change”. We therefore predicted the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5a: Encouraging the Heart will be positively related to Role

Hypothesis 5b: Encouraging the Heart will be positively related to Relationships

Hypothesis 5c: Encouraging the Heart will be positively related to Change

Method

Participants and procedure

Participants were middle managers working in four manufacturing companies in Mexico. One hundred and fifty four indicated their willingness to participate in the study. One hundred and twenty useable set of questionnaires were returned. Questionnaires were translated into Spanish by using the procedure suggested by Hofstede (1980).

Measures

Potential stressors. To assess stress, we used the Management Standards Indicator Tool (MSIT) (Cousins., et. al. 2004; Edwards et. al., 2008). The MSIT measures six potential stressors: Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Change and Control. The MSTI contains 34 items tapping the six components. The “Support” scale includes Managerial support and Peer support, we only measured Managerial Support. Respondents answered on a five points Likert scale the extent to which their job included each component. Reported reliabilities for the scales range from alpha = .78 for Change to alpha = .87 for Managerial Support and Demands. Results for all of the items were summed and divided by 34 to arrive at a summary indicator of the potential stressors at work (Total Stress).

Leadership behaviors. Leadership behaviors were measured by the 30 items Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI observer) developed by Kouses and Posner (1987). The LPI measures five

leadership practices. The five practices are: Challenging the Status Quo, Sharing a Vision, Enabling to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart. Internal reliabilities reported for the LPI observer range from $\alpha = .81$ to $\alpha = .92$ for the five scales. An assessment of the instrument (Fields, & Herold, 1997) found the LPI a reliable way of measuring both; transactional and transformational leadership. The LPI asks the respondents about their own leader leadership practices, in the five subscales, in a 5 point Likert scale. Results from all of the 30 items were summed and divided by 30 to arrive at a summary indicator of the Leadership practices (Total Leadership).

Results

Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations among the study variables, and reliabilities of the measures are provided in Table 1. Reliabilities for the measures were found at an acceptable level, being the lower $\alpha = .70$ for the “Change”, and “Challenge” scales to $\alpha = .85$ for the “Encouraging” scale.

Table 1. Participants' Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Work stressors and leadership practices

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|----------------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| 1 Demands | 3.32 | .78 | (.78) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Role | 3.74 | .48 | .45** | (.78) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Managerial Support | 3.56 | .73 | .78** | .64** | (.75) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Relations | 3.63 | .62 | .71** | .76** | .81** | (.82) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Change | 3.74 | .58 | .58** | .74** | .80** | .80** | (.7) | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Control | 3.45 | .61 | .83** | .49** | .78** | .80** | .76** | (.76) | | | | | | | |
| 7 Total Stress | 3.63 | .53 | .61** | .71** | .73** | .85** | .89** | .80** | - | | | | | | |
| 8 Challenge | 3.52 | .81 | -.05 | .16 | -.06 | .12 | .12 | .05 | .18 | (.7) | | | | | |
| 9 Vision | 3.38 | .95 | -.01 | .39** | .06 | .27** | .36** | .15 | .38** | .61** | (.8) | | | | |
| 10 Enabling to act | 3.79 | .80 | -.01 | .38** | .20* | .33** | .42** | .26** | .46** | .40** | .69** | (.72) | | | |
| 11 Modeling | 3.45 | .89 | .03 | .36** | .07 | .22* | .30** | .12 | .36** | .66** | .72** | .67** | (.77) | | |
| 12 Encouraging | 3.60 | 1.03 | -.02 | .23* | .06 | .24** | .27** | .13 | .38** | .44** | .61** | .70** | .71** | (.85) | |
| 13 Total Leadership | 3.55 | .75 | -.02 | .36** | .08 | .28** | .35** | .16 | .42** | .73** | .87** | .82** | .90** | .84** | - |

Note. Reliabilities (α) are on the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$, $n = 120$

Results for the hypotheses postulated were as follows. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the five leadership practices will be positively related to perceptions of existence of the six components of the management standards. As shown in Table 1, Total Leadership correlates with Total Stress significantly and in the predicted direction ($r = .42$, $p < .01$).

“Inspiring a Shared Vision” was found, as predicted, positively and significantly related to “Role” ($r = .39$, $p < .01$) and to “Change” ($r = .36$, $p < .01$) supporting H2a, and H2b, respectively. “Enabling Others to Act” was, as predicted, positively related to “Role” ($r = .38$, $p < .01$), “Managerial Support” ($r = .20$, $p < .05$), “Relationships” ($r = .33$, $p < .01$), “Change” ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), and “Control” ($r = .26$, $p < .01$), therefore support was found for H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, and H3e, respectively. Modeling the Way was positively and significantly related, as predicted, to “Role” ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), “Relationships” ($r = .22$, $p < .05$), and “Change” ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), supporting H4a, H4b, and H4c, respectively. Finally, Encouraging the Heart, was found as predicted related to “Role” ($r = .22$, $p < .05$), “Relationships” ($r = .24$, $p < .01$), and “Change” ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), support was found for H5a, H5b and H5c.

Results of the regression analyses show that leadership behaviors are able to predict five of the six components of stress in the study (See Table 2). Leadership behaviors failed, as

suspected, to predict Demands. Results for Role are $R = .47$; being Challenge significant at the $\alpha = .09$ level, Vision at the $\alpha = .06$ level, Enabling at the $\alpha = .07$ level. Modeling is the most significant predictor of Role at the $\alpha = .04$ level, and Encouraging was significant at the $\alpha = .08$ level. Results for Relations are $R = .34$. The only significant predictor behavior is Enabling at the $\alpha = .07$ level. For Managerial support results are: $R = .27$, the only significant predictor is Enabling at the $\alpha = .02$ level. Results for Change are $R = .44$, being the only significant predictor Enabling at the $\alpha = .01$ level. Finally, results for Control are: $R = .28$, being the only significant predictor: Enabling to Act at the $\alpha = .01$ level.

Discussion of Results

As noted at the outset, the impact of leadership empowerment behaviors on stress on the job has been vastly considered. We noted that less attention has been given to what specific leadership behaviors are indicated to deal with specific stressors. With that in mind, this study makes some theoretical contributions.

First, we provide empirical support for the idea of differential stressors. By linking each potential stressor to each of the five leadership behaviors we were able to further understand what possible behaviors leaders may exert, in order to deal with the detrimental effects of a particular stressor. We found that when leaders exert the transformational behavior of Inspiring a vision, leaders foster role clarity. At the same time, the stress of change can be dealt with when leaders set and share an inspiring vision. We argue that leaders accomplish this result by helping subordinates to know the direction of change and how their work contributes to this aim. In a similar way, we found a relationship between Enabling to Act and Role, Relationships, Change, Managerial Support and Control. We argue that by setting cooperative goals and reaching integrative solutions leaders promote role clarity and deal with change. Clear goals and arriving to cooperative solutions may be a way to reduce feelings of powerlessness. Clear goals reduce uncertainty that have been suggested at the heart of stress. We found that Enabling to Act was

Table 2
Regression results of Leadership Practices: Challenge, Vision, Enabling, Modeling and Encouraging and Work Stressors: Demands, Role Relations, Support, Change, Control and Total stress.

| <i>Dependent Variables</i> | <i>Independent Variables</i> | <i>R</i> | <i>Standardized Beta- Coeff.</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig t</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Demands | (constant) | 0.065 | | 8.256 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.047 | -0.361 | 0.719 |
| | Vision | | 0.009 | 0.055 | 0.956 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.060 | 0.399 | 0.691 |
| | Modeling | | -0.032 | -0.192 | 0.848 |
| | Encouraging | | -0.019 | -0.127 | 0.899 |
| Role | (constant) | 0.47 | | 13.248 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.114 | 1.666 | 0.090 |
| | Vision | | 0.259 | 1.872 | 0.064 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.243 | 1.835 | 0.069 |
| | Modeling | | 0.311 | 2.072 | 0.041 |
| | Encouraging | | 0.235 | 1.795 | 0.075 |
| Relations | (constant) | 0.336 | | 8.865 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Challenge | | -0.071 | -0.573 | 0.568 |
| | Vision | | 0.120 | 0.814 | 0.417 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.261 | 1.841 | 0.068 |
| | Modeling | | 0.007 | 0.042 | 0.966 |
| | Encouraging | | 0.009 | 0.063 | 0.950 |
| Managerial Support | | 0.271 | | | |
| | (constant) | | | 8.365 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.160 | -1.267 | 0.208 |
| | Vision | | -0.075 | -0.498 | 0.620 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.345 | 2.380 | 0.019 |
| | Modeling | | 0.097 | 0.590 | 0.556 |
| | Encouraging | | -0.128 | -0.896 | 0.372 |
| Change | | 0.457 | | | |
| | (constant) | | | 9.647 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.168 | -1.444 | 0.152 |
| | Vision | | 0.192 | 1.377 | 0.171 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.369 | 2.763 | 0.007 |
| | Modeling | | 0.106 | 0.700 | 0.485 |
| | Encouraging | | -0.108 | -0.816 | 0.416 |
| Control | | 0.279 | | | |
| | (constant) | | | 8.855 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.041 | -0.324 | 0.746 |
| | Vision | | -0.010 | -0.069 | 0.945 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.362 | 2.507 | 0.014 |
| | Modeling | | -0.013 | -0.082 | 0.935 |
| | Encouraging | | -0.098 | -0.689 | 0.492 |
| Total Stress | | 0.482 | | | |
| | (constant) | | | 10.451 | 0.000 |
| | Challenge | | -0.124 | -1.078 | 0.283 |
| | Vision | | 0.124 | 0.899 | 0.370 |
| | Enabling to act | | 0.307 | 2.331 | 0.022 |
| | Modeling | | 0.115 | 0.773 | 0.441 |
| | Encouraging | | 0.062 | 0.475 | 0.635 |

n=120

related to Relationships and Managerial Support. Leaders who enable to act promote relationships by building trust. A climate of trust is likely to reduce stress by making employees believe their leaders are supportive and will act in their best interest. We also found that leadership behaviors that aim at enabling employees to act are related to Control and Change. Sharing of power and information is one of the most popular definitions of empowerment. When leaders share power and information they reduce the feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness that cause stress at job. We also found, the behavior of Modeling or being an example, related to promoting Relationships, promoting Role clarity and facilitating Change. When leaders exhibit the “modeling” behaviors they let subordinates know what their philosophy and values are, promote relationships, and lead by example. According to Bandura (1977), self efficacy can be promoted by observing others effectiveness, this is the essence of “Modeling”; “being a model” for subordinates may observe and imitate. We argue that by setting a philosophy and a set of values leaders make clear to subordinates what is expected of them (Role), while by promoting relations leaders deal with this potential source of stress. When leaders “model the way” they also break tasks into small parts which may facilitate Change. By breaking a complex or long range task into small goals, leaders may foster employees’ sense of accomplishment, and self-efficacy, motivating them to perform. Finally, we found the “Encouraging the heart” leadership behavior related to Role, Relations and Change. We argue that role clarity and dealing with change are facilitated by the encouraging behaviors of linking rewards to performance and

recognizing contributions. Recognizing contribution and linking rewards to performance not only may serve as motivators to perform but also to indicate what the desired behaviors (i.e., role clarity) and the direction of change are. Conversely, Relations may be promoted by the modeling behaviors of coaching, celebrating accomplishments and the leader's involvement.

Second: results indicate that Enabling to act is the behavior leaders may exhibit to deal with all the five stressors included in the study. Role, Relations, a sense of support, facilitating change, and giving a sense of control all can be dealt in some way by enabling employees to act. This may be due because this leadership behavior resembles more closely than the others the idea of empowering. It includes giving autonomy (delegation and participation) to employees and sharing information with them which are proposed as the essence of empowering.

Third, we think that our study goes beyond the classic idea of empowerment (i.e., empowerment) and presents alternate and additional leadership behaviors to deal with the stressors. For example, one of the most studied and afflictive on the job stressors is role ambiguity. Our study shows that several leadership behaviors, besides "Enabling to act" can be exhibited to clarify the role. This can be done, by "Setting an Inspired Vision", or by "Modeling the Way" by setting a basic philosophy and a set of values, and by "Encouraging" recognizing the employee's contributions. In the same manner, leaders may also be instrumental in reducing the adverse effects of change in their employees facilitating its implementation. Besides enabling employees to act, leaders may help change by setting a vision, and by Modeling when they break the task into small parts, and by Encouraging, when they link rewards to performance. On the other hand, Relationships can be fostered and the stress of interacting with others reduced by: Modeling: promoting better relationships, and by Encouraging through coaching, celebrating accomplishments, and being involved.

Fourth, before we argued that the effect of leadership's behaviors on Demands cannot easily be predicted. As expected, we did not find a significant relationship between any of the behaviors and this potential stressor. Besides confirming prior findings, this finding in our study seems to support the idea of differential stressors, giving support to our argument about not all stressors being subject to the same strategies to be dealt with. Fifth, regression analyses showed that the most significant predictor of Role is Modeling the way. So, in dealing with the most detrimental stressor to performance, "walking the talk" and leading by example become rather important. Results of these analyses show also that Enabling to act is a very significant predictor for Managerial support, Change and Control.

Managerial and International Implications

Managers in various organizations are in dilemma over what interventions need to be employed to minimize the costs associated with occupational stress. Given the detrimental effects of stress on organizations, leaders may benefit from our study by knowing how several behaviors can be instrumental to reduce or to avoid the detrimental effects of stress. A main point here is that leaders can access a "battery" of behaviors, that goes beyond delegation of authority (empowerment), that can be used to deal with the several stressors. To empower employees is not always seen as feasible or as desirable. To some, delegation leaves the leader without enough authority or respect, while some others may fear the challenge of being a leader of

empowered employees. Furthermore, in some cultures, empowering may be seen as a counterculture. Such is the case of countries where power distance is high (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). In these countries, giving authority for managers, and participating for employees may not be seen or even been the recommended way to go. In this sense, our study can help managers and organizations to use some other practices such as setting a vision, modeling, or encouraging, to deal with the adverse effects of stress.

Limitations of the Study

Two limitations of the study should be noted. First, to set our hypotheses we used the descriptions of the behaviors included in each of the five practices. However, even if our hypotheses were supported, we cannot be sure whether support came from the specific behavior we postulated related to the stressor, or for other behavior or behaviors included in the leadership practice. For example, we postulated that by Modeling the Way, leaders will promote role clarity; because we reasoned that setting a basic philosophy and a set of values will have such an effect. However, although the hypothesis was supported we cannot be sure that role clarity was specifically promoted for that behavior rather than for other “modeling” behavior. Future research may address this idea in order to further understand what specific behaviors within each leadership practice lead to the desired results. On the other hand, there is always a concern of the generalization of results from the study because of it being made in a country as culturally different from the United States as it is Mexico. However, this concern may be less important as it seems, for at least two reasons. First, hypotheses were set by reasoning from the current literature and supported with the Mexican sample. Second, at least concerning the relationship between several stressors and performance, culture has not been not found as a moderator (Edwards et al., 2008).

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